THFM-2311-001

FILM COMEDY

Fall/Winter: 2021/2022 Instructor: John Kozak

Classes every Wednesday: 14:30-17:15 Office: Room 3T11 On campus Phone: 786-9951

Room 0T10 e-mail: j.kozak@uwinnipeg.ca

Office Hours: Tuesday - 13:00-14:00 or conducted via Zoom by appointment

All classes and labs are on-campus/in-person

Announcements will be posted on the class Nexus site.

The best way to contact me is by email at j.kozak@uwinnipeg.ca I will check my email daily and respond within 24 hours.

Please note: Do not contact me through Nexus Mail. I will not be using it.

I may occasionally send announcements through your University of Winnipeg Webmail address. Check your U of W webmail address regularly.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will look at film comedy, from the pioneering silent film comedies of Max Linder and John Bunny to the comedies of Seth Rogen and Edgar Wright 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.

LABS

There will be 2 Lab assignments

Students will form groups and shoot a series of short scenes highlighting the implementation of two different comedic strategies: 1). Suspense (Tension and Release) and 2). Surprise (Concealment of Information).

Each Lab is worth 10% of your final grade

EVALUATION

Grade evaluation will be based on the four (4) assignments as outlined below, plus the 2 Labs and Class Participation.

Class Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in class exercises and class demonstrations and contribute to the set-up and breakdown of equipment in class.

Your contributions to the script outline analysis sessions are an important aspect of your participation grade.

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 10% of your final grade and is graded on attendance, attitude and participation in class and labs.

Mark Breakdown

Script Outline (Due October 27)	%
Final Draft script (Due January 12)109	
Major Film Project (Due March 23)309	
Essay assignment (Due April 13)	
Labs (2 X 10%)	
Class Participation	

There Is No Final Exam

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

<u>Presentation of Assignments:</u> All written assignments must be handed in <u>unless otherwise stipulated</u>. All written assignments must be submitted typed, on standard 8½ X 11 paper, with 1 staple in the top left corner. No binders or folders of any kind please. Written assignments must be double-spaced and single-sided. <u>Number the pages.</u>

CONVERSION SCALE

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

Work not submitted will be graded as 0.

Voluntary withdrawal date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022

TEXTS

No Required Text

Recommended - Film Comedy by Geoff King

FILM EQUIPMENT ORIENTATION, COSTS AND REQUIREMENTS

IMPORTANT NOTE: STUDENTS MUST PROVIDE THEIR OWN EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE. All Film Editing computers are now equipped with Deep-Freeze technology, meaning any information not saved to your personal hard drive will be unrecoverable. ALL YOUR FILES MUST BE SAVED TO YOUR HARD DRIVE ONLY, NOT THE DESKTOP (computer file folders). Students will be instructed on the correct software settings to ensure that work is saved onto their hard drive.

COSTS

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

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 refundable Damage Deposit for this class. The Damage Deposit is to allow students to borrow department equipment, use our Film Lab including hardware and software, and use of studio and building spaces (when available) for film shoots. If you lose or damage equipment while it is in your care, or damage software/hardware in the film lab, or incur damages to a space, the Damage Deposit will be applied to the 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 will be confirmed shortly, and will be set for the end of September. If you fail to pay in full you will not be permitted to sign out or use any equipment or book space, including time in the editing lab, at the ACTF.

Instructions on the Damage Deposit payment process and deadline will be distributed in the first week of classes.

Once you have paid, send proof of payment to Melinda Tallin at m.tallin@uwinnipeg.ca, following which:

- You will be required to complete and sign an electronic *Equipment Loan Damage Deposit Agreement*.
- Keep a copy of the Agreement as you must present it (electronically or in print form) 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 during the Fall/Winter term.)

MANDATORY FILM EQUIPMENT ORIENTATION SESSIONS

The Department of Theatre and Film will hold two scheduled Equipment Orientation Sessions in September (dates and method of delivery to be announced).

ATTENDANCE IS COMPULSORY for students enrolled in THFM-2310 Filmmaking I (both sections).

It is also compulsory for students in THFM-2311 Film Comedy who have not taken THFM-2310 in the past.

