

CLAS 210-01/THEA 297-01: ROMAN COMEDY ALIVE (.5 CREDIT)

MEETING DAYS, TIMES, AND PLACE: TTh, 12:30-1:45, Wallace 114, for the first half of the semester

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Dr. Robert Holschuh Simmons

21 Wallace Hall

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Office Hours: M-F 9-10 AM, and by appointment.

PREREQUISITES: None

FOR WHOM PLANNED:

This course is designed for anyone interested in understanding Roman comedy from a range of perspectives—as literature, as script, as product of its time and cultural circumstances, and as pieces for performance. It will be of particular interest for those who wish to put Roman plays into performance, since the focus of the course will be a performance of a portion of a play on Oct. 3 for the attendees of a Classics conference on campus. This class can also fulfill partial requirements for a major in Classics, Latin, Greek, or Theatre.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will introduce you to classical Roman comedy through reading, analyzing, and performing segments of a selection of the most prominent texts in the genre. Throughout the course, we will be attentive to what these plays tell us defined the genre of comedy to Romans, and also what elements seem to produce humorous effects both to Roman audiences and to contemporary American audiences. We will also focus on the contexts of these plays: they were performed in settings with conventions that affected their structures, and, importantly, they were produced in historical contexts that influenced them powerfully. While I will lecture to bring across background information and to provide certain deep analysis, discussion will be a vital component of the meaning and content of the class, and performance will be critical. **One caution: this course will be dealing with a range of topics that have been mined for humor through the centuries, some of which certain people may find offensive or painful. Among things that may make some students uncomfortable about the plays we read and other material presented in class are the following: the use of foul language; references to sexuality; mentions of rape in people's past; and mockery of a variety of people, both for their public personae and for certain characteristics or mannerisms the comedies stereotypically associate with them. I will do my best to make our discussions inclusive, kind, sensitive, and light-hearted, but a small amount of the content could be hurtful to some students. If you take issue with any of the material or discussions in this course, please contact me.**

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following, and more:

- 1) Explain the elements of the genre of comedy as understood by Romans (and perhaps Greeks) at different points in history.
- 2) Bring a dramatic text to life through performance.
- 3) Understand, create, and use costumes and props that will contribute to our performance of Roman comedy.
- 4) Apply techniques of literary and dramatic analysis to texts.
- 5) Use literary and dramatic study to develop skills in careful reading and clear writing.

- 6) Evaluate information and interpret writing about Roman drama.
- 7) Demonstrate a basic understanding of comedy as an expression of the values of Rome (and perhaps Greece) at different periods in history.
- 8) Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse social and historical contexts in which Roman (and perhaps Greek) comedy was written and interpreted.
- 9) Explain many of the complex connections between the Greek and Roman worlds and the contemporary Western world (GFA SLO 3, GL SLOs 2-3).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs) FOR MAJORS IN CLASSICS:

A student who completes a Classics Major will be able to:

- 1) Think critically about the Classical World, including know what questions to ask and how to answer them.
- 2) Know the basic structure of one (or more) of the Classical Languages.
- 3) Know the broad overview of Greek and Roman history, (the difference between the Republic and Imperial periods, for example), the values prevailing within each culture and period, and the factors that led to changes in the political, social, and economic structures.
- 4) Be familiar with Classical literature, including the major authors, genres, groupings, and relationship of literature to history and culture.
- 5) Understand the role of Classics in the modern world.

EVALUATION AND GRADING:

PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION:

This will be a tremendously active and interactive class. We will spend a lot of time physically performing Roman (and perhaps Greek) comedies. We will also be spending a lot of time in class talking about the things we have read and learned. Thus it is critical that you be willing to take active part in class, both intellectually and physically. To do the best job in carrying out class activities, it will be important for you to be well prepared for each class. Thus a significant part of your grade will come from your participation in class and your preparation for it. I will assign you a grade in this category through a combination of my observations and notes, and your own justification of a grade for yourself.

ATTENDANCE:

Because attendance is crucial to your success, and because our class meetings are where a great deal of the course's value comes, I will hold you to a high standard of attendance. You may occasionally, however, need to miss a class for illness or other reasons. **Thus you will not be penalized for your first two absences, whatever the reason for them. If you miss more than two classes, however, your grade or status in the class will be affected according to the following parameters:**

- For your third absence, your preparation and participation grade for the semester will drop by 10%.
- For absences five and above, your attendance grade will drop another ten percent for each absence (to 80%, then 70%, etc.).

