

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

COURSE SYLLABUS

1. **COURSE TITLE**

Comedy: Idea and History

2. **COURSE CODE**

HUMN 4056

3. **No. OF UNITS**

3 Units

4. **OFFERING DEPARTMENT**

Department Humanities and Creative Writing

5. **PREREQUISITES**

NIL

6. **MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

English/Chinese

7. **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

This course aims at introducing and analysing different forms of comedy in theatre, from ancient Greek to modern comedy, from the west to the east. By the end of the course students should be able to describe the aesthetic qualities, structure and psychological effects of different forms of comedy in theatre. Further, they should be able to critically interpret great comedies, their different forms and methods of performance and staging, and assess the meaning of comedy in theatre for our real life.

8. **COURSE CONTENT**

- I. Introduction: What is comedy?
 - a) Is comedy merely to make us laugh?
 - b) Psychology of laughter
 - c) Theory of humour
 - d) Comic relief
 - e) Parody
 - f) Farce

- II. Greek Comedy
 - a) Aristophanes: *Lysistrata*, *Clouds*, *Frog*

- b) Satyr play
- c) Aristotle's notion of comedy

III. Shakespearian Comedy

- a) Mistaken identity: *Comedy of Errors, Twelfth Night*
- b) Nothing: *Much Ado About Nothing*
- c) Crisis and relief
- d) Reconciliation and happy ending

IV. Modern and Contemporary Comedies

- a) Commedia dell'arte: *The Servant of Two Masters*
- b) Molière: *The Miser*
- c) Oscar Wilde: *Importance of Being Earnest*
- d) Dario Fo: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*

V. Eastern Comedy

- a) Japanese *Kyogen* (狂言)
- b) Chinese *Xiang Sheng* (相聲)

9. **COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (CILOs)**

CILO	By the end of the course, students should be able to:
CILO 1	describe aesthetic qualities and structure and psychological effect of different forms of comedy in theatre;
CILO 2	interpret critically great comedies and their different forms and methods of performance and staging
CILO 3	Evaluate critically the meaning of comedy in theatre for our real life

10. **TEACHING & LEARNING ACTIVITIES (TLAs)**

CILO alignment	Type of TLA
CILO 1+2	Students will be required to present in tutorials at least one genre of comedy with examples, its aesthetic and structural features
CILO 2+3	Assignments --write a research paper with a clear and concise thesis statement and using clear and analytical reasoning, effective communication, and proper formatting.
CILO 2+3	Exam --complete an exam consisting of objective questions and an essay great comedy

11. **ASSESSMENT METHODS (AMS)**

Type of	Weighting	CILOs	Description of Assessment Tasks
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Assessment Methods		to be addressed	
Presentation	30%	CILO 1+2	The participation portion of the grade determines whether the student has been attentive to lecture material from the instructor, has participated in discussions of course content, and, if the instructor so determines, has completed any presentations or other activities to be determined by the instructor.
Term Paper	30%	CILO 2+3	The research paper tests the student's ability to present and critically evaluate a chosen genre of comedy
Final exam	40%	CILO 2+3	The exam will test the student's recognition and comprehension of terms and concepts from course lectures and readings as well as the student's ability to explain, synthesize, and critique course content in a written essay.

END