Failure to attend one of these sessions will result in:

- your being prohibited from borrowing equipment (without which you cannot pass your course);
- an automatic deduction of \$25 from your Damage Deposit; and
- a required separate meeting with our Equipment Manager.

Students in THFM-3312 Sound Editing and THFM-3310 Film II are encouraged to attend particularly if they have not attended before, or as a refresher.

STUDENT EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Students MUST provide their own hard drives for project storage and editing. The recommended
 minimum drive is a 1TB USB2 7200RPM drive. Thunderbolt and USB A and C drives are supported.
 Drives must be formatted for Mac computers.
- We also recommend you have an additional hard drive to back up all of your media files and work.
- STUDENTS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO OWN A MAC PERSONAL COMPUTER. Instructors will provide information on working on files between Mac and PC based computers.
- Students should also have a flash drive (also formatted for Mac computers) available for every inperson class/lab to copy assignments and media, and to hand in film work. Please note, they are very unstable storage devices and are not to be used in place of a hard drive.
- Students are required to provide their own media cards on which to record their video assignments. It is advised to bring them to every in-person class/lab. Recommended is a Class 10 16 gig card.
- When possible, students will be expected to work on the Media Lab computers (0T14) on the Applebased editing software. CLEANING ORIENTATION WILL BE PROVIDED AND STRICT HEALTH-SAFETY PROTOCOLS WILL BE FOLLOWED.
- Acceptable editing software includes Adobe Premiere, Apple's Final Cut Pro 7 and Final Cut X, DaVinci Resolve, AVID, iMovie or Windows Movie Maker. Consult your instructor regarding any other editing software.
- Students are required to provide their own headphones.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

FIRST TERM

September 8 to 15 - Comic modes

September 22 - Comedy and narrative & the elements of character

September 29 - Cinematic techniques in comedy

October 6 - Lab 1 - Suspense

October 10 - 16 - READING WEEK

October 20 - Complete Lab 1 and review

1st Assignment: Script Outline

Write a 3 to 4 page Outline for a 5 to 10 minute comedy film.

Submit by email as a PDF

Each student will present their outline in class on November 17/November 24 for analysis and discussion. This will be the outline for the film which students will shoot in second term.

Due October 27

October 27 - Lab 2 - Surprise

November 3 - Complete Lab 2 and review

November 10 – Clash of context & verbal comedy

November 17 - In-class script outline review

November 24 - In-class script outline review

December 1 - Screenplay format

2nd Assignment: Final Draft Script

Students will write an 8 to 10 page script, based on their assignment # 1 outline, to be used for their final film assignment.

Submit by email as a PDF

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/or surprise. Students will also be graded on correct screenplay format.

Due January12

SECOND TERM

January 12 to March 30 – The History of Comedy (Tentative Schedule)

January 12 – Max Linder to Harry Langdon

January 19 - Charlie Chaplin & Buster Keaton

January 26 – Marx Brothers, W.C. Fields & the Three Stooges

February 2 - Comedy in the 1940s - Abbott & Costello & Preston Sturges

February 9 – Jerry Lewis

February 16 - Comedy in the 1960s - Blake Edwards & Billy Wilder

February 16, 2022 - Voluntary withdrawal date

February 20-26 – READING WEEK

March 2 - Comedy in the 1970s - Mel Brooks & Woody Allen

March 9 - In-class editing on film projects

March 16 - In-class editing on film projects

March 23 – Comedy in the 1990s March 30 – Contemporary comedy April 6 – Screening of class film projects

3rd assignment: Film Project

Shoot a short 5 - 10 minute comedy film. Detailed assignment parameters TBA Delivery Format TBA Due March 23

4th assignment: Essay

Students will write an essay of approximately 1000 - 1500 words (4 – 6 pages double-spaced). Topics and detailed assignment parameters TBA

Due: April 13

STUDENT PARTICIPATION POLICY & COURSE CONTENT

Theatre & Film are communal art forms in which a number of interdependent artists and crafts people cooperate 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, meetings or shoots both within and outside of class times; and, in short, 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 NOTE

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.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Human Rights and Diversity

All students are encouraged to visit the University's Human Rights and Diversity website (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/index.html) to familiarize yourself about your rights, the University's policies, and resources in place to support you. This site includes links to the University's Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/sexual-violence-policy-and-procedures.html), as well as resources for getting and providing support and clear steps for disclosing or reporting sexual violence.

