

CRIT 203 Perspectives on the Theory and Practice of Humour

School of Languages & Cultures

Trimester 2 2008

22 Points

Please read through this material very carefully in the first week of the course, and refer to it regularly.

STAFF

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Co-ordinator for Students with Disabilities and Co-ordinator for Maori and Pacific Students VZ 613	Dr Richard Millington richard.millington@vuw.ac.nz		ph. 463 5976

CLASS TIMES AND ROOMS

Lectures

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3.10pm – 4.00pm in HU (Hunter) 221

Cellular phones and pagers should be switched off for the duration of all classes.

COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This course introduces students to the study of comedy and humour in text and performance, paying particular attention to the development of comedy in Europe. The course will offer a broad-based introduction to theoretical approaches and to the various forms and techniques particular to the study of humour and comedy. Various media including film, comic books, opera and theatre that underscore the cultural importance of humour and its impact on European culture will be explored.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

Approximately 15 hours per week including the three formal classes; but this will vary from student to student. The most vital thing is that students keep abreast of the course by reading the set texts in advance of lectures and writing the prescribed essays on time.

TEXTS

Photocopied material for the course will be provided at a cost of \$20.00. This amount must be paid to the Programme Administrator Nina Cuccurullo (VZ610) by the end of Week 2.

Course material will be distributed to students by the Course Co-ordinator and Lecturers ahead of the respective unit. It can also be collected from the Administrator.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment for CRIT 203 is a combination of in-term assessment (50%) and a final three hour examination (50%), as follows:

- i. Two essays (1500-2000 words), worth 25% each.
- ii. A final three-hour examination, worth 50%.

The assessment programme is designed to evaluate the extent of the student's understanding of the themes and texts studied, and the depth and sensitivity of the student's response to those themes and texts as shown in the discipline of essay-writing, and in examination answers. The essays also provide a means of assessing the student's ability to research and think on a topic, organise thoughts and insights, and express them in a lucid, well-documented way. To help them in this, students will be given detailed *Notes on the Presentation of Essays*. (see attached at end of this Outline)

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to complete CRIT 203, students are required to do the following, unless specific exemptions have been agreed to:

- i. submit the two written essays by due dates;
- ii. sit the final written examination.

To pass CRIT 203 students must meet the mandatory course requirements and achieve at least an average C over all assessment. Students who gain at least 50% of the course marks, but fail the course due to not satisfying a mandatory course requirement, will receive a K grade. Students who gain less than 50% will receive a D or an E grade, whether or not they have completed the mandatory course requirements.

The relation of grades to percentages, for any work and for the course as a whole, is as follows: A+ (85-100%), A (80-84%), A- (75-79%), B+ (70-74%), B (65-69%), B- (60-64%), C+ (55-59%), C (50-54%), D (40-49%), E (0-39%).

PENALTIES

Essays *must* be handed in on time. Students prevented by uncontrollable circumstances from completing an essay on time must, in advance of the deadline, formally request an extension of time from the Course Co-ordinator, Dr. Marco Sonzogni (VZ 504). In cases of illness, accident or bereavement, this can be done by telephone (04-463-6284). Essays submitted late without explanation will have penalty marks deducted at the rate of two marks a day.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES AND STUDENT EVALUATIONS

In the second week of lectures, staff will facilitate the election of a class representative for each lecture group. Student reps are a valuable means of communication between teaching staff and students. In addition students can approach any member of staff individually to talk about the course as a whole, any particular aspect of it, or their own individual progress.

At the end of the course students may be asked to fill out questionnaires prepared by the University's Teaching and Development Centre. These questionnaires relate either to the course, or to an individual lecturer's contribution. They are an important part of the University's accountability process, and the results are helpful in the University's attempts to maintain and raise the standards of the education it offers.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The CRIT 203 Noticeboard is in the corridor between room VZ 614 and VZ 615. Important information is posted on it, please check it regularly. Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed to students either via class, noticeboards, Blackboard, or email.

ESSAY TOPICS AND DEADLINES

All efforts will be made to provide information relating to essay topics as early as possible and this will be posted on Blackboard.

The examination will cover the whole course, and will consist of one three-hour paper divided into two sections. It is an open book examination, thus texts are permitted in the examination room.

