

Spring Semester 2008
TR 10:50-12:05
100 Knight Hall
Office Hours: MW 11-12, T 12:15-1:15,
and by appointment

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CLA 102.001: Comedy and Satire

This course introduces students to two genres of classical literature which share a high degree of wit and humor, but which also deliver social and political criticism on a deeper level of meaning. The reading list includes authors such as Aristophanes and Menander (Greek comedy), Plautus and Terence (Roman comedy), as well as Horace, Persius, Martial, Juvenal, Petronius, Seneca, and Apuleius (all representatives of satire, a genre dominated by Roman writers).

Texts

Apuleius. *The Golden Ass*. Trans. E. J. Kenney. New York: Penguin, 2004.
Aristophanes. *Lysistrata and Other Plays*. Trans. Alan H. Sommerstein. New York: Penguin, 2002.
---. *The Frogs and Other Plays*. Trans. David Barrett. New York: Penguin, 2007.
Horace. *Satires and Epistles*. Persius. *Satires*. Trans. Niall Rudd. New York: Penguin, 1979.
Juvenal. *The Sixteen Satires*. Trans. Peter Green. New York: Penguin, 2004.
Martial. *Epigrams*. Volume I. Ed. and trans. D. R. Shackelton Bailey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993 (Loeb Classical Library).
Menander. *Plays and Fragments*. Trans. Norma Miller. New York: Penguin, 1987.
Petronius. *The Satyricon*. Seneca. *The Apocolocyntosis*. Trans. J. P. Sullivan. New York: Penguin, 1986.
Plautus. *The Pot of Gold and Other Plays*. Trans. E. F. Watling. New York: Penguin, 1965.
Terence. *The Comedies*. Trans. Betty Radice. New York: Penguin, 1976.

Objectives

By the end of this course, you will

- have been introduced to two genres of classical (Greek and Roman) literature and some major representative literary works
- have gained basic knowledge of Greco-Roman culture and history
- be able to apply that knowledge to your own interpretation of classical texts
- understand the ways in which our own cultural background shapes our understanding of foreign culture and literature

Instructional methodology

In this course, we will focus on the development of the two literary genres of comedy and satire in the classical period. Roughly the first third of the semester will be devoted to Greek literature, the rest to Roman literature. All texts will be read in English translation; although we will discuss some linguistic issues, no knowledge of either Greek or Latin is required.

You will be asked to read and prepare an extensive portion of text for every class meeting. As you allot time for your reading, please bear in mind that ancient literary texts are difficult to read and require time and devotion. Please do not take this class unless you can honestly commit yourself to reading all the assigned texts in a careful and timely fashion. It makes little sense to try to “survive” in a literature class without actually reading the texts. To help you prepare meaningful contributions to class discussion, you will find a list of guiding questions for each assigned text on Blackboard. You can access our course at <http://mercero.blackboard.com>. Please find the link to the question sheets on the course homepage, print out your own copy of each assigned sheet, and bring it to class with your written responses.

Although the literary works are the major basis of lectures and discussions, we will also use videos as well as film and audio clips to engage with topics of ancient comedy and satire.

Evaluation

Quizzes	10 %
Classroom performance	25 %
Written homework assignments	15 %
Oral presentation	10 %
Term paper	20 %
Final exam	20 %

All quizzes will be announced in the preceding class meeting. Three times this semester you will receive a grade for your performance in the classroom. Each grade reflects your work and contributions over a number of weeks. Provisional dates are the end of the fourth week, the week after spring break, and the final week (see tentative class schedule). Students succeeding in this area will be prepared for every class (i.e., have completed the assigned reading), make meaningful contributions to our class activities (plenary as well as group work), and ask relevant questions pertaining to the material.

About once every two weeks you will be asked to hand in a typed page or so with your answers to selected questions on the texts. These written homework assignments will be graded for content (75%) as well as style and linguistic correctness (25%). I also reserve the right to collect your question sheets periodically and unannounced and assign a grade for your preparatory discussion notes.

Individuals or pairs of students will regularly prepare brief presentations on special topics, such as the biography of an author or historical and cultural background information. Please see the tentative schedule for topics. It is your responsibility to sign up for at least one presentation, either individually or together with another student in the class. Students who fail to give an oral presentation before the end of the semester will receive a zero in that category. Your presentation

should be a free delivery (i.e., not read out word by word) and about five to ten minutes in length. For each presentation, you are asked to prepare a handout (giving the title of your talk, your name, the sources you used, and an overview of the contents).

In the second part of the semester, you will select a topic from the area of classical comedy and satire, on which you will do extensive research. You will have the opportunity of presenting your ideas orally to the instructor and receiving feedback. You will then produce a four-to-six-page term paper (not counting title page and bibliography), following the MLA guidelines. You should quote at least two works of secondary literature. To avoid plagiarism, you must acknowledge all ideas that are not your own, no matter whether you quote your source verbatim, paraphrase, or summarize. The deadline for the paper is Thursday, April 24, 2008.

The final exam will consist of an in-class multiple-choice test. I will give you more details as we approach the end of the term.

