GENERAL STUDIES COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM  
(ONE COURSE PER FORM)

1.) DATE: 12/27/2011  
2.) COMMUNITY COLLEGE: Maricopa Co. Comm. College District

3.) COURSE PROPOSED:  Prefix: HUM  Number: 215  Title: Film Comedy  Credits: 3  
   CROSS LISTED WITH: Prefix:   Number: ; Prefix:   Number: ; Prefix:   Number: ;
   Prefix:   Number: ; Prefix:   Number: ; Prefix:   Number: ;

4.) COMMUNITY COLLEGE INITIATOR: DR. BOB BARON  PHONE: 480-461-7611  
   FAX: 480-461-7644

ELIGIBILITY: Courses must have a current Course Equivalency Guide (CEG) evaluation. Courses evaluated as NT (non-transferable are not eligible for the General Studies Program.

MANDATORY REVIEW:

☐ The above specified course is undergoing Mandatory Review for the following Core or Awareness Area (only one area is permitted; if a course meets more than one Core or Awareness Area, please submit a separate Mandatory Review Cover Form for each Area).

POLICY: The General Studies Council (GSC-T) Policies and Procedures requires the review of previously approved community college courses every five years, to verify that they continue to meet the requirements of Core or Awareness Areas already assigned to these courses. This review is also necessary as the General Studies program evolves.

AREA(S) PROPOSED COURSE WILL SERVE: A course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. Although a course may satisfy a core area requirement and an awareness area requirement concurrently, a course may not be used to satisfy requirements in two core or awareness areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirements and the major program of study.

5.) PLEASE SELECT EITHER A CORE AREA OR AN AWARENESS AREA:  
   Core Areas: Humanities and Fine Arts (HU)  Awareness Areas: Select awareness area...

6.) On a separate sheet, please provide a description of how the course meets the specific criteria in the area for which the course is being proposed.

7.) DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED  
   ☒ Course Description  
   ☒ Course Syllabus  
   ☒ Criteria Checklist for the area  
   ☒ Table of Contents from the textbook required and/or list or required readings/books  
   ☒ Description of how course meets criteria as stated in item 6.

8.) THIS COURSE CURRENTLY TRANSFERS TO ASU AS:  
   ☒ DEC/ENGprefix  
   ☐ Elective

Current General Studies designation(s): None

Effective date: SUMMER 2012  
Course Equivalency Guide

Is this a multi-section course? ☒ yes ☐ no

Is it governed by a common syllabus? ☒ yes ☐ no

Chair/Director: JANINE ADKINS  
11/27/2011  
Chair/Director Signature: Emailed approval to J. Ricker

AGSC Action: Date action taken: ☐ Approved ☐ Disapproved
Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

### ASU - [HU] CRITERIA

**HUMANITIES, FINE ARTS AND DESIGN [HU]** courses must meet *either 1, 2, or 3 and at least one of the criteria under 4* in such a way as to make the satisfaction of these criteria a CENTRAL AND SUBSTANTIAL PORTION of the course content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Identify Documentation Submitted</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Syllabus; Course Description;</td>
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<td>Course Competencies; Course Outline; Textbook Table of Contents</td>
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1. Emphasize the study of values, of the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems, and/or aesthetic experience.

2. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of written, aural, or visual texts, and/or the historical development of textual traditions.

3. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of material objects, images and spaces, and/or their historical development.

4. In addition, to qualify for the Humanities, Fine Arts and Design designation a course must meet one or more of the following requirements:
   
   a. Concerns the development of human thought, including emphasis on the analysis of philosophical and/or religious systems of thought.
   
   b. Concerns aesthetic systems and values, literary and visual arts.
   
   c. Emphasizes aesthetic experience in the visual and performing arts, including music, dance, theater, and in the applied arts, including architecture and design.
   
   d. Deepen awareness of the analysis of literature and the development of literary traditions.

**THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (from checksheet)</th>
<th>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</th>
<th>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</th>
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</table>
| 1. Emphasizes the study of values, of the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems, and/or aesthetic experience. | Comedy may be defined as “that which evokes humour” and humor may be defined as “the tendency of a particular cognitive experience to evoke laughter.” But neither of these definitions is able to capture the rich meaning and heritage of the comic tradition. Humor is a key component of the heart of life, yet little in academia helps us to fully comprehend WHY we laugh and how important comedy is to the healthy functioning of our culture. This course traces the evolution of humor and theories of humor beginning with the ancient Greeks, through the Romans, and up through the current day. Analysis of humor often begins with Plato, continues with Aristotle, evolving over time into the ideas of Hobbes to Kant to Freud to Bergson, and finds an ultimate synthesis in the work of John Moreaall, who argued that “humor is best understood as itself a kind of aesthetic experience, equal in value at least to any other kind of aesthetic experience.” Comedy, and film comedy in particular, helps us to understand the morals and mores of a society as it encourages creativity, a common discourse of values, an exposure of hypocrisy, a tolerance of diversity, an examination of gender, and an understanding of the role of the individual in that society. Comedy is at the core of the free expression of ideas in a democracy. In fact, Behrman noted that “Dictators are terribly afraid of | SYLLABUS:  
Class Meetings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 27, 32, 35, 38, 43  
COURSE COMPETENCIES: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7  
COURSE OUTLINE: I, II, III, IV, V, VIII  
TEXTBOOKS:  
1. ANOTHER FINE MESS  
Introduction (pp. xi-xv)  
Chapter 2--Buster Keaton  
Chapter 3--Harold Lloyd  
Chapter 4--Laurel & Hardy  
Chapter 5--The Marx Brothers  
Chapter 7--Mae West  
Chapter 10--Cary Grant  
Chapter 11--Katherine Hepburn  
Chapter 26--The Coen Brothers  
Chapter 28--Ben Stiller  
Fatty Arbuckle (pp. 384-385)  
Ralph Bellamy (pp. 390-391)  
Bugs Bunny (pp. 393-394)  
Cheech and Chong (pp. 397-398)  
George Cukor (pp. 402-403)  
Cameron Diaz (pp. 403-404)  
Nora Ephron (pp. 407-408)  
Bobby & Peter Farrelly (pp. 408-409)  
Howard Hawks (pp. 412-413)  
Ben Hecht (pp. 413-414)  
Chuck Jones (pp. 422-423)  
Rosalind Russell (pp. 454-455)  
Mack Sennett (p. 458)  
2. FILM COMEDY TEXT  
Carr & Greeves—*Only Joking*  
Hitchens—*Why Women Aren’t* |
comedy and its laughter. For laughter is the most humanizing—as well as the most critical—agency in the world. The ability to laugh at its own pretensions and shortcomings is the true mark of a civilized nation,” an observation made even more relevant by the numerous restrictions on humorous expressions in many nations around the world.

2. Concerns the comprehension and interpretation/analysis of written, aural, or visual texts, and/or the historical development of textual traditions.

The course uses two textbooks that delve into two facets of film comedy: the history of humor in movies, including examinations of the works of writers, actors, directors, and producers; and the ruminations of theorists regarding why we laugh and about the effects of humor on individuals and societies. Students view over 200 excerpts from comic films, as well as a number of full-length films. They then analyze these films from a broad historical perspective, as well as through individual text critiques based on what they’ve learned in a sequence of class discussions about the essentials of film language. The course focuses in particular on

SYLLABUS:
Class Meetings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, 32, 35, 38, 43

COURSE COMPETENCIES:
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

COURSE OUTLINE:
II, III, IV, V, VI, VIII, IX, X

TEXTBOOKS:
1. ANOTHER FINE MESS
Introduction (pp. xi-xv)
Chapter 2—Buster Keaton
Chapter 3—Harold Lloyd
Chapter 4—Laurel & Hardy
Chapter 5—The Marx Brothers
Chapter 6—W. C. Fields
Chapter 7—Mae West

Funny
Jordan—The Anatomy of Cinematic Humor
King—Film Comedy
Klein—The Healing Power of Humor
MacHovee—Humor and Health
MacHovee—Summary of Basic Elements
Maslon & Kantor—Make 'Em Laugh-Cartoons
Maslon & Kantor—Make 'Em Laugh—"Vaudeville and Broadway"
Mast—The Comic Mind
Morreall—The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor
Sanders—Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History
Ziv—Theoretical Uses of Humor

FILMS:
Some Like it Hot (1959);
Excerpts from other Billy Wilder films
comic-film language. Horace Walpole noted, “Life is a tragedy to those who feel, a comedy to those who think.” In this statement, he was alluding to humor’s ability to distance us from so-called serious matters, which then allows us to gain proper perspective. We cry at whatever has power over us, but we laugh at whatever we have power over. Thinking changes our consciousness so that, over time, we come to see that what had power over us—what we cried about—is now something that we have power over—something to laugh about. Film comedy in particular helps us to understand this schism. As Chaplin opined, “Long shot for comedy, close-up for tragedy.” He meant, of course, that the camera’s placement determines whether an event is perceived as funny or sad. Since comedies so rarely use the intense close-ups so common in serious dramas, the audience is able to stand back far enough to laugh at a comic’s foibles. A close-up does not allow the audience to achieve a detached perspective but, instead, produces an empathic response to whatever dilemma the character faces. This language of film evolved from its beginning and is a key component in the understanding of film comedy.

