

THFM-2311-001 (6 credit hours)

FILM COMEDY

Fall/Winter: 2013/2014
Classes every Wednesday: 14:30-17:15
Room OT10

Instructor: John Kozak
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Office Hours: Tuesday, 13:00-14:00
Thursday, 13:00-14:00
(and by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will look at film comedy, from the pioneering silent film comedies of Max Linder and John Bunny to the recent comedies of Kevin Smith and the Farrelly brothers, from the perspective of the cinematic techniques used to achieve a comic action or comic perspective. Though the course will study comedy forms and styles and take an historical perspective on the development of film comedy, the emphasis will be on an exploration of the cinematic tools of the comedy filmmaker.

TEXTS

Required

- 1). Film Comedy by Geoff King
- 2). Writing the Comedy Film by Stuart Voytilla and Scott Petri

SCHEDULE (subject to change)

FIRST TERM

September 4 - 25

Comic Modes
Comedy and Narrative
Elements of character
The Comic Perspective

1st Assignment: Script Outline

Write a 3 to 4 page Outline for a 5 to 10 minute comedy film. Each student will present their outline in class for analysis and discussion. This will be the outline for the film students will shoot in second term.

Due October 23

October 2 - 30

Cinematic Techniques in Comedy
Suspense and Surprise
Setup and Payoff

LAB

There will be 4 Lab assignments

Students will form groups and shoot 4 short one to three minute scenes highlighting the implementation of different Comedic strategies: 1). Shot Selection, 2). Tension and Release, 3). Concealment of Information, 4). Clash of Context. Each Lab is worth 5% of your final grade.

Schedule TBA

November 6 - November 20

Script analysis

2nd Assignment: Final Draft Script

Students will write an 8 to 10 page script, to be used for their final film assignment. Scripts will be graded on narrative structure, comic tone, character perspective and the application of the comedic principles of

set-up and pay-off, suspense and surprise, concealment of Information and/or clash of context. Students will also be graded on correct screenplay format.

Due January 8

SECOND TERM

January 8 - 15

3rd Assignment: Class presentation

Select a short comedy clip, 2 - 4 minutes in length, from a film of your choice. Give a short presentation on the clip in terms of its comedic form, style of comedy, genre, and the various cinematic elements and comedic strategies being used.

Presented in class January 8 and January 15

January 22 - February 5

Clash of Context

Verbal humour

February 12 - February 26

History of Comedy - Max Linder to Charlie Chaplin

4th assignment: Film Project

Shoot a short 5 - 10 minute comedy film. Detailed assignment parameters TBA

Due March 19

March 5 -25

Presentational Comedy

Iconoclastic Comedy

Unintentional Comedy

April 2 - Screening of class projects

5th assignment: Essay

Students will select a film (from a list of films provided by the instructor) and write an essay of 1000 – 1500 words from a list of topics TBA.

Due April 2

EVALUATION

Grade evaluation will be based on the five (5) assignments as outlined above, plus the LAB and Class Participation.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in class exercises and class demonstrations, make a contribution to the script analysis sessions and contribute to the set-up and breakdown of equipment in class. Students are also expected to spend a reasonable amount of time outside of class on pre-production for their film shoots. Class Participation is worth 5% of your final grade and is graded on attendance, attitude and participation in class and labs.

MARK BREAKDOWN

Script Outline (Due October 23).....	10%
Final Draft script (Due January 8)	10%
Class presentation (Presented January 8 and 15).....	10%
Major Film Project (Due March 19)	25%
Essay assignment (Due April 2).....	20%
Labs (4 X 5%).....	20%
Class Participation.....	5%
Total	100%

There Is No Final Exam.

Penalty for Late Assignments: Late assignments will be marked down at the rate of 1% per calendar day after the due date.

Presentation of Assignments:

- All written assignments must be submitted **TYPED**, on standard 8½" X 11" paper, with one staple in the top left corner. No binders or fancy folders of any kind please.
- Written assignments must be double-spaced and single-sided. All written assignments must be handed in; assignments submitted by e-mail will not be accepted.