Sexual Violence Resources on Campus

From the UW Human Rights & Diversity website:

The University takes all disclosures and reports of sexual violence seriously; survivors of all backgrounds and experiences will be treated with dignity, respect, and care. If you have experienced sexual violence, there are trained staff to help you in whatever way suits you best."

Disclosing is telling a member of the UW Community that you have experienced sexual violence. This could be someone you trust or feel comfortable with, like a professor, coach, another staff person, or a member of the Sexual Violence Response Team (**SVRT**). A disclosure can be made in order to receive support, accommodation, or to be connected to other resources. The Sexual Violence Response Team (**SVRT**) is a small team of specially trained, well-situated staff that coordinates and organizes services for survivors in a confidential manner. For example, if you personally do not feel comfortable talking to your professors about extensions or deferring work, they would be able to arrange changes for you without telling the professor why you need accommodation.

<u>Contact SVRT by phone at 204-230-6660.</u> You can find more information on disclosing here. (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/sexual-violence/support/index.html)

Reporting is making a statement to the **Human Rights & Diversity Officer (HRDO)** with the intention of seeking remedy, sanction, or consequences through the university. Once a report is made, the **HRDO** will review your report and discuss your options. Your options could include an investigation process, or informal resolution (if you wish to resolve it without an investigation). The **HRDO** can still connect you with support, accommodation, or external organizations while the investigation is taking place.

<u>You can contact the HRDO by phone at 204-988-7508</u> or by email at hrdo@uwinnipeg.ca
You can report online here » (https://uwinnipeg.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV 40Ni2EP1gcXjyBv)

PUBLIC HEALTH COVID CONSIDERATIONS

In the current changing health situation, the schedule and content of the course may be subject to change on short notice. Every effort will be made to inform students of these changes, to deliver the course content in the best way possible under the circumstances, and to evaluate students fairly.

HEALTH AND ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Life happens to everyone. If you are experiencing a crisis in your life, or if you have a physical or mental health issue, communicate with your Professor or Accessibility Services – let us know so we can provide support or direct you to those who can. The earlier we know, the earlier we can discuss what resources might be available. Students with documented disabilities, or temporary or chronic medical conditions requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams/presentations (e.g., private space or more time) or during lectures/labs (e.g., note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 204-786-9771 or accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca to discuss appropriate options. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential. If you are registered with Accessibility Services, do not assume that Accessibility Services (AS) has informed your instructor that you have registered with them. Please see http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility. If you do not register with AS, you cannot be granted special consideration (e.g. extra time to write exams/tests, attendance issues because of physical or mental health conditions, etc.).

The University of Winnipeg promotes a scent-free environment. Please be respectful of the needs of your fellow classmates and your instructor by avoiding the use of scented products while attending on-campus

lectures and labs. Exposure to perfumes and other **scented products (such as lotion)** can trigger serious health reactions in persons with asthma, allergies, migraines or chemical sensitivities. We are asking for your cooperation to create a scent-free environment **on campus** by students, faculty and staff.

"THE REAL THING" LECTURE SERIES

During the FW terms, the Department of Theatre and Film presents a series of lectures held on Wednesdays during the free period (12:30-13:20). This series will feature speakers from a range of areas in the performing arts: technical, performance, design, management, film, directing, playwriting, etc. and are open to all students. The speakers will specifically address issues related to "the business of the business."

Pending health guidelines, lectures are planned to be in-person in the Theatre on the following dates:

October 6, 2021 November 10, 2021 January 19, 2022 March 2, 2022

Guests will be confirmed shortly.

MANDATORY ATTENDANCE FOR HONOURS STUDENTS: Beginning in January, attendance at <u>EVERY</u> lecture is mandatory for ALL Honours students in Theatre (that is, anyone taking 4000-level courses in any area), as well as students in THFM-3110 Screen Acting, THFM-3201 Styles in Design, THFM-3801 Production II, and THFM-3920 Musical Theatre.