Chapter 10—Cary Grant
Chapter 11—Katherine Hepburn
Chapter 13—Marilyn Monroe
Chapter 26—The Coen Brothers
Chapter 28—Ben Stiller
Fatty Arbuckle (pp. 384-385)
Ralph Bellamy (pp. 390-391)
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Rosalind Russell (pp. 454-455)
Mack Sennett (p. 458)
2. FILM COMEDY TEXT
Carr & Greeves—Only Joking
Hitchens—Why Women Aren’t Funny
Jordan—The Anatomy of Cinematic Humor
King—Film Comedy
Klein—The Healing Power of Humor
MacHovee—Humor and Health
MacHovee—Summary of Basic Elements
Maslon & Kantor—Make ’Em Laugh—Cartoons
Maslon & Kantor—Make ’Em Laugh—“Vaudeville and Broadway”
Mast—The Comic Mind
Morreall—The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor
Sanders—Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History
Ziv—Theoretical Uses of Humor

FILMS:
Some Like It Hot (1959); Excerpts from other Billy Wilder films

TESTS:
Test 2 (Class Meeting 29)
Students must demonstrate that they have a fundamental understanding of major theories of humor (and the theorists who developed them)—theories that
4.a. Concerns the development of human thought, including emphasis on the analysis of philosophical and/or religious systems of thought. This course traces the historical evolution of comedy beginning with ancient Greece and Rome, through its suppression by Church authorities during the Renaissance, up to its dominance in the modern media. Humor allows a more stoic and composed way of coping with events. As Leacock observed, comedy arises from “the incongruous contrast between the eager fret of our life and its final nothingness.” Frye noted that the essence of all storytelling is “the cycle of nature which rolls from birth to death and back again to rebirth.” While tragedy focuses on the first half of this natural cycle—for every birth, there must be a death—Poague argued that comedy focuses on the second half, from “death to rebirth decadence to renewal, winter to spring, darkness to a new dawn.” In other words, by critically examining the domain of humor as manifested in movies, students come to understand how this humanistic element enhances our appreciation of life’s meaning.

| SYLLABUS: |
| Class Meetings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 24, 27 |
| COURSE COMPETENCIES: |
| 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 |
| COURSE OUTLINE: |
| II, III, IV, V, VIII |
| TEXTBOOKS: |
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| Chapter 7—Mae West |
| Chapter 10—Cary Grant |
| Fatty Arbuckle (pp. 384-385) |
| Ralph Bellamy (pp. 390-391) |
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| Howard Hawks (pp. 412-413) |
| Ben Hecht (pp. 413-414) |
| Chuck Jones (pp. 422-423) |
| Rosalind Russell (pp. 454-455) |
| Mack Sennett (p. 458) |
| 2. FILM COMEDY TEXT Carr & Greeves—Only Joking Hitchens—Why Women Aren’t Funny |
| Jordan—The Anatomy of Cinematic Humor |
| King—Film Comedy |
| Klein—The Healing Power of Humor |
| MacHovess—Humor and Health |
| MacHovess—Summary of Basic Elements |
| Maslon & Kantor—Make ‘Em Laugh—Cartoons |
| Maslon & Kantor—Make ‘Em Laugh—“Vaudeville and Broadway” |
| Morrall—The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor |
| Sanders—Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History |
| Ziv—Theoretical Uses of Humor |
4.c. Emphasizes aesthetic experience in the visual and performing arts, including music, dance, theater, and in the applied arts, including architecture and design.

The course emphasizes the history of film comedy from its birth in a movie titled “The Sprinkler Sprinkled,” through the slapstick of Chaplin and Keaton, to the sound era of “screwball comedies,” to our current “anything-goes” era. Film comedy within each era is a commentary on the times that inspired it. As stated in the justification for Criterion 1, humor often involves an aesthetic experience equal in importance to those that occur within disciplines more traditionally identified with aesthetics. In comic films, these experiences depend importantly on the manner in which various techniques and the current technology are used to express and reveal meanings in ways unique to the art of film and film comedy.

| FILMS: |
| Some Like it Hot (1959); |
| Excerpts from other Billy Wilder films |

| TESTS: |
| Test 3 (Class Meeting 40) |
| Students must demonstrate that they have a fundamental understanding of how, over the past 100+ years, the zeitgeist of each era influenced the creators of comic films, especially with respect to the various “philosophies” espoused in their films. |

| SYLLABUS: |
| Class Meetings 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 32, 35, 38, 43 |

| COURSE COMPETENCIES: |
| 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 |

| COURSE OUTLINE: |
| VI, VII, VIII |

| TEXTBOOKS: |
| 1. ANOTHER FINE MESS |
| Introduction (pp. xi-xv) |
| Chapter 2--Buster Keaton |
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| King—*Film Comedy*  
| Klein—*The Healing Power of Humor*  
| MacHovee—*Humor and Health*  
| MacHovee—*Summary of Basic Elements*  
| Maslon & Kantor—*Make 'Em Laugh-Cartoons*  
| Maslon & Kantor—*Make 'Em Laugh—"Vaudeville and Broadway"*  
| Mast—*The Comic Mind*  
| Morreall—*The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*  
| Sanders—*Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History*  
| Ziv—*Theoretical Uses of Humor*  

