GENY0001 Course Outline
SESSION 1 2019

Academic Skills Plus
Comedy Through the Ages

Lecture: Tuesday 12:00-13:00 Ainsworth G02
Tutorials:
- Tuesday 13:00-15:00 Quad 1042
- Tuesday 16:00 – 18:00 Colombo LG02
- Wednesday 12:00-14:00 Goldstein G05

Units of Credit: 6

Convener/Lecturer/Tutor: Dr Jamie Q Roberts
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Background
Welcome to Academic Skills Plus! The course will focus on a number of key academic skills: reading, writing, critical thinking and speaking. It will also give you an opportunity to apply what you learn to a particular topic. The topic will be Comedy Through the Ages. We will examine what was and is considered funny across different times and places, and think more generally about why we laugh. Each week there will be a one hour lecture on the week’s ‘Comedy’ topic and a two hour skills based seminar. Any questions, please contact Jamie.


Assessment schedule (to pass the course all assessments must be completed)
1. Assignment 1: Essay plan (15%). Due: Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 11:59pm
2. Assignment 2: Essay (35%). 1500 words. Due: Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 11:59pm
3. Assignment 3: Presentation (15%). Due: post to forum by Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 11:59pm
4. Assignment 4: In class test (25%). Due: in tutorial class Week 10
5. Class participation: (10%) Online and in class

Penalties for late assignments
As this is a credit bearing course, penalties for late work apply: 2% of the total mark will be subtracted each day the assignment is late, including weekends.

Essay questions
1. To what extent does humour depend upon context? In your response you may consider different periods, cultures or interpretive communities.
2. Why do we laugh?
3. Is it wrong to laugh at suffering?
4. What is the relationship between comedy and power? (You could also consider the relationship between humor and laughter and power)
5. Are only certain people allowed to be funny? Why?
6. Can comedy change the world?

NB: You can devise your own question. Just make sure you discuss it with your tutor.
Essay plan (~2 pages)
The point of this first assignment is to encourage you to move through the steps that will help you produce a strong essay. These include working out what topics/arguments you need to consider within the question, finding sources, making notes, and developing a provisional thesis and structure.

Submit a 1-2 page document with the following components:

1) Identify the question you are answering.
2) Identify the topics you want to discuss and/or points you want to make. Do not exceed one to two sentences for each. These topics will likely become paragraphs in your essay. Remember that to do justice to a problem you usually need to explore its complexities.
3) For each topic, identify at least one or two sources that make a point that is relevant to the topic. Reproduce the relevant quotation and, in a couple of sentences, explain why it is relevant (does it support what you want to argue, provide useful facts, a contrasting perspective, and so on?). For very good marks, group sources that say similar things and identify contrasting positions. Include at least two academic sources from the set readings and four external academic sources.
4) State a thesis.
5) Provide a structural diagram (or skeleton) that indicates how your essay will be structured.
Your assignment should look roughly like this (but remember to think for yourself):

**Question:** Is X good?

**Thesis:** X is good to a considerable extent

**Topics for discussion:**

1) X is good for reason A
   
   Source 1: ‘Blah blah blah’
   
   My thoughts about Source 1: This makes the important point that...

2) X is good for reason B
   
   Source 2: ‘Blah blah blah’
   Source 3: ‘Blah blah blah’
   
   My thoughts about Sources 2 and 3: Interestingly, Sources 2 and 3 both identify that...

3) X is bad for reason C
   
   Source 4: ‘Blah blah blah’
   Source 5: ‘Blah blah blah’
   
   My thoughts about Sources 4 and 5: Sources 4 and 5 provide contrasting...

4) X is neither good nor bad for reason D
   
   Source 6: ‘Blah blah blah’
   
   My thoughts about Source 6: This is useful evidence for...

**Structural diagram:**

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Thesis: X is good to a considerable extent

Why X is good
  
  Why X is good
  
  Why X is bad
    
    Reason C

Why X is neither good nor bad
  
  Reason A
  
  Reason B

Reason D
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The following are the criteria used to mark your plan (total marks = 100):

- **Thesis:** Is there a thesis that answers the question in a nuanced/intelligent manner? (10 marks)
- **Topics:**
  - Are the topics clearly presented? (10 marks)
  - Do the topics provide good coverage of the subject? (20 marks)
- **Sources:**
  - Are there a sufficient number of sources (2 or more from the set readings and 4 or more from outside)? (10 marks)
  - Are the found sources of academic quality? (10 marks)
  - Are the quotations from the sources well selected? (10 marks)
  - Are the comments about the sources thoughtful? (10 marks)
- **Structural diagram**
  - Is the structural diagram clear and logical? (20 marks)

**Essay (1500 words)**

You may respond to the same question as your plan, or attempt a new question. **At least seven academic-quality sources must be used.** At least two must come from within the course and three from outside the course (there will be a significant mark penalty for not using the two course readings – this is to discourage students from paying for essays). Non-scholarly websites do not count towards the seven sources; although these sources can be used with caution and citation. Include a structural diagram of your essay’s structure.