Students will be required to answer four questions: 2 from Section 1 and 2 from Section 2. Section 1 will cover topics and texts analysed in the first half of the trimester, Weeks 1-6, and section 2 will cover topics and texts analysed in the second half of the trimester, Weeks 7-12. All questions are of equal value, worth 25% each.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means no cheating. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as: The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff. It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include: an oral or written warning, cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course, suspension from the course or the University. Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at: http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

COURSE PROGRAMME

TIMETABLE	DATE	ACADEMIC UNITS	TOPIC	LECTURER
Week 1				
Lecture 1:	08 Jul 08	Introduction: Course Overview	Studying humour? Seriously?	Marco Sonzogni
Lecture 2:	09 Jul 08	Theory of Comedy (I)	Contemporary Theories of Humour	Marco Sonzogni
Lecture 3:	10 Jul 08	Theory of Comedy (II)	Pirandello's <i>Essay on Humour</i>	Marco Sonzogni
Week 2				
Lecture 4:	15 Jul 08	Cultural perspectives (I)	<i>Fart Forward: From Hell to Heaven</i>	Marco Sonzogni
Lecture 5:	16 Jul 08	Cultural perspectives (II)	Translating Humour	Jean Anderson
Lecture 6:	17 Jul 08	Tutorial		Marco Sonzogni
Week 3				
Lecture 7:	22 Jul 08	German	Freud	Richard Millington
Lecture 8:	23 Jul 08	German	Freud	Richard Millington
Lecture 9:	24 Jul 08	Tutorial		Richard Millington
Week 4				
Lecture 10:	29 Jul 08	French	Jacques Tati	Jean-Marc Lecaudé
Lecture 11:	30 Jul 08	French	Jacques Tati	Jean-Marc Lecaudé
Lecture 12:	31 Jul 08	Tutorial		Jean-Marc Lecaudé
Week 5				
Lecture 13:	05 Aug 08	English	Chaucer's <i>The Shipman's Tale</i>	Peter Whiteford
Lecture 14:	06 Aug 08	English	Chaucer's <i>The Shipman's Tale</i>	Peter Whiteford
Lecture 15:	07 Aug 08	Tutorial		
Week 6				
Lecture 16:	12 Aug 08	Spanish	Almodóvar	Carolina Miranda
Lecture 17:	13 Aug 08	Spanish	Almodóvar	Carolina Miranda
Lecture 18:	14 Aug 08	Tutorial		Carolina Miranda

ESSAY ONE DUE ON FRIDAY 15 AUGUST 5PM

MID-TRIMESTER BREAK 18 AUGUST 2008 -31 AUGUST 2008

Week 7

Lecture 19:	02 Sep 08	Russian	Gogol'	Richard Millington
Lecture 20:	03 Sep 08	Russian	Gogol'	Richard Millington
Lecture 21:	04 Sep 08	Tutorial		Richard Millington

Week 8

Lecture 22:	09 Sep 08	Humour and Literary Genre (I)	Humour and Detective Fiction	Barbara Pezzotti
Lecture 23:	10 Sep 08	Humour and Literary Genre (I)	Humour and Detective Fiction	Barbara Pezzotti
Lecture 24:	11 Sep 08	Tutorial		Barbara Pezzotti

Week 9

Lecture 25:	16 Sep 08	Humour and Literary Genre (III)	Humour in Children's Literature	Anna Jackson
Lecture 26:	17 Sep 08	Humour and Literary Genre (III)	Humour in Children's Literature	Anna Jackson
Lecture 27:	18 Sep 08	Religious Studies	Transgressive Comics	Art Buehler

ESSAY TWO DUE ON FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 5 PM

Week 10

Lecture 28:	23 Sep 08	Religious Studies	Transgressive Comics	Art Buehler
Lecture 29:	24 Sep 08	Humour in Visual Arts (I)	Humour and Comics	Marco Sonzogni
Lecture 30:	25 Sep 08	Humour in Visual Arts (II)	<i>The Laughing Audience: Hogarth and Caricatures</i>	David Maskill

Week 11

Lecture 31:	30 Sep 08	Humour in theatre	Black humour: Beckett's <i>Godot</i>	Marco Sonzogni
Lecture 32:	01 Oct 08	Humour in music	Gilbert and Sullivan's <i>The Mikado</i>	Marco Sonzogni
Lecture 33:	02 Oct 08	Humour in television	<i>Comedy, politics and social difference</i>	Sue Abel

Week 12

Lecture 34:	07 Oct 08	Humour in film (II)	Comedy and the Holocaust (I)	Giacomo Lichtner
Lecture 35:	08 Oct 08	Humour in film (III)	Comedy and the Holocaust (II)	Giacomo Lichtner
Lecture 36:	09 Oct 08	Conclusions	Revision and Exam	Marco Sonzogni

FINAL WRITTEN EXAMINATION to be held during the Examination Period (17 OCTOBER 2008 – 8 NOVEMBER 2008) – date to be advised

NOTES ON THE PRESENTATION OF ESSAYS

1. Scholarly writing aims at:

- 1.1 **Readability:** Above all your essay should be readable. Become self-critical; analyse your own writing and try to make sure that what you have written expresses *clearly* and *precisely* what you want to say. The notes below are intended to help you make your essay readable.
- 1.2 **Objectivity:** Trying to be objective implies that all judgements are supported by logical arguments. Do not merely state an opinion without backing it up with evidence; expressions of personal opinion, such as "I think that..." or "in my opinion...", should be used purposefully and complement established criticism.