**FILMS:**  
*Some Like it Hot* (1959)

**TESTS:**  
*Final Exam*  
Students write an essay in which they must synthesize what they have learned over the semester about the elements of film comedy, with the goal of communicating the critical importance of this genre to the lives of individuals, as well as to the functioning of society as a whole.
Official Course Description: MCCCD Approval: 11-23-2010

HUM215 2011 Spring - 9999  
LEC 3.0 Credit(s)  3.0 Period(s)  
3.0 Load Acad

Film Comedy

Explores the basics of humor in film by tracing its roots through a historical examination of a variety of arts, artists, and theorists. Focuses on films' unique contributions to the world of laughter. Investigates how comedy, and film comedy in particular, provides an essential and unifying force for culture and society.

Prerequisites: None.

Go to Competencies  Go to Outline

MCCCD Official Course Competencies:

HUM215 2011 Spring - 9999  Film Comedy

1. Define comedy in its various forms. (I, II, V, VI, VII, VIII)
2. Analyze the ways in which comedy works. (II, III, IV, VI, IX)
3. Evaluate how film comedy has been influenced by other media. (V)
4. Examine and synthesize theories that explain why people laugh. (II, III, IV, IX)
5. Describe how film has developed its own unique conventions. (VI, VII, VIII, IX)
6. Trace the evolution of film comedy. (VII, VIII, IX)
7. Explain the importance of comedy for the harmonious functioning of a society. (III, IV, V, VII, X)

Go to Description  Go to top of Competencies

MCCCD Official Course Outline:

HUM215 2011 Spring - 9999  Film Comedy

I. Definitions of Comedy
   A. Slapstick
   B. Screwball
   C. Pun
   D. Irony
   E. Wit
   F. Sarcasm
   G. Exaggeration
   H. Satire

II. Basic Tenets of Comedy
    A. Benign
    B. Incongruous
    C. Sudden

III. Theories of Comedy
A. Ludicrous perception
B. Superiority
C. Relief
D. Taboo
E. Absurdity
F. Intellectual

IV. Theorists of Comedy
   A. Superiority theorists: Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes
   B. Relief theorists: Sigmund Freud, Herbert Spencer
   C. Incongruity theorists: Immanuel Kant, Soren Kierkegaard

V. Historical Evolution of Comedy
   A. Greek
   B. Roman
   C. Renaissance
   D. Shakespearean
   E. Commedia dell'arte
   F. Comedy of manners
   G. Dadaist/Surrealist
   H. Vaudeville/Burlesque
   I. Radio
   J. Television

VI. Determination of a Film Comedy
   A. "Worthlessness" taken seriously
   B. Familiar hero
   C. One dimensional supporting players
   D. Subject matter
   E. Dialogue
   F. Artistic self-consciousness
   G. Use of cinematic tools

VII. Film Comedy History
   A. Silent era
      1. Slapstick
      2. Pratfalls
   B. Early sound era
      1. Screwball
      2. Battle of the sexes
   C. Developing sound era
      1. Conformist
      2. Problem pictures
   D. Modern Era
      1. Challenging societal mores
      2. End of the screen code
      3. Black comedy

VIII. Comic Film Structure
   A. Boy meets girl
B. Parody of conventions
C. Reduction ad absurdum
D. Investigation of a society or group
E. Central figure's journey
F. Riffing
G. Accomplishing the task
H. Discovering the error

IX. Film Comedy Technique and Terminology
A. Shot Selection
   1. Close-up
   2. Medium shot
   3. Long shot
B. Camera Movement
   1. Pan
   2. Tracking
   3. Crane
   4. Steadicam
C. Camera angles
   1. High angle
   2. Low angle
   3. Dutch angle
   4. Eye level
D. Editing
   1. Invisible
   2. Montage
   3. Jump cut
   4. Parallel
E. Photography
   1. Lighting
   2. Mise-en-scene
   3. Lenses
   4. Film stock