CONVERSION SCALE

For the calculation of the final grade the following conversion table will be used:

A+	90 – 100%	GPA	4.5	C+	65 – 69.9%	GPA	2.5
A	85 – 89.9%	GPA	4.25	C	60 – 64.9%	GPA	2.0
A-	80 – 84.9%	GPA	4.0	D	50 – 59.9%	GPA	1.0
B+	75 – 79.9%	GPA	3.5	F	below 50%	GPA	0
B	70 – 74.9%	GPA	3.0				

Work not submitted will be graded as 0%.

IMPORTANT NOTE: READ THIS! All computer hard drives will be wiped clean as of APRIL 28/14. Make sure you are finished all your projects and have saved all of your files by this date. Hard Drives may also be wiped in January to make room for 2nd term projects.

NOTE: Cellular phones **MUST BE TURNED OFF** during classes, both in the lecture room AND in the editing room. Students discovered talking on their cell phones during class time will be asked to leave the class. Ringing cell phones will be confiscated for the duration of the class.

COSTS

This is a practical hands-on course in filmmaking utilizing video and film equipment and students should take note of certain costs involved.

Students are required to buy the DV tapes they will be using for their projects. At a cost of approximately \$30.00 for each 120-minute tape, you may require 2-3 tapes, depending on the length of your projects.

There is a \$50.00 non-refundable Technology Fee to help defray the costs of regular equipment maintenance. You paid this fee with your tuition.

In addition to the non-refundable Technology Fee, students are required to pay a \$200 Damage Deposit for this class. In return, we will loan you our equipment for use on class projects. If you lose or damage equipment while it is in your care, the damage deposit will be applied to costs of repair or replacement,

but note: you are responsible for the total value of the loss even if it is more than this deposit. Any unused portion of your Damage Deposit will be returned to you, usually by the end of June.

The deadline for payment of the Damage Deposit is **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2013. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS.** If you fail to pay in full by the deadline, a "hold" will be placed on your student file and you will not be permitted to sign out or use any equipment. In order to make payment, take the "Damage Deposit Ticket" handed out in class to Student Central by the deadline. Once you have paid, **bring your receipt to Patty Hawkins in Room 3T03.** You will be required to complete an *Equipment Loan Damage Deposit Agreement* which you must show to the Equipment Manager the first time you attempt to sign out equipment.

(NB: if you are taking more than one course requiring a damage deposit, you only pay the Damage Deposit once per academic year.)

Attendance and Class Participation: Attendance will be taken at each class and absenteeism will affect your grade. Also, students are expected to participate in class discussion.

Class etiquette: Be on time. It is very disruptive to the rest of the class if people are wandering in late, especially if films are being screened or workshops are being conducted.

"THE REAL THING" LECTURE SERIES

The Department of Theatre and Film is presenting a series of six lectures which will be held on Wednesdays during the free period (12:30-13:20) in Theatre 1T15. Please note the dates in your diary **NOW:** Sept 18, Oct 23, Nov 13, Jan 15, Feb 12, Mar 12. This series will feature speakers from a range of areas in the performing arts: technical, performance, design, management, film, directing, playwriting, etc. These speakers will specifically address issues related to "the business of the business."

Attendance for potential Theatre Honours/majors and for Film majors is optional but highly recommended.

ORIENTATION ASSEMBLY

Each year in September we hold an *Orientation Assembly* to introduce our new students to faculty and other students; to provide information about the department, its various activities and those of its professors; and to provide news about what's coming up. This year our *Orientation Assembly* will be held on **Wednesday, September 11, 2013, 12:30-13:20 in Theatre, 1T15. ATTENDANCE IS COMPULSORY** for all Majors and Honours students. Those considering Honours are strongly recommended to attend. All others are welcome and encouraged to attend.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with documented disabilities, temporary or chronic medical conditions, requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams (e.g., private space) or during lectures/laboratories (e.g., access to volunteer note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 786-9771 or email accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca to discuss appropriate options. Specific information about AS is available on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential.

