Catalog Description: Examination of the varieties of screen comedy, from silent comedy to contemporary forms, with some attention to the history and theory of comic performance.

Course Objectives: After taking this course, the student will be able to:

- Describe major traditions, styles, and techniques in American screen comedy
- Apply theoretical concepts to understand comedy
- Create research projects applying concepts to specific examples of screen comedy

Required Course Texts:


Subscription to Hulu Plus for screenings.

Additional readings marked “PDF” available via Blackboard.

**ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

In-Class Attendance & Participation (10% of grade)

Journal (10% of grade) Response to readings and screenings due every week via Blackboard, one page double-spaced. 10 points each, 100 points maximum.

Midterm Exam: 20% An essay exam over key concepts addressed in the course readings, lectures, screenings, and discussions.

Final Exam: 20% An essay exam over key concepts addressed in the course readings, lectures, screenings, and discussions.

Individual Paper: 25% 6-8 page paper on TV Comedy. Details to come.

Group Presentation: 15% 15-20 minute presentation on a reading and screening.

The basic grade scale applies to translating your average to your course letter grade: A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F = 59 and under.
**Attendance Policy**

Attendance is mandatory. Two absences are acceptable, but any additional unexcused absences will cause a five-point deduction from your participation grade, and you may not make up any missed work. Excused absences require official documentation. Two “lates” (or leaving early) equal an absence.

**E-Communication Policy:**

- CONTACT ME THROUGH BLACKBOARD MESSAGES FOR THIS COURSE.
- I will respond to messages within 24 hours (usually sooner), except for Friday at 3 pm until Monday at 9 am.
- I will be happy to talk on the phone, instant message, Facetime etc with you during my office hours.
- I am also happy to meet with you in person during office hours or some other time arranged in advance!

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in an automatic zero on the assignment and further disciplinary action.

**Classroom/Professional behavior**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Dropping a Class**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to
drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

Academic Advising.

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Statement of Academic Continuity

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Grade Appeals

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.
Disabilities Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Students are expected to:

1. Take ownership of your education. It will not be handed to you. You must build it.
2. Silence and put away cell phones. Texting (including the reading of texts!) is not allowed in class. Your social life will survive until the break, I promise.
3. Come to class on-time. Do not get up and leave early.
4. Participate in class discussions. In addition to the enlightening lectures, our goal during each class will be to have a lively, informed discussion.
5. Be responsible for any information and materials missed when absent.
6. Complete readings and assignments as assigned. All assignments must be handed in on time; exceptions will be made only for extraordinary cases and official documentation is needed. Exams may not be rescheduled. Do not make travel plans that conflict with exams.
7. Proofread all work before turning it in. Really.
8. Seek help with writing if necessary. The Writing Center of TAMU-CC, located in GSSC 112, provides free help for students at any stage in the writing process. More information is available at the Center for Academic Student Achievement website, casa.tamucc.edu.
9. Properly cite sources. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form, and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and further disciplinary action. A useful guide to citing references in APA style is located at http://library.nmu.edu/guides/userguides/style_apa.htm.
10. Respect the privacy and opinions of fellow students. I expect students to participate in discussion, and I expect students to respect each other’s (hopefully well-informed) opinions. Grades and course performance are considered private information. Students are not to openly discuss their grades (good or bad) inside my classroom.
11. Meet with the instructor during office hours. I will not discuss individual student grades in the classroom. I will, however, be happy to discuss grades on papers, exams, course performance, etc. during office hours. I also do not allow the following topics to be openly discussed in the classroom: student opinions about other faculty, student opinions about other students, student grades in other classes.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings marked “CSR” are from the Comedy Studies Reader. Those marked “PDF” available via Blackboard.

WEEK 1: Introduction to Comedy Theories and Varieties of Ha!
8/28: Introduction to the class.

WEEK 2: The Carnivalesque
9/4: Read: CSR, Part 1: Introduction, Bakhtin, Eco
9/6: Read: CSR, Scepanski

WEEK 3: The Carnivalesque, continued.
9/11: Read: Gray, Jones & Thompson, “The State of Satire, the Satire of State”
9/13: Read: Thompson, “South Park as Carnivalesque Satire”

WEEK 4: Comedy Mechanics & Absurdity
9/18: Read: CSR, Part 2: Introduction, Bergson, Palmer
9/20: Read: CSR, Crafton

WEEK 5: Comedy Mechanics & Absurdity, continued.
9/25: Read: CSR, Elkins
9/27: Read: PDF, Sconce

WEEK 6: Psychoanalyzing Comedy
10/2: Read: CSR, Part 3: Introduction, Freud
10/4: Read: CSR, Owens

WEEK 7: Irony
10/11: Read: CSR, Sienkiewicz, Day

FRIDAY ONLINE: MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 8: Genre
10/16: Read: CSR, Part 5: Introduction, Neale and Krutnick
10/18: Read: CSR, Thompson, Fuller-Seeley

**WEEK 9:** The Sitcom

10/23: Read: PDF, Newcomb, Sandell,

10/25: Read: PDF, Thompson

**WEEK 10:** Race & Ethnicity

10/30: Read: CSR, Part 6: Introduction, Gray, Henderson

11/1: Read: PDF, Gates, Haggins

**WEEK 11:** Race & Ethnicity, continued.

11/6: Read: CSR, Park, Gabbadon & Chernin

11/8: Read: CSR, Thakore & Hussain

**WEEK 12:** Gender & Sexuality

11/13: Read: CSR, Part 7: Introduction, Rowe

11/15: Read: CSR, Mizejewski, Martin

**WEEK 13:** Nation & Globalization

11/20: CSR, Part 8, Introduction, Medhurst

11/22: THANKSGIVING BREAK

**WEEK 14:** Nation & Globalization, continued.

11/27: Read: CSR, Bore, Kumar

11/29: Read: PDF, Beeden & DeBruun

**PAPERS DUE-Monday**

**WEEK 15** THE END OF COMEDY

12/4: REVIEW FOR FINAL

**FINAL EXAM:** Thursday, Dec. 13., 11 am – 1:30 pm