X. Film Comedy's Importance to a Humanistic Society
A. Harmony
B. Unification
C. Common discourse
D. Creativity
E. Exposure of hypocrisy
F. Defense and preservation of freedom
G. Physical and mental health
H. Critical examination of moral values
I. Male female relationships
J. Individual vs. society
K. Fantasy vs. reality
L. Identity clarification
HUM 215 traces the evolution of our understanding of humor from the earliest theories of Plato and Aristotle through Kant, Descartes, Bergson, Darwin, and Freud, among others, and seeks to analyze WHY we laugh. It observes the many forms of humor from slapstick to irony to satire to exaggeration, notes the influence of prior art forms on movies, then focuses on film as the rich repository of thousands of years of comedy. HUM 215 suggests that comedy is more than a simple chuckle – at times it can be serious business. At its core, it allows us to rise above difficult circumstances. Jewish prisoners who survived the concentration camps credited their survival to their ability to laugh and thereby unite with beleaguered comrades. In contrast we cry when we feel the world has power over us, and sometimes our recovery can be determined by our ability to laugh at what once caused tears. HUM 215 also posits that a free society needs a comic consciousness to maintain its freedom. As S. N. Behrman observes, "Dictators are terribly afraid of comedy and its laughter... The ability to laugh at its own pretensions and shortcomings is the true mark of the civilized nation," yet this seemingly harmless function is severely limited and even forbidden in totalitarian regimes. Because it explores the history of film comedy over the last one hundred years, HUM 215 critically examines how comedy is influenced by the mores of its time period. It demonstrates that laughter helps to expose hypocrisy and urges us to be more conscious of what's really important by satirizing and thus deriding what is not. In addition, it offers a philosophical outlook. Humor's contribution to our humanity, as L. W. Kline explains, "is to detach us from our world of good and evil, of loss and gain, and enable us to see it all in proper perspective." According to Walter Kerr, "comedy is tragedy's private diary," meaning that comedy is the more realistic of the two, dealing with a reality that tragedy cannot approach. Nathan Scott agrees that "our health and happiness are contingent upon our facing the fact that we are finite and therefore subject to all sorts of absurdities and interruptions and inconveniences and embarrassments and weaknesses. That is, we might say, the courage that the comic imagination requires of us." In medieval times, the King was the supreme power. However, every king had a "fool," a jester who was allowed free rein with his humor, who could "sneak in" ideas to the king who might laugh at them at first, but then often incorporate them into his own thinking. Similarly, film comedies like TOOTSIE, LIFE OF BRIAN, LA CAGE AUX FOLLES, HIS GIRL FRIDAY, DR. STRANGELOVE, ADAM'S RIB, HAROLD AND MAUDE, and PARENTHOOD may "sneak in" ideas to the public consciousness about gender relations, death, power structures, ideology, integrity, liberty, and in the title of a Monty Python film, THE MEANING OF LIFE, that, while laughed off at first, may begin to sink in later, thus exerting a much more lasting effect on the culture than so called "serious" films with their overtly "preachy" messages. The word "humor" derives from an ancient theory that that the human being was composed of four liquids or humors – blood (sanguine), yellow bile (choler), phlegm (phlegmatic), and black bile (melancholic) – and that a person who kept these four entities in harmony was considered well balanced or good humored. Ideally, students can apply the insights gained from HUM 215 to achieve more balanced and harmonious lives of their own, a noteworthy goal of a humanistic curriculum.
II. LIST OF FILMS SHOWN

Class Meetings 7-8
Modern Times (1936)
Excerpts from other Charlie Chaplin films

Class Meetings 14-15
His Girl Friday (1940)
Excerpts from other Howard Hawks films

Class Meetings 21-22
Adam’s Rib (1949)
Excerpts from other George Cukor films

Class Meetings 24-25
Some Like it Hot (1959)
Excerpts from other Billy Wilder films

Class Meetings 29-31
Raising Arizona (1987)
Excerpts from other Joel & Ethan Coen films

Class Meetings 33-34
Sleepless in Seattle (1993)
Excerpts from other Nora Ephron films

Class Meetings 36-37
There’s Something About Mary (1998)
Excerpts from other Bobby & Peter Farrelly films

Class Meetings 40-42
Pineapple Express (2008)
Excerpts from other David Gordon Green films
I. LIST OF READINGS

**TEXTBOOK 1: ANOTHER FINE MESS**
Introduction (pp. xi-xv)
Chapter 2--Buster Keaton
Chapter 3--Harold Lloyd
Chapter 4--Laurel & Hardy
Chapter 5--The Marx Brothers
Chapter 6--W. C. Fields
Chapter 7--Mae West
Chapter 10--Cary Grant
Chapter 11--Katherine Hepburn
Chapter 13--Marilyn Monroe
Chapter 26--The Coen Brothers
Chapter 28--Ben Stiller
Fatty Arbuckle (pp. 384-385)
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Ben Hecht (pp. 413-414)
Chuck Jones (pp. 422-423)
Rosalind Russell (pp. 454-455)
Mack Sennett (p. 458)