All assignments are due when indicated. Late submission of homework and make-up quizzes will only be allowed at the discretion of the instructor for cases of duly documented personal or family emergency. In any event, five points will be taken off the score for every day past the deadline. There will be no extra credit work or rewrites.

Students receiving failing grades during this course or students having trouble with any aspect of this class are encouraged to meet with me, either during regular office hours or by appointment.

Course policies

Prerequisite: None

Requirements: Meticulous preparation of assigned texts
Regular and timely completion of homework assignments
Active participation
Some teamwork

Attendance: You are expected to attend each class session and to contribute constructively to classroom activities. Should you miss more than three class sessions for any reason, one point will be deducted from your total average for each session missed. Under no circumstances will you receive a passing grade for this course if you miss more than fifty percent of the class meetings.

<u>Grading scale:</u>	90-100	A	70-75	C
	86-89	B+	66-69	D
	80-85	B	0-65	F
	76-79	C+		

Electronic submission rule: Students bear sole responsibility for ensuring that papers or assignments submitted electronically to a professor are received in a timely manner and in the electronic format(s) specified by the professor. Students are therefore obliged to have their e-mail client issue a receipt verifying that the document has been received. Students are also strongly

advised to retain a copy of the dated submission on a separate disk. Faculty members are encouraged, but not required, to acknowledge receipt of the assignment.

Honor code: The honor code will be firmly followed. While you are encouraged to work and study together with other students or with tutors, all written work that you submit must be your own. Please refer to the *Lair* (student handbook; see at http://www.thezonelive.com/zone/02_SchoolStructure/GA_MercerUniversity/handbook.pdf) for details regarding violations of the honor system.

Accommodation of disability: Students with a documented disability should inform the instructor at the close of the first class meeting or as soon as possible. If you are not registered with Disability Services, the instructor will refer you to the Student Support Services office for consultation regarding documentation of your disability and eligibility for accommodations under the ADA/504. In order to receive accommodations, eligible students must provide each instructor with a Faculty Accommodation Form from Disability Services. Students must return the completed and signed form to the Disability Services office on the third floor of the Connell Student Center. Students with a documented disability who do not wish to use accommodations are strongly encouraged to register with Disability Services and complete a Faculty Accommodation Form each semester. For further information please contact Disability Services at 301-2778 or visit the website at http://www.mercer.edu/stu_support/swd.htm.

Cell phone usage: Out of courtesy for all those participating in the learning experience, all cell phones and pagers must be turned off before entering any classroom, lab, or formal academic or performance event.

Tentative class schedule

January	8	T	Course introduction; comedy and satire; Greek comedy
	10	R	Aristophanes: <i>The Clouds</i> (<u>Presentations</u> : Aristophanes; The Sophists)
	11	F	Last day to drop the course
	15	T	Aristophanes: <i>The Clouds</i> ; <i>Lysistrata</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Women in Ancient Greece)
	17	R	Aristophanes: <i>Lysistrata</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Greece in the fifth century BC)
	22	T	Aristophanes: <i>The Frogs</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : The three Greek tragedians)
	24	R	Menander: <i>Old Cantankerous</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Menander)
	29	T	Menander: <i>Old Cantankerous</i> ; <i>The Girl from Samos</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Ancient Greek theater)
	31	R	Plautus: <i>The Pot of Gold</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Plautus); grade 1 for classroom performance

February	5	T	Plautus: <i>The Pot of Gold</i> ; <i>The Swaggering Soldier</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Roman drama)
	7	R	Plautus: <i>The Swaggering Soldier</i> ; <i>Pseudolus</i>
	12	T	Plautus: <i>Pseudolus</i>
	14	R	Musical: <i>A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</i>
	19	T	Musical: <i>A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</i> ; Terence, <i>The Girl from Andros</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Terence)
	21	R	Terence, <i>The Girl from Andros</i> ; <i>The Eunuch</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Roman history up to the death of Julius Caesar)
	26	T	Terence, <i>The Eunuch</i>
	28	R	Horace, <i>Satires I</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Horace)
March	3-7		[Spring Break]
	11	T	Horace, <i>Satires II</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Epicureanism and Stoicism)
	13	R	Horace, "Ars Poetica" (<u>Presentation</u> : Early Roman satire); grade 2 for classroom performance
	18	T	Persius, <i>Satires</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Persius)
	20	R	Persius, <i>Satires</i> ; last day for course withdrawal
	25	T	Martial, <i>Epigrams</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Martial)
	27	R	Martial, <i>Epigrams</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : The patron-and-client system)
April	1	T	Juvenal, <i>Satires</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Juvenal)
	3	R	Juvenal, <i>Satires</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Roman history after the death of Julius Caesar)
	8	T	Petronius, <i>The Satyricon</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Petronius)
	10	R	Petronius, <i>The Satyricon</i>
	15	T	Seneca, <i>The Apocolocyntosis</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Seneca)
	17	R	[No class]
	22	T	Apuleius, <i>The Golden Ass</i> (<u>Presentation</u> : Apuleius)
	24	R	Review and conclusion; term paper due; grade 3 for classroom performance
	29	T	Final exam (2:00 pm)