Normally, the two-absence cushion should account for matters outside of your control that would keep you from attending class, so the third one, even if it could be excusable on its own, serves as the consequence for classes missed previously that were within your control, and it underscores the importance of your being present: any absence, for whatever the reason, detracts from your learning in the class. However, I recognize that a person can, at times, run into circumstances that can keep her or him out of class on several occasions without any fault on the student's part. If your first two absences were all due to debilitating or contagious illness, family emergency, mandatory religious obligation, or participation in an authorized College activity (for any of which I may require documentation), I would

be willing to consider not penalizing you for a third absence either, if that also was precipitated by one of those circumstances. For absences beyond the first two that you believe should be excused, you should contact me beforehand if you are in position to know about the absences in advance (such as if you have a mandatory religious or College obligation); if the absence is the result of an emergency, you should notify me within three days of the missed class. Please speak with me if you have a different reason for your absence that you think may be excusable. I will be the sole arbiter as to whether an absence will be considered excused. Further details:

- Missing 25 or more minutes of class (whether at the beginning, middle, or end) counts as an absence.
- Three times arriving late counts as an absence.
- If you walk in after I have taken attendance, it is your responsibility to make sure I have marked you present for the time that you were in class.

QUIZZES AND IN-CLASS WRITING:

Because it is critical that people are well-prepared for class in order for the events we will do in class to work out, I will regularly have you either take a short quiz and/or write for a few minutes in response to the reading you were assigned, and sometimes in response to questions that I have assigned along with your reading. MISSED QUIZZES AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS MAY NOT BE MADE UP, unless you have missed such an assessment for reasons that were fully justifiable and over which you had no control. (I will be the one who determines whether your circumstance justifies any mercy.) However, I will drop one or two of students' two lowest scores, including missed assignments, in tabulating their final grade.

PERFORMANCE AND PREPARATION FOR IT:

At the center of this course is a performance that we will be putting on on Saturday, Oct. 3, for an audience of Classics teachers and students present for the Illinois Classical Conference. You will need to contribute significantly to this performance in any number of ways—as an actor, as a director, as a creator of masks, costumes, or props, or in a range of other ways. As we get closer to the time when we will start dedicating the large majority of our time to preparation for the performance, you will need to agree to take certain parts in the creation and performance of this play, and it is possible that other tasks will come up that you will need to add to/change from your agreed-upon role. While I would like the performance itself to be great, your grade is not dependent on whether it actually is a great performance or not, but rather on whether you have conscientiously done your part to make the performance the best it can be.

PROJECT/EXAM:

Depending on the preferences of class members, the other assessment we have can take on several different roles. It could be a final exam on material covered in the course; if it is that, the exam will take place on **Friday, Oct. 16, at 12:30 PM**. But it may take any number of other forms as well, depending on the wishes of individual members of the class, and it is possible that people may present their projects during this final exam time. The form of this final project is something that we will discuss as the class moves along.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:	Attendance	5%
	Daily preparation and participation	15%
	Quizzes and in-class writing	15%
	The performance and your contribution to it	45%
	Final exam/project	20%

PERCENTAGE/GRADE EQUIVALENTS:

93+ = A	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	59 and below = F
90-92 = A-	83-86 = B	73-76 = C	63-66 = D	
	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D-	

REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER MATERIALS:

Moore, Timothy. *Roman Theatre* (Cambridge, 2012). **ISBN-10:** 0521138183; **ISBN-13:** 978-0521138185
Plautus and Terence: Five Comedies, translated by Deena Berg and Douglass Parker (Hackett, 1999).
ISBN-10: 087220362X; **ISBN-13:** 978-0872203624.

COURSE ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS:

This course is scheduled to meet 2 days per week for 75 minutes each for eight weeks. You should expect to spend on course reading, preparation for discussion, preparation for class rehearsals, completion of your tasks leading up to the performance, etc. approximately two hours outside of class for every hour in class. Assigned activities may take each student a different amount of time to finish; however, the weekly average for all students in the course for those matters should be 9 hours. Intensive preparation for our performance and your project/exam will be in addition to the standard weekly preparation, but will likely average out to an extra three hours per week. The time estimates for the course thus break down as follows:

In class activities	3.0 hours
Homework	6.0 hours
Intensive preparation for the performance and exam/projects (averaged out)	<u>2.0 hours</u>
Average per week:	11.0 hours

CLASS BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:

To maintain a classroom environment in which everyone can learn, please show the respect and courtesy to others that you would expect in turn. Here are a few of the ways in which you can show respect and courtesy:

- Be in your seat on time for class, and remain for the duration of each class.
- Have a notebook, pen, and relevant materials out and ready to use throughout class.
- Be ready to answer questions about the day's homework and other relevant subjects, to work on in-class assignments individually and with peers, and to share your work in small groups with the whole class.
- Remain quiet while I or others in class are speaking.
- Show support for those who speak in class by your demeanor and body language.
- Focus on the content of the class, not on personal electronic devices; all such items should be turned off and packed away during class, unless they are being used for class matters, in a way that is not distracting to your classmates or me.
- You may eat and drink in class, but only if it is not distracting to other students or me.

