



CLAS CCX: ANCIENT HUMOR, Fall 2013



INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nick Dobson
TIME: T/TH 9:30-10:45
OFFICE: WH 2, x2103



CONTACT: ndobson@monm.edu
PLACE: WH 113
OFFICE HRS: MWF 10-11, T/TH 1-2 &
by appointment (or serendipity)

The ability to laugh is what separates humans from beasts. That, and the ability to accessorize. Evidence of people performing in order to make others laugh goes all the way back to Homeric poetry, our earliest surviving works of Western literature. In this class we will examine the origins of humor in ancient Greece and Rome, along with comparisons to the present day. Some of the questions of interest to us will be: What makes something funny? Can humor be used for serious purposes? How (dis)similar is the humor of today to/from the humor of earlier eras? We will attempt to find answers to these questions by reading primary texts, examining secondary literature, and watching as much comedy as possible.

Required Texts

Plautus and Terence. Five Comedies. tr. by Deena Berg and Douglass Parker. Hackett, 1999. ISBN: 0-87220-362-X.

Class Format

Classes will generally meet 2 days a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 until 10:45. Attendance is recorded, & class participation counts towards your final grade. Each student is permitted 3 unexcused absences during the semester. A student with **more than THREE** unexcused absences will drop one grade point on the final semester grade for each unexcused absence over 3.

Most course materials will be available in electronic form on the Monmouth College Moodle webpage (<http://lms.monmouthcollege.edu/moodle/course/view.php?id=99¬ifyeditingon=1>).

Do not hesitate to ask questions in class. If you don't understand something, there are inevitably others in the class who do not understand either. You will do the entire class a favor by asking for explanations.

Goals and Requirements—Your final grade will be determined in the following way:

Short Papers	20%
Midterm Comparison	25%
Group Presentation	10%
Final Exam	25%
Quizzes	20%

I. Short Papers

Approximately once a week each student will submit a response to a question or topic supplied by me. These responses, at least 600 words (2 pages) in length are informal, short, non-research essays on discussion topics. Class discussions, readings, films, etc. may all be used in discussing the topics, but they are not just summaries of activities. They should go beyond mere recording of events to include personal analysis and commentary. Emphasis will be on (1) integration of the student's own ideas and thoughts with the subject matter of the course and on (2) coherent and logical expression of these ideas. In these responses you will briefly summarize the main points, offer your own opinion and thoughts about the topics raised, and support your response with specific data. These responses will be graded primarily on personal analysis and insights, but appropriate length and timeliness will also be taken into account. **All papers will be submitted via Turnitin.com.**

II. Midterm Comparison

Each student will write a 4(ish) page research paper comparing some aspect of (an) ancient comedy to a modern comedy. Details will be given later.

III. Group Presentation

Each student will be assigned to a group and given a topic to present to the rest of the class. The grade for this presentation will be based upon 1) the appropriateness of the presentation to the topic; 2) the presenterss ability to explain the topi to the class; and 3) the quality and appropriateness of the visual features accompanying the presentation.

IV. Quizzes

There will be 1 quiz every week. At least 1 of the quizzes will be over the geography of the ancient Greco-Roman world. The map (geography) quiz must be passed in order to pass the course. Other quizzes, both announced and unannounced, may be given at my discretion. No make-ups for quizzes (except for the map quiz) will be given without documentation of excused absence.

Weekly Work Expectations:

I expect each student in this class to spend approximately **1-2 hours working outside of class for each hour spent in the classroom.** Outside work includes (but is not limited to) reading and analyzing texts, preparing written assignments, and reviewing class notes. **Including class attendance, students should anticipate spending an average of 10 hours per week on CLAS 210.**

Grading scale:

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following pattern:

A 93-100	A- 90-92		
B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82	
C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72	
D+ 67-69	D 63-66	D- 60-62	F below 60

Honesty and Plagiarism:

Don't cheat! Passing off someone else's work as yours is plagiarism. **Any student submitting plagiarized work will receive a 0 for that assignment and will be reported to the appropriate academic authorities.**

Caveat: This syllabus is subject to revision by me, provided that written or verbal notice is given in class.