All students are encouraged to attend these fun and informative lectures. Please see our department website in the Fall for information.

ORIENTATION ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 at 12:30 pm we will hold an *Orientation Assembly* to welcome students to the new term; introduce our new students to faculty and other students; provide information about the department, its various activities and those of its professors; and deliver news about what's coming up.

ALL STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED AND WELCOME TO ATTEND! Please see our department website for information.

TAFSA

All students enrolled in at least one theatre or film class are automatically members of TAFSA, the Theatre and Film Students' Association, which plans a number of exciting activities each academic year. Activities organized by TAFSA include regular **Performance Jams, Department parties** and **Socials** as well as **DioFest** (a new play festival featuring student written and produced plays), and **24/7** (an event in which students move into our building and several plays are written, rehearsed, produced, and presented – all in a period of 24 hours!).

Please join TAFSA to find out more at their meetings, every second Monday from 12:30-13:20 pm. This is a great opportunity for students to connect with other like-minded people and a way to get involved in the department events. Visit the TFSA Instagram account at **@tafsauw**.

BUILDING SECURITY

To safeguard the health of the UWinnipeg community — and support public health efforts — during the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the UW campus is closed to the public until further notice. Students, Faculty and Staff must use specific access points to buildings and provide identification upon entry.

Information about access for students can be found at https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/covid-19/on-campus-learning-faq.html.

NOTE: It is <u>MANDATORY</u> that anyone entering the building and attending classes, labs or rehearsals in the building carry an ID card/student card to verify their vaccination status and that they are allowed to be on campus. If a Security Guard checks and you do not have proper accreditation, <u>you will be evicted</u>.

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

SECURITY PHONE (General, non-emergency, Safe Walk and Safe Ride): 204-786-9272 SECURITY EMERGENCY NUMBER: 204-786-6666

The Asper Centre for Theatre and Film is equipped with an emergency-only phone to contact Security immediately in the main lobby by the House Management Office. This can be used in an emergency situation to directly connect with the UW Security Services.

Students are encouraged to visit the UW Security Services webpage at https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/security/index.html for complete information about campus security and emergency procedures.

RECORDING ON-LINE CLASSES

The instructor of an on-line class may choose to record a zoom or video class if there are online connectivity issues, absences, or to post to Nexus for later review.

If a lecture is recorded, students will be given notice (via the course outline or on a case-by-case basis) that their personal information may be captured; informed of how long the recording will be retained; and whether the recording will be used for evaluation of any kind. Students will also be given the option to turn off their cameras/microphones and use pseudonyms to remain anonymous (except where class participation is required).

Students with concerns or who wish to seek alternate arrangements may discuss the matter with the instructor.

Access to recordings will be limited to the academic staff, students, and others with a legitimate need. Recordings containing student personal information will not be posted publicly, but only on UW-approved servers.

No student is allowed to disseminate recordings outside of the class or post recordings publicly. Access to the recordings will be limited to the instructor and the students.

ELECTRONIC COURSE OUTLINE ADDENDA

Department Website: https://theatre.uwinnipeg.ca or https://film.uwinnipeg.ca

Please refer to the website for department information, but particularly regarding:

Fire and Safety Information for ACTF: Students must check our website and review the *Fire Safety Instructions in the Asper Centre for Theatre* and *Film* and *Access Card/Building Use Policy* at https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/theatre-film/student-resources/loves-labours-lost-production-schedule.html.

Room Bookings for Class Assignment Work: We expect students will be allowed to book rehearsal room space FOR CLASS-RELATED WORK ONLY. Please see our website links to *Room Booking Instructions* and electronic *Online Room Booking Form* found on our department website at https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/theatre-film/rentals/access-card-and-building-use-policy.html. Please read and note all instructions carefully. Room booking availability is subject to change according to public health and university policies.

GENERAL NOTES

- Students can find answers to frequently asked questions related to the University's Covid-19
 policies for the 2021-22 year here: https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/covid-19/index.html
- Students should check their UWinnipeg e-mail addresses daily as this is the most direct way
 instructors and the University will contact students, particularly during the current environment of
 quickly-changing circumstances.
- 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, they should withdraw from this course immediately.
- Unless necessary for accessing class, cellular phones should 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 <u>ALL</u> assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.