E-MAIL COURTESIES:

When sending me e-mail, please observe the following courtesies:

- Begin the message with a salutation of some sort (Dr. Simmons, Prof. Simmons, Mr. Simmons, etc.).
- Include a reasonably accurate subject line.
- Capitalize and punctuate where appropriate, and proofread to make sure that you are communicating clearly.



- At the end of the message, please identify yourself by the name by which I know you (first name or nickname).

I will get back to you as soon as I can. Sometimes a response will be immediate; on other occasions it may take me several hours, and quite possibly a full day if you write late in the day, at night, or on a weekend, if I need to give some thought to a response before providing one, or if I simply have other things I need to get done before I can get to e-mails.

SPECIAL NEEDS:

Anyone who has a special need that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should see me as soon as possible. I will be pleased to make the appropriate arrangements in consultation with you. Depending on the modification, you may need to be registered with Disability Services.

Disability Support Services:

If you have a disability or had academic accommodations in high school or another college, you may be eligible for academic accommodations at Monmouth College under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Monmouth College is committed to equal educational access.

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Students with disabilities can apply for accommodations at the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). The TLC is located on the 2nd floor of Poling Hall. For more information, call 309-457-2257 or connect online at <http://ou.monmouthcollege.edu/life/disability-services/default.aspx>.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

From the Monmouth College Academic Honesty Policy: “We view academic dishonesty as a threat to the integrity and intellectual mission of our institution. Any breach of the academic honesty policy – either intentionally or unintentionally – will be taken seriously and may result not only in failure in the course, but in suspension or expulsion from the college. It is each student’s responsibility to read, understand and comply with the general academic honesty policy at Monmouth College, as defined here in the Scots Guide, and to the specific guidelines for each course, as elaborated on the professor’s syllabus.

“The following areas are examples of violations of the academic honesty policy:

1. Cheating on tests, labs, etc;
2. Plagiarism, i.e., using the words, ideas, writing, or work of another without giving appropriate credit;
3. Improper collaboration between students, i.e., not doing one’s own work on outside assignments specified as group projects by the instructor;
4. Submitting work previously submitted in another course, without previous authorization by the instructor.

“Please note that this list is not intended to be exhaustive.”

The complete Monmouth College Academic Honesty Policy can be found on the College web page by clicking on “Student Life” then on “Student Handbook” in the navigation bar on the top of the page, then “Academic Regulations” in the navigation bar at the left. Or you can visit the web page directly by typing in this URL: <http://www.monmouthcollege.edu/life/residence-life/scots-guide/academic.aspx>.

In this course, any violation of the academic honesty policy will have varying consequences depending on the severity of the infraction as judged by the instructor. Minimally, a violation will result in an “F” or 0 points on the assignment in question. Additionally, the student’s course grade may be lowered by one letter grade. In severe cases, the student will be assigned a course grade of “F” and dismissed from the class. All cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Associate Dean, who may decide to recommend further action to the Admissions and Academic Status Committee, including suspension or dismissal. It is assumed that students will educate themselves regarding what is considered to be academic dishonesty, so excuses or claims of ignorance will not mitigate the consequences of any violations.

HELP OUTSIDE OF CLASS:

You should not hesitate to talk with me about any difficulties you are having—the course material and the performance task we are undertaking can be challenging, and I want to help you do the best you can at it. Speak with me as soon as you are having trouble; letting a problem fester is likely to make it worse. There are also other resources available to assist you.

Teaching & Learning Center:

The Teaching and Learning Center offers FREE resources to assist Monmouth College students with their academic success. Programs include Supplemental Instruction for difficult classes, drop-in and appointment tutoring, and individual academic coaching. The TLC is here to help students excel academically. TLC services are not just for struggling students, but can assist all students to get better grades, practice stronger study skills, and manage time.

Visit Dana and Rita at the TLC on 2nd floor Poling Hall from 8am-4:30pm or online at <http://ou.monmouthcollege.edu/academics/teaching-learning-center/>

We can also be reached at: tlc@monmouthcollege.edu or 309-457-2257

Like the TLC on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Monmouth-College-Teaching-and-Learning-Center/203117166403210?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

Writing Center:

The Monmouth College Writing Center offers unlimited, free peer tutoring sessions for students at Monmouth College. Peer writing tutors work with writers from any major, of any writing ability, on any type of writing assignment, and at any stage of their writing processes, from planning to drafting to revising to editing. We are located on the 3rd floor of the Mellinger Teaching and Learning Center, and we are open Sunday-Thursday 7-10pm and Monday-Thursday 3-5pm on a first-come, first-served basis. No appointment necessary! Learn more about the Writing Center at our website: <http://blogs.monm.edu/writingatmc/writing-center/>

Speech Tutors:

Speech Tutors are available on a limited basis in the Writing Center to work with students who are preparing for a presentation in any course. Speech Tutors can help fine-tune thesis statements, review outlines, suggest organizational strategies, provide feedback about visual aids, help students develop ways to manage speech anxiety, and watch speech practice sessions.