The following are the criteria used to mark your essay (total marks = 100):

- **Introduction:** Orientation, thesis, outline. (10 marks)
- **Body:** General logic (relationship between paragraphs), structure of paragraphs (topic sentences, logic, transitions, etcetera). (17 marks)
- **Conclusion:** Summary, thesis restated. (5 marks)
- **Is the questions answered:** Is there a sustained and convincing engagement with the question? (20 marks)
• Research: Is there a sufficient number of sources? Is knowledge and understanding of the topic demonstrated? Are the sources well integrated and engaged with? (15 marks)
• Referencing: Is a referencing system adhered to (in-text citations / footnotes and reference list / bibliography)? (5 marks)
• Critical thinking: Is the student’s voice strong? Are the arguments nuanced? Does the response engage with the ideas of others in a thoughtful manner? Etcetera. (15 marks)
• Expression: Grammar, level of formality, clarity, etc. (7 marks)
• Presentation: Line spacing (1.5), font size (11 or 12), page numbers, margins (not too narrow) etc. (3 marks)
• Structural diagram: Thesis and main points. (3 marks)

**Presentation**
Your task is to film yourself and upload your presentation.

Your presentation should go for 5 minutes (or 7 minutes if you include a video – the video should be no more than 2 minutes). In the presentation you should analyse a piece of comedy/humour. You should explain why the piece is funny; use comedy/humour theory.

**This is the process to follow:**
1) Film your presentation (use your phone or tablet if you like). You can just film yourself and upload a full video, do a screencast (with your face), or, if you are feeling creative, you can use a program such as Windows Movie Maker to make a slicker presentation; but doing this won’t get you more marks.
2) Upload your video to youtube and set the privacy setting to ‘Unlisted’.
   [https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/)
3) Post the link to your movie in the moodle presentation forum.
4) Your tutor and your fellow students will comment on your video.

The following are the criteria used to mark your presentation:
• Opening/introduction: Here you should introduce yourself and say what, generally, you
will talk about. Make sure that you provide an outline that gives the audience a sense of
how your presentation will develop (don’t tell the audience there will be an
introduction, body and conclusion – this is useless) and your attitude to the material.
(15 marks)
• Clarity of structure: It should always be clear where you have just been in your
presentation, where you are, and where you are going. (15 marks)
• Quality of information: Make sure that the information you present is interesting and
from appropriate sources (eg: if you are talking theory, get your theory from academic
sources). (15 marks)
• Quality of critique/analysis: Make sure you explore the nuances of your example. Make
sure your own voice is present. (15 marks)
• Conclusion: Summarise what you have said and don’t introduce any new information.
Don’t start your analysis in your conclusion. (10 marks)
• Performance: Think about pace, volume, eye contact, body language, and use of visuals.
You will do poorly here if you read and well if you have a conversational manner. (30
marks)

Exam
The exam will be two hours. It will take place on the last day of the course and be closed book.
Its focus will be on the academic skills component of the course, not the comedy content. The
exam will consist of 10 multiple choice questions, 4 short answer questions, 1 referencing
question and 2 introduction/paragraph analysis questions.

Class participation
Class participation is designed to develop your understanding of the material and your ability to
think critically and to then express your opinion in discussions with other members of the class.
Class participation is about the quality and honesty of your responses and to what extent you
help the learning of others. Also keep in mind that a lively class is a fun class. You can gain
participation marks by talking in class and by making thoughtful online comments in response
to the presented activities.
**Attendance**

This course adopts the regular university rule that you must attend at least 80% of classes. **This includes lectures.** Please contact your tutor or the course coordinator if you are not able to attend a class – communication is the key!