**TEXTBOOK 2: FILM COMEDY TEXT**
Carr & Greeves—*Only Joking*
Hitchens—*Why Women Aren’t Funny*
Jordan—*The Anatomy of Cinematic Humor*
King—*Film Comedy*
Klein—*The Healing Power of Humor*
MacHovee—*Humor and Health*
MacHovee—*Summary of Basic Elements*
Maslon & Kantor—*Make ’Em Laugh-Cartoons*
Maslon & Kantor—*Make ’Em Laugh—”Vaudeville and Broadway”*
Mast—*The Comic Mind*
Morreall—*The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*
Sanders—*Sudden Glory: Laughter as Subversive History*
Ziv—*Theoretical Uses of Humor*
1. M Aug 22  Introduction
   Discuss "Hollywood's Evolution" (an overview of film history as a foundation for the history of film comedy)

   Read for next class: FCT Morreall: "The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor"

2. W Aug 24  Discuss FCT Morreall: "The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor":
   Plato (humor as malice to be avoided) Aristotle (laughter as derision, incongruity, and expectation) Hobbes (sudden glory) Hartley (early synthesis of superiority, incongruity, and relief) Kant (strained expectations and humor as health ( Freud (psychic expenditure) Bergson (materialism and mechanism) Morreall (ultimate synthesis)

   Read for next class: AFM Introduction XI - XV; AFM 458 Sennett; FCT Maslon and Kantor - Make 'Em Laugh - "Vaudeville and Broadway"

3. F Aug 26  Introduction to Film Comedy History; Continue Morreall; Discuss AFM Introduction XI - XV; AFM 458 Sennett; FCT Maslon and Kantor - Make 'Em Laugh - "Vaudeville and Broadway"

   Read for next class: FCT Jordan - The Anatomy of Cinematic Humor

4. M Aug 29  Test 1 on "Hollywood's Evolution" - 15 points
Continue Morreall; Discuss FCT Jordan - "The Anatomy of Cinematic Humor":
ludicrous perception; the mask and silent comedy; benign humor; discrepancy between the way
things are and the way they should be; time and humor heals all; frustration and resolution;
sudden incongruity; superiority; cruelty of early humor; similarity and differences between
laughing and crying; economy of psychic expenditure; sex and violence; adult wish to be
children

5. W Aug 31  Historical Evolution of Comedy

6. F Sep 2  Continue Historical Evolution of Comedy

Introduction to Film Language
closeup / medium shot / long shot / panning / tracking / crane / steadicam / high angle / low angle
/dutch angle / eye level / editing / lighting / mise-en-scene / lenses / film stock

Read for next class: AFM 1-14 Chaplin

7. W Sep 7  MODERN TIMES (1936)
Director: Charles Chaplin
RINK, THE IMMIGRANT, I AM, EASY STREET, THE GREAT Dictator)

8. F Sep 9  MODERN TIMES

9. M Sep 12 Discuss MODERN TIMES; Discuss AFM 1-14 Chaplin

Read for next class: FCT MacHovec - "Summary of Basic Elements"; FCT Ziv "Theoretical
Uses of Humor"; AFM 15-26 Keaton; AFM 27-38 Lloyd; AFM 384-5 Arbuckle

10. W Sep 14 The Silent Comics: Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd

Discuss FCT MacHovec - "Summary of Basic Elements":
playful mood / pleasure / transformational / short-lived / fragile / universality / timeless

Discuss FCT Ziv "Theoretical Uses of Humor"
social taboos / correcting behavior / defense mechanism / self-disparagement / intellectual
freedom

AFM 15-26 Keaton; AFM 27-38 Lloyd; AFM 384-385 Fatty Arbuckle

11. F Sep 16 The Silent Comics

Read for next class AFM 39-50 Laurel and Hardy; FCT Mast "The Comic Mind"

12. M Sep 19 Laurel and Hardy

FCT Mast "The Comic Mind"
Comic plots: boy meets girl / parody / reductio ad absurdum / societal investigation / the hero's
journey / riffing / adventurous romance / discovery of error / worthlessness of worth / upholds
societal values or criticizes them / no preaching
Discuss AFM 39-50 Laurel and Hardy

Read for next class AFM 63-74 Fields

13. W Sep 21  W.C. Fields
   Discuss AFM 63-74 Fields

14. F Sep 23  HIS GIRL FRIDAY (1940)
   Director: Howard Hawks
   (SERGEANT YORK, TWENTIETH CENTURY, RED RIVER, SCARFACE, THE BIG
   SLEEP, TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT, BRINGING UP BABY, BALL OF FIRE, MONKEY
   BUSINESS, GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES, ONLY ANGELS HAVE WINGS)