BUILDING SECURITY

The Asper Centre for Theatre and Film (which houses the Department of Theatre and Film) is open from 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. weekdays. Students are permitted to be in the building between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. seven days per week (except statutory holidays when the University is closed) **BUT PLEASE NOTE:** outside of regular building hours, it is **MANDATORY** that everyone in the building **EITHER** carry an access card **OR** have a booking confirmation form in their possession (hard copy or electronic). **ALL**

EVENING STUDENTS in the building for classes MUST have an access card. If a Security Guard checks and you do not have proper accreditation, **you may be evicted.**

These rules are in place to protect our students and our equipment; please respect them.

ELECTRONIC COURSE OUTLINE ADDENDA

Students must check our website at <http://theatre.uwinnipeg.ca/tbooking.htm> and read the menu items called *Access Card/Building Use Policy* **AND** *Room Booking Instructions*. The link to the electronic *Online Room Booking Form* is also found at this location. Please read and note all instructions carefully.

GENERAL NOTES

This course outline should be considered a guideline only. Time constraints and other unforeseen factors may require that some topics be omitted or covered in less detail than indicated.

Archival records such as videotapes, sound recordings, and photographs may be made or taken during class or lab times. The University uses such materials primarily for archival, promotional, and teaching purposes. Promotional use may include display at open houses or conferences, or use in advertising, publicity, or brochures. In reading and accepting the terms in this course outline, students acknowledge consent for such use by the University. Should a student not wish to convey such consent, s/he should withdraw from this course immediately.

The University of Winnipeg promotes a scent-free environment. Please be respectful of the needs of fellow classmates and the instructor by avoiding the use of scented products while attending lectures. Exposure to perfumes and other scented products (such as lotion) can trigger serious health reactions in persons with asthma, allergies, migraines, or chemical sensitivities.

Cellular phones **MUST** be turned off during classes and examinations; texting is **NOT** permitted in class.

Any student attending a test or final examination may be required to present proof of identity; photo identification is preferred.

It is the student's responsibility to retain a photocopy or computer disk copy of **ALL** assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.

Students are strongly advised to read the section of the *University of Winnipeg Calendar* (found on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action/pdfs/calendar/RegulationsandPolicies.pdf>) for information on Registration, Grading, Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2014 is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses which begin in September 2013 and end in April 2014 (2013/14 Fall/Winter Term).

STUDENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

Theatre is a communal art form in which a number of interdependent artists and crafts people co-operate to create a work of art. This fact is necessarily transferred to the learning situation, and is reflected in many of the Department's courses. Consequently, it is the Department's policy that students are required to: complete homework such as reading, line-learning, script analysis, prop lists, design drawings, etc.; attend classes; attend rehearsals both within and outside of class times; and, in short, to exhibit commitment towards the inevitably shared endeavours of our field of study.

Any student failing to fulfil these requirements is harmful to the progress of dedicated students and may, after due warning, be asked to withdraw from any individual Departmental course.

COURSE CONTENT NOTEAll Theatre and Film Classes

Dramatic Literature depicts a wide variety of human action, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. The Department of Theatre and Film will not undertake to censor the subject matter of dramatic works.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of content and style in drama/film are urged to discuss these concerns with the course instructor.

Performance-Related Classes

Much of an actor's work is based upon actual experiences of life which become translated into fictional circumstances. Because of this, the teaching of acting may involve encouraging the student to examine personal and even intimate areas of life to help him or her access life experiences appropriate to the demands of the work.

Dramatic literature depicts a wide range of human actions, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. Acting students must learn to simulate life truthfully in interaction with other students in the safety of the acting class and the rehearsal hall through exercises, discussions, and directions which address rather than avoid truthful, particularized, personalized action.

Performance classes often require strenuous physical activity. Classes may also involve physical interaction between students as part of class exercises or character development and occasional physical contact by instructors for purposes such as the demonstration of a technique or to make a posture correction. Students are responsible for wearing clothing appropriate to these activities.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of actions and subject matter involved in drama are urged to discuss these concerns with their course instructor.