**Help with assignments**

The university provides a number of avenues for academic support. Your first step is to ask your tutor or the course convener. You might also like to contact the Learning Centre. The Learning Centre offers both generic workshops in academic skills, and also individual consultations for specific help with your own work. See the Learning Centre website: [www.lc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au)

**What is Plagiarism?**

Plagiarism is presenting the thoughts or work of another as one’s own. Examples include:

- direct duplication of the thoughts or work of another, including by copying material, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document (whether published or unpublished), composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, web site, Internet, other electronic resource, or another person’s assignment without appropriate acknowledgement;
- paraphrasing another person’s work with very minor changes keeping the meaning, form and/or progression of ideas of the original;
- piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole;
- citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the 'secondary' source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.
- presenting an assessment item as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with other people, for example, another student or a tutor; and
- claiming credit for a proportion a work contributed to a group assessment item that is greater than that actually contributed.
Also keep the following in mind:

- For the purposes of this policy, submitting an assessment item that has already been submitted for academic credit elsewhere may be considered plagiarism.
- Knowingly permitting your work to be copied by another student may also be considered to be plagiarism.
- Note that an assessment item produced in oral, not written, form, or involving live presentation, may similarly contain plagiarised material.
- The inclusion of the thoughts or work of another with attribution appropriate to the academic discipline does not amount to plagiarism.

The Learning Centre website is main repository for resources for staff and students on plagiarism and academic honesty. These resources can be located via:

www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism

The Learning Centre also provides substantial educational written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students, for example, in:
- correct referencing practices;
- paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing, and time management;
- appropriate use of, and attribution for, a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre.

Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting, and the proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

**Special consideration**

On some occasions, sickness, misadventure, or other circumstances beyond your control may prevent you from completing a course requirement such as handing in a piece of written work by the due date, or sitting the formal end of session examination. It is also possible that such situations may significantly affect your performance in an assessable task. The University has
procedures that allow you to apply for an extension or for special consideration for the affected assessments. Depending on the circumstances, the University may take action to allow you to overcome the disadvantage; eg: giving you an extension on an assignment or allowing you to complete a different assessment task. As far as is possible, you should try and keep your lecturer informed of the circumstances that are having an adverse effect on your studies. The University also offers Counseling Services and assistance for students with an ongoing disability. You can apply for Special Consideration through the following page:

student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration

**Student support services**

There are a number of student services on campus including Student Central, Counseling, Nura Gili, Disability support, the Hub, and the Library.

**Email**

All students are allocated a UNSW email account. This is the email account that the University and your lecturer will use if they want to communicate with you about classes, timetables, enrolment, assessments, and final grades. You need to ensure that you can access this email account and it is your responsibility to check it regularly. **We assume that all students can be contacted via their UNSW email account.** If you use another email address, you must arrange to have your UNSW email account forwarded to that address. **Also make sure that you regularly check your myunsw home page.**
GENY0001: Timetable S1 2019

**Week 1**
**Lecture:** Overview of the course; common comedy/humour theories
**Academic skills:** Understanding university philosophy, reading strategies, the research process

**Week 2**
**Lecture:** Common comedy/humour theories continued
**Academic skills:** The research process continued
**Readings:**
Week 3

**Lecture:** The science of comedy, humour and laughter (evolution, different types of laughter)

**Academic skills:** The essay part 1 (introductions)

**Readings:**


### Week 4

**Lecture:** Physical/slapstick Comedy: Commedia dell'arte, Charlie Chaplin, and more  

**Academic skills:** The essay part 2 (body paragraphs)  

**Readings:**


### Week 5

**Lecture:** Political comedy / comedy and politics  

**Academic skills:** The essay part 3 (the conclusion and analyzing/marking a student essay)  

**Readings:**


Transcript of Stephen Colbert’s performance at the 2006 White House Correspondents’ Association Dinner (see, for example [http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/04/30/206303/-Re-Improved-Colbert-transcript-now-with-complete-text-of-Colbert-Thomas-video#])

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**Week 6**

**Lecture:** Australian humour and comedy

**Academic skills:** Referencing and integrating research 1

**Readings:**


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**Week 7**

**Lecture:** The UK versus the USA

**Academic skills:** Referencing and integrating research 2
Readings:


Due: Essay no.1

Week 8
Lecture: Japan and China
Academic skills: Critical thinking
Readings:


George Kao (1946) Chinese Wit and Humour, United States of America: Coward-McCann, Inc.
Week 9

Lecture: Comedy and death

Academic skills: Expression and grammar, presentation skills

Readings:


Week 10

Academic skills exam (120 mins)

Bonus material 1: Comedy in Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome

Readings:


**Bonus material 2: Who is allowed to be funny?**

**Readings:**