15. M Sep 26  HIS GIRL FRIDAY
   Read for next class: AFM 454-455 Rosalind Russell; AFM 115-121 Cary Grant; AFM 412-413
   Howard Hawks; AFM 413-414 Ben Hecht; AFM 390-391 Ralph Bellamy

16. W Sep 28  Discuss HIS GIRL FRIDAY and AFM 454-455 Rosalind Russell; AFM 115-121 Cary Grant;
   AFM 412-413 Howard Hawks; AFM 413-414 Ben Hecht; AFM 390-391 Ralph Bellamy
   gender roles and screwball comedy

   Read for next class: AFM 75-86 Mae West; FCT Hitchens "Why Women Aren't Funny"; FCT
   Carr and Greeves "Only Joking"

17. F Sep 30  FCT Hitchens "Why Women Aren't Funny"
   satire / nature vs. nurture / stereotypes: women pretty, men funny / does childbearing influence
   perception of humor? / male female comedians

   FCT Carr and Greeves "Only Joking"
   does gender influence the way we tell and perceive jokes? / jokes as power / culture and humor /
   death of the joke / majority of comedians male / women regard humor as higher value in a mate /
   women and men laugh more at jokes told by men / laughter like orgasm / prejudice against
   women comedians

   Discuss AFM 75-86 Mae West;

18. M Oct 3   ROMANTIC COMEDY
   (the evolution of male - female comedy)
   Read for next class: AFM 51-62 Marx Brothers; AFM 393-394 Bugs Bunny; AFM 422-423
   Chuck Jones; FCT Klein "The Healing Power of Laughter"; FCT Maslon and Kantor - Make
   'Em Laugh - "Cartoons"; FCT MacHovec - "Humor and Health"

19. W Oct 5   Discuss AFM 51-62 Marx Brothers; AFM 393-394 Bugs Bunny; AFM 422-423 Chuck Jones

   Discuss FCT Klein "The Healing Power of Laughter"
   new perspective / power / coping mechanism / create humor / exaggeration / laugh at oneself

   Discuss FCT MacHovec "Humor and Health"
   Norman Cousins recovery / humor and health centuries ago / endorphins / internal jogging

   Discuss FCT Maslon and Kantor - Make 'Em Laugh - "Cartoons"
20. F Oct 7  ANIMATION

21 M Oct 10  ADAM'S RIB
Director: George Cukor
(MY FAIR LADY, THE PHILADELPHIA STORY, DINNER AT EIGHT, PAT AND MIKE,
GASLIGHT, A STAR IS BORN, BORN YESTERDAY, HOLIDAY, LET'S MAKE LOVE,
DAVID COPPERFIELD, CAMILLE, ROMEO AND JULIET, SYLVIA SCARLETT)

22. W Oct 12  ADAM'S RIB

Read for next class: AFM 127-134 Hepburn; AFM 402-403 Cukor

23. F Oct 14  Discuss ADAM'S RIB and AFM 127-134 Hepburn; AFM 402-403 Cukor

Read for next class: FCT Sanders "Sudden Glory"

24. M Oct 17  SOME LIKE IT HOT
Director: Billy Wilder
(THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH, WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION, LOVE IN THE
AFTERNOON, THE SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS, STALAG 17, DOUBLE INDEMNITY,
THE APARTMENT, THE LOST WEEKEND, SABRINA, SUNSET BOULEVARD)

Discuss FCT Sanders "Sudden Glory"
the fall / Hobbes / authorities threatened by humor / humorists jailed / Adam and Eve / Puritans /
Mary Poppins / heaven and hell - above and below - high and low comedy / medieval society /
Church suppression of humor / the devil and laughter / a sober Christ / Carnival liberation /
upper and lower class humor - heaven and hell

25. W Oct 19  SOME LIKE IT HOT
Read for next class: AFM 151-162 Monroe

26. F Oct 21  Discuss SOME LIKE IT HOT; AFM 151-162 Monroe; Read for next class: FCT King "Film
Comedy"

27. M Oct 24  Discuss FCT King "Film Comedy"
gross out comedy / the trickster - fool - jester / humor lower regions of the body / body out of
control / fluids / Carnival / balance between disgust and pleasure / radical or reactionary /
Animal House / 1968 rating change / return to childhood and escape adult responsibilities /
anything goes

28. W Oct 26  Review for Test on FILM COMEDY TEXT (Baron)

29. F Oct 28  Test 2 on FILM COMEDY TEXT (Baron) - 25 points

RAISING ARIZONA (1987)
Director: Joel Coen
(BLOOD SIMPLE, NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN, FARGO, THE BIG LEBOWSKI,
TRUE GRIT, A SERIOUS MAN, O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?)

