

## **Greece and Rome: Texts, Traditions and Transformations: Comedy (Spring Quarter 2021)**

Instructor:  
Email:  
Office hours by appointment

Writing Intern:  
Email:  
Office hours by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The Greece and Rome sequence is about genres and traditions—not as stable, pre-given structures, but as bodies of texts that influence and transform each other across historical time periods. The students gain a grounding in some major texts of the Classical Greek and Latin traditions (read in English translation) as well as their reception at pivotal moments in modernity. These texts have sustained a community of reading, commentary, and debate ever since their inception, and they continue to resonate through our institutions and values today. In our encounter with them, we will develop the tools to read in inquiring and original ways, as well as to defend our readings with respect to the texts.

The Spring quarter of the sequence is devoted to exploring the origins and the transformation of the genre of comedy by focusing on the plays first performed in ancient Athens and Rome and then moving on to Renaissance England and the golden age of American comic films.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS** (available at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore, 5751 S. Woodlawn Avenue)

Aristophanes, Lysistrata and Other Plays, trans. A. Sommerstein (Penguin). 9780140448146  
Plautus, The Pot of Gold and Other Plays, trans. E.F. Watling (Penguin)  
Plautus, Amphitryon & Two Other Plays (Norton Library Paperback)  
Shakespeare, Midsummer Night's Dream (Pelican Shakespeare) 9780143128588  
Shakespeare, Twelfth Night (Pelican Shakespeare) 9780143128595  
Margaret Cavendish, The Convent of Pleasure and Other Plays (ed. Shaver)  
Aphra Behn, The Rover and Other Plays (Oxford)

Please make sure to purchase these exact translations or editions. You may not use other translations of these texts or editions. It's important that we're all on the same page.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

As a seminar-style class, this course requires substantial reading and writing as well as your active involvement in class. Specific course requirements are:

**Participation** (including writing seminars): **25%** of final grade  
**Three Papers** (approx. 4-5 pages each): **75%** of final grade

#### **Participation**

Your informed, thoughtful participation is crucial to the success of this course and our collective learning. Please speak up to voice your thoughts, no matter how incomplete they may be. Some ideas for how to participate meaningfully:

- once a week you will be required to e-mail me by midnight before class a possible prompt or question for the next day's reading. *Submission of prompts is mandatory* and failure to do so will lower your grade.
- respond to the readings generously and thoughtfully: be ready to talk about what you think is important or relevant about them, as well as things that are troubling or questionable.
- introduce new topics or issues for discussion *while also being responsive to the comments or questions that others have introduced*, so that we can generate sustained discussion.

You will each take one turn leading the discussion on a particular day, to be determined on the first day of class.

### **Writing Seminars**

The writing intern for this course will conduct writing seminars and meet with you individually. Participation in these seminars, and the written work associated with them, is mandatory, and absences will affect your grade for the course. Please see Nathan's separate syllabus, as it includes important information about the Writing Program's resources and outlines each seminar's goals. Nathan will reach out to you during Week 2 to schedule your Writing Seminar meetings via an online poll. Please heed the University's policy that these seminars take precedence over all extracurricular activities (including jobs and sports practice) and schedule accordingly!

### **Papers**

The prompts for each paper will be distributed one week before each draft is due. These writing assignments are not research papers, but rather opportunities to build an original argument based on close readings of the text. I will evaluate your papers according to the quality of your own thought, argument, and style. Be sure to follow the instructions of each prompt.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Academic Honesty**

Your education requires you to come up with your own ideas and express them in your own words. Plagiarism can occur not just intentionally but also through carelessness about the attribution of others' ideas and the citation of sources. Since the writing assignments do not entail secondary reading, we will not be covering proper citation practices in class. If you do read secondary sources to form your ideas, however, you must cite them. The following resources are helpful in explaining what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, and in providing guidelines for citation practices:

<http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/undergrads/wic5stuck>

<http://guides.lib.uchicago.edu/c.php?g=297265&p=1984219>

If you submit plagiarized material, you will receive a 0 in this course.

### **Attendance and Lateness**

You are permitted two absences in this class, no emails or explanations required. More than two absences will reduce your participation grade by one letter. Three such absences will lower your participation grade by another letter and may affect your standing in the course. Repeated lateness will also affect your participation grade; if you are more than twenty minutes late to class you will be counted as absent for that session.

### **Electronic Devices**

This classroom is a no-device space. Phones must be turned off and kept out of sight at all times. You are expected to print out and bring to class hardcopies of the readings posted on Canvas. Please do not read from tablets and laptops.

### **Accessibility**

I am committed to making this class fully accessible. If you have a disability that requires accommodation so that you can participate in class and complete assignments, please be in touch with me as soon as possible. You will need to provide me with a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter, which you can obtain from the Student Disability Services office.

### **Late Papers and Extensions**

Late papers will be penalized by a third of a grade each day. I will not accept papers that are more than three days late. You are allowed *one* 48-hour extension during the quarter, no questions asked. The extension must be **requested** at least **48 hours in advance** of the paper's due date.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

*Subject to Change. Please arrive to each class prepared to discuss the reading that is listed for the day.*

WEEK ONE: Greek Comedy

March 30: Aristophanes Acharnians (first half)

April 1: Aristophanes Acharnians (second half)

WEEK TWO

April 6: Aristophanes Lysistrata (first half)

April 8: Aristophanes Lysistrata (second half)

**First writing assignment handed OUT at the END of class**

WEEK THREE: Roman Comedy

#### ***First Writing Seminars***

April 13: Plautus Miles Gloriosus (first half)

April 15: Plautus Miles Gloriosus (second half)

WEEK FOUR:

**First writing assignment handed IN before class BEGINS**

April 20: Plautus Menaechmi (first half)

April 22: Plautus Menaechmi (second half) + scene from Comedy of Errors?

WEEK FIVE: Elizabethan Theater and Romantic Comedy

April 27: Shakespeare, Midsummer Night's Dream (first half)

April 29: Shakespeare, Midsummer Night's Dream (second half)

WEEK SIX:

May 4: Shakespeare, Twelfth Night (first half)

May 6: Shakespeare, Twelfth Night (second half)

**Second Writing Assignment handed OUT at the end of class.**

WEEK SEVEN:

***Second Writing Seminars***

May 11: Margaret Cavendish's The Convent of Pleasure

May 13: Aphra Behn, The Rover

WEEK EIGHT

**Second Writing Assignment handed IN before class BEGINS**

May 18: Amphytruo + Kleist, Amphytruo (first half)?

May 20: Kleist, Amphytruo (second half)?

**Third Writing Assignment handed OUT at the END of class.**

WEEK NINE: American Comic Film

***Third Writing Seminars***

May 25: George Cukor, The Philadelphia Story (1940)

May 27: Billy Wilder, Some Like It Hot (1959)

**Third Writing Assignment handed IN BEFORE the end of Finals Week**