- When it is necessary to cancel a class due to exceptional circumstances, instructors will make every effort to inform students via UWinnipeg webmail (and/or using the preferred form of communication, as designated by the instructor), as well as the Departmental Assistant and Chair/Dean. Students are reminded that they have a responsibility to regularly check their UWinnipeg e-mail addresses to ensure timely receipt of correspondence from the university and/or their course instructors.
- Students may choose not to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religion, but they must notify their instructors at least two weeks in advance. Instructors will then provide opportunity for students to make up work or examinations without penalty. A list of religious holidays can be found in the 2021-22 Undergraduate Academic Calendar, http://uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/important-notes.pdf

Regulations, Policies, and Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the "Regulations and Policies" found in the University Academic Calendar at:

https://uwinnipeg.ca/academics/calendar/docs/regulationsandpolicies.pdf. Particular attention should be given to subsections 8 ("Student Discipline"), 9 ("Senate Appeals"), and 10 ("Grade Appeals"). Please emphasize the importance of maintaining academic integrity, and to the potential consequences of engaging in plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct. Even "unintentional" described in the UW Library video tutorial "Avoiding plagiarism, (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvFdxRU9a8g) is a form of academic misconduct. Similarly, uploading essays and other assignments to essay vendor or trader sites (filesharing sites that are known providers of essays for use by others who submit them to instructors as their own work) is a form of misconduct, as it involves "aiding and abetting" plagiarism. More detailed information can be found here: Procedures: https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-Academic Misconduct Policy and analysis/docs/policies/academic-misconduct-policy.pdf and https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutionalanalysis/docs/policies/academic-misconduct-procedures.pdf.

Respectful Learning Environment

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner on campus and in the learning environment irrespective of platform being used. Behaviour, communication, or acts that are inconsistent with a number of UW policies (e.g. Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/respect/respect-policy.html, Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/policies/acceptable-use-of-information-

<u>technology-policy.pdf</u>) could be considered "non-academic" misconduct. More detailed information can be found here: Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures:

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/student-non-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf and https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/student-non-academic-misconduct-procedures.pdf.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

Course materials are the property of the instructor who developed them. Examples of such materials are course outlines, assignment descriptions, lecture notes, test questions, and presentation slides—irrespective of format. Students who upload these materials to filesharing sites, or in any other way share these materials with others outside the class without prior permission of the instructor/presenter, are in violation of copyright law and University policy. Students must also seek prior permission of the instructor/presenter before, for example, photographing, recording, or taking screenshots of slides,

presentations, lectures, and notes on the board. Students found to be in violation of an instructor's intellectual property rights could face serious consequences pursuant to the Academic Misconduct or Non-Academic Misconduct Policy; such consequences could possibly involve legal sanction under the Copyright Policy (https://copyright.uwinnipeg.ca/docs/copyright policy 2017.pdf).

Research Ethics

Students conducting research interviews, focus groups, surveys, or any other method of collecting data from any person, including a family member, must obtain research ethics approval before commencing data collection. Exceptions are research activities done in class as a learning exercise. For submission requirements and deadlines, see http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/research/human-ethics.html

Privacy

Students are reminded of their rights in relation to the collecting of personal data by the University (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/privacy/admissions-privacy-notice.html), especially if Zoom is being used for remote teaching (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/privacy/zoom-test-and-exam-proctoring.html) and testing/proctoring (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/privacy/zoom-test-and-exam-proctoring.html).

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL DATES

The voluntary withdrawal dates for each term, without academic penalty, are:

- FALL TERM COURSES: November 16, 2021 for Fall courses which begin in September 2021 and end in December 2021
- FALL/WINTER TERM COURSES: February 16, 2022 for Fall/Winter courses which begin in September 2021 and end in April 2022
- WINTER TERM COURSES: March 16, 2022 for Winter courses which begin in January 2022 and end in April 2022
 - Students are encouraged to speak to the Instructor before withdrawing to explore other options.

Please note that withdrawing before the VW date does not necessarily result in a fee refund.