30. M Oct 31  RAISING ARIZONA
31. W Nov 2  RAISING ARIZONA
   Read for next class: AFM 319-331 Coen Brothers

32. F Nov 4  Discuss RAISING ARIZONA and AFM 319-331 Coen Brothers

33. M Nov 7  SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE (1993)
   Director: Nora Ephron
   (YOU'VE GOT MAIL, JULIE AND JULIA, MICHAEL, BEWITCHED)

34. W Nov 9  SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE
   For next class: Read AFM 407-408 Ephron

35. M Nov 14  Discuss SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE and the "chick flick" and AFM 407-408 Ephron

   Directors: Bobby and Peter Farrelly
   (SHALLOW HAL, DUMB AND DUMBER, KINGPIN, FEVER PITCH, STUCK ON YOU,
   HALL PASS, THE THREE STOOGES)

37. F Nov 18  THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY
   Read for next class: AFM 408-409 Farrelly Brothers; AFM 345-356 Stiller; AFM 403-404 Diaz

38. M Nov 21  Discuss SOMETHING ABOUT MARY and AFM 408-409 Farrelly Brothers; AFM 345-356
   Stiller; AFM 403-404 Diaz

39. W Nov 23  Review of ANOTHER FINE MESS

40. M Nov 28  TEST 3 on ANOTHER FINE MESS - 30 points
   PINEAPPLE EXPRESS (2008)
   Director: David Gordon Green
   (GEORGE WASHINGTON, ALL THE REAL GIRLS, SNOW ANGELS, YOUR HIGHNESS
   THE SITTER))

41. W Nov 30  PINEAPPLE EXPRESS

42. F Dec 2  PINEAPPLE EXPRESS
   Read for next class: AFM 397-398 Cheech and Chong

43. M Dec 5  Discuss PINEAPPLE EXPRESS and AFM 397-398 Cheech and Chong; drug used encouraged?

44. W Dec 7  JEOPARDY EXTRA CREDIT QUIZ

45. F Dec 9  Class Review
WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 14       FINAL EXAM – 30 pts

GRADIENT:
Test 1 on Hollywood’s Evolution                      15           A           90-100
Test 2 on Film Comedy Text                          25           B           80-89
Test 3 on Another Fine Mess                         30           C           70-79
Final Exam                                          30           D           60-69
                                                100           F           Below 60

Textbooks: ANOTHER FINE MESS (AFM) by Saul Austerlitz
            FILM COMEDY TEXT (FCT) edited by Bob Baron

As stated in the MCC catalog, any form of academic dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism may subject the student involved to disciplinary action.

Please do not come late to class and do not leave early.

Please do not talk or distract other students in any way during the films. Students who disrupt the viewing of a movie may be dropped from the class.

PLEASE TURN OFF ALL PHONES. ONCE CLASS HAS STARTED, ALL PHONES MUST BE IN A BACKPACK OR PURSE OR POCKET AND SHOULD NOT BE SEEN IN CLASS. DO NOT LOOK AT YOUR PHONE SCREEN OR USE YOUR PHONE IN ANY WAY OR AT ANY TIME ONCE CLASS HAS BEGUN

Please read the assigned work BEFORE the class in which it is to be discussed.

Once a grade has been earned over the course of a full semester, that grade cannot be changed in the last week or once the class has concluded – one’s grade is measured by work done consistently over 45 classes, not just in the last week.
Because this is a class dealing with contemporary cinema, and these movies reflect the society in which we live, there will be times when the films will feature explicit language, sexual behavior, and violence.

If you will not be comfortable in this environment, please do not take this class.

The films chosen do not sensationalize or trivialize concerns about violence, sexism, and graphic language, but they may utilize these elements in trying to tell a story relevant to our times.
Students can raise their grades through active participation in class discussions.

Students are responsible for being aware of, and understanding, the college policies and information contained in this syllabus, the MCC college catalog, and the MCC student handbook. Students who need special accommodations should inform the instructor (MCC Disability Resources and Services can be reached at 461-7447). Students will be notified by the instructor of any changes in course requirements or policies.

FOR A LIST OF ALL THE FILM CLASSES TAUGHT AT MCC, GO TO

http://www.mesacc.edu/dept/d13/eng/film.html
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THE ANATOMY OF CINEMATIC HUMOR

Geoff King
FILM COMEDY

Allen Klein
THE HEALING POWER OF HUMOR

Frank J. MacHovec
HUMOR: THEORY, HISTORY, APPLICATION

Laurence Maslon and Michael Kantor
CARTOONS

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THE COMIC MIND

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF LAUGHTER AND HUMOR

Barry Sanders
SUDDEN GLORY: LAUGHTER AS SUBVERSIVE HISTORY

Avner Ziv
THEORETICAL USES OF HUMOR