2. **Presentation** is, of course, also important. Essays should be written (if at all possible typed, with double spacing) on A4 paper, on one side of the page only, **and with a 5 cm margin**. Add an Assignment Cover Sheet giving the topic, the date due, your name and course designation, and the name of the lecturer. Staple the pages together in the top left-hand corner. Please write legibly and do not exceed the stipulated length. Your language and style should be appropriate to a formal argument: avoid therefore the use of colloquial or slangy expressions or contractions such as "don't" or "wouldn't". Correct English grammar, spelling and punctuation are essential. Carefully proof-read your essay before submitting it.

3. **Form:** Both readability and legibility are enhanced by correct form. A useful, general rule for the academic essay: it has a beginning, a middle and an end, i.e. it consists of an introduction, an argument plus evidence, and a conclusion. Mere presentation of information (e.g. the contents of a novel) is not enough; it must be supported by critical analysis. You should plan your essay in advance, and back your main points by reference to the text. Avoid mere paraphrasing of the text.

3.1 **Paragraphs** formally mark the smaller units into which the essay is broken up. Skip one line or double the normal spacing between paragraphs.

3.2 **The Introduction** should, in one or two paragraphs, define the problem and outline the general direction of the essay.

3.3 **The Argument** is the main body of your essay. Paragraphs represent the various steps in your argument. All statements must be supported by evidence, e.g. by quotations from or references to primary and secondary sources. Always keep the essay topic firmly in mind!

3.4 **The Conclusion** should provide no new information, nor simply repeat what has already been said, but summarize the major points of the essay and show how these provide a final, concise answer to the problem discussed.

4. **References:** You are expected to consult secondary literature relevant to your topic, i.e. critical works which are given in your background reading list, or books or articles which you have located yourself in the Library. Use these intelligently and critically, i.e. do not simply borrow the ideas of others, but work through them with the aim of arriving at an understanding of your own. References to or quotations from both primary and secondary texts (all quotations accurately transcribed and placed within inverted commas) must be acknowledged in a footnote at the bottom of the page giving author, work and page-number (p.); where such sources are cited more than once, abbreviations are permissible. (Such methods allow the reader to check your sources, and also protect you from a charge of plagiarism.) If there is a large number of footnotes, they may be given at the end of the essay. Footnotes adding a comment which does not fit into the context of the essay should be avoided.

4.1. **Quotations** should correspond with the original. For ellipsis use three spaced periods (dots) in square brackets: [. . .]. Quotations of up to two lines in length should be run on in quotation marks as part of the text. Longer quotations should be separated from the text by slight indentation (3 spaces) on the left margin; in this case no quotation marks are used. Such quotations should be introduced by a colon. The whole of each quotation must make sense in its - new - context. Avoid, therefore, such

meaningless quotations as "People like me ... this time things went too far." If a German quotation is incorporated into an English sentence, there must be no grammatical clash between German and English.

- 4.2. The Bibliography** consists of a formal list of materials relating to a particular subject. The list should be attached to the end of your essay. It must contain all the works referred to in the essay and any others you have consulted and consider relevant. Where applicable it should be divided into two separate sections for Primary Literature and Secondary Literature. Each section should list the material in alphabetical order. In citing the primary text or secondary literature, observe these conventions:

Course Handbook: Name of author. *Title of Text. Title of Handbook, date, page nos.*

Example: Grass, Günter. *My Century* (excerpts). In: *GERM 114 Handbook, 2005*, pp.16-30.

Book: Name of author or editor. *Title of Book.* Place of publication, publisher, date, page no. or nos. (if relevant).

Example: Schlink, B. *The Reader*, trans. by Carol Brown Janeway. London, Phoenix, 1997.

Journal Article: Name of author(s). "Title of Article". *Title of Periodical*, Issue no. (Date), page no. or nos.

Example: Mittman, Elizabeth. "On the Road to Nowhere: Utopian Geography in Post-Unification Literature". *Seminar*, XXXVII, 4 (2001), pp. 336-54.

Article or Chapter in Book combining several authors: Give the specific item first.

Example: Breuilly, J. "German National Identity". In: Kolinsky, E. & Wilfried van der Will (Eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 44-66.

Web References: "Author & Title of Article". Website in full. Date consulted.

Example: "Günter Grass – Nobel Lecture".
<http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/1999/lecture-e.html> Consulted 14 July 2005.

Note that while the titles of articles, short stories or poems are enclosed in inverted commas, the titles of books or periodicals should be italicised.

A bibliography must be given, even if only one source is used.

- 5. Tense:** When summarising or retelling (part of) a story or plot, use the present tense. This convention a) helps to distinguish fictitious events and characters from historic ones; and b) indicates that, in the process of reading or listening, fictitious events are imagined as really occurring in the present.