For information about tutor availability, visit the Writing Center’s website at <http://blogs.monm.edu/writingatmc/writing-center/>.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS (TENTATIVE):

Note: The assignments below are **due** on the days on which they are listed. If there is no other instruction given, you are to do the following:

- carefully read the assigned play, including the short introduction given prior to it in your course text, be ready for a quiz on it, be ready to write about it, and be ready to act out parts of it (with your text in front of you);
 - You do not need to read more of the longer general introduction at the beginning of the Plautus and Terence book than is specifically assigned to you, though it would not hurt to read it all;
- read passages from Timothy Moore’s *Roman Theatre* if there is an assignment listed as “Moore” plus page numbers;
 - For those readings, you should read everything, including the notes at the bottom of the pages. You should read the questions that Moore offers, and think about them enough that you **COULD** answer them in class, but I will not require you to prepare response to those questions in writing.
 - Note for understanding the readings: if there is a blue number in the left margin, that means that an original source from ancient Rome, either written or visual, is being incorporated into the chapter. The text that is set in a light bluish-gray box right before it gives context for the original source.
- read any other assignment that is posted on Moodle; and
- consider the discussion questions posted on Moodle dutifully enough to write and discuss thoughtfully in response to them in class.
 - You do **NOT** need to write out your responses to each day’s discussion questions carefully ahead of time, but you **DO** need to take careful enough notes on your reading, with the discussion questions in mind, that you will be able to write a coherent, thoughtful response to any of the questions for five minutes when you get to class. You are free to look at your notes when you write out your discussion responses in class.

You are to read each play in its entirety on the first day that it is assigned; on the second day (if we spend a second day on a play), you should look over it again in light of the first day’s class discussion, the second day’s discussion questions, and further direction I have given you after the first day’s coverage.

Day 1 (Tuesday, August 25)

Assignments due today: none—first day

Day 2 (Thursday, August 27)

Assignments due today:

- Plautus, *Major Blomhard (Miles Gloriosus)*

Day 3 (Tuesday, September 1)

Assignments due today:

- Plautus, *Double Bind (Menaechmi)*

Day 4 (Thursday, September 3)

Assignments due today:

- Moore pp. vii-ix and 15 (starting with “The Setting”)-36
- In class: watch a portion of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*

Day 5 (Tuesday, September 8)

Assignments due today:

- Plautus, *Mostellaria* (*The Haunted House*)—print it out to read from Moodle

Day 6 (Thursday, September 10)

Assignments due today:

- Moore pp. 1-14 and 37-61
- In class: watch a portion of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*

Day 7 (Tuesday, September 15)

Assignments due today:

- **Plans for our performance—assignment to be announced**

Day 8 (Thursday, September 17)

Assignments due today:

- **Plans for our performance—assignment to be announced**

Day 9 (Tuesday, September 22)

Assignments due today:

- **Plans for our performance—assignment to be announced**

Day 10 (Thursday, September 24)

Assignments due today:

- **Plans for our performance—assignment to be announced**

Day 11 (Tuesday, September 29)

Assignments due today:

- **Practice for performance on Saturday night, with a possible performance on Friday as well**

Day 12 (Thursday, October 1)

Assignments due today:

- **Practice for performance on Saturday night, with a possible performance on Friday as well**

Day 13 (Tuesday, October 6)

Assignments due today:

- Moore pp. 61-89

Day 14 (Thursday, October 8)

Assignments due today:

- Terence, *Brothers* (*Adelphoe*)

Day 15 (Tuesday, October 13)

Assignments due today:

- Terence, *The Mother-in-Law* (*Hecyra*)

Day 16 (Thursday, October 15)

Assignments due today:

- Menander, *Dyskolos*—print out from Moodle

Friday, October 16:

Final Exam time: 12:30-1:45

Final exam, or presentation of final projects

Caveat:

Many things that are currently on the syllabus are subject to change as time goes on. Readings may be moved, added, or deleted. Activities may change. This is all a function of the nature of this course—we are trying to put on a good performance, and what it takes to make a performance good is not something that is perfectly concrete. We are also trying to make this course as meaningful as possible for all of you, and I want to leave some flexibility to do that. Any substantial deviations from this schedule will be given to you in writing.