

# **THE 405 – FILM: GREAT COMEDY FILMS**

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**SYLLABUS**

**SLN# 73633 / 42801**

**FALL B - 2018**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Chris Chandler

**E-MAIL:** [cschand2@asu.edu](mailto:cschand2@asu.edu)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a study and analysis course of Great Comedy Films with an emphasis on the process of how comedy works, the different types of comedy films, and comedy trends from the beginning of cinema through current day.

We also profile some of the comic geniuses through film history, and view and dissect some of the major films ever created. The American Film Institute's Great Comedy Films list (aka 100 Greatest Laughs) is used as a reference guide for the class.

There are some of you that may complain that the films that are shown in this class aren't more current. The AFI list only goes until 2000 – so great movies like “The Hangover Part 3”, Adam Sandler's “Blended” or “Alvin and the Chipmunks Part 4 – Road Chip” aren't going to be screened.

## **COURSE FORMAT:**

- This class is an “online” class. It means that you don't have to sit in a classroom. The classroom is on a computer! The class is delivered with almost everything you need through this thing called the “internet.” I've checked it out and it's pretty sweet. And I like using “air quotes” when I talk.
- Some of the films that are assigned may not be available through the class interface, but can still be streamed online through alternative methods such as Itunes, Netflix and Hulu for a small fee.

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- The class is divided into Four (4) Units, with Three (3) Sections each, for a total of Twelve (12) Sections. Think of them as chapters in a book. Each Unit takes the student (“You”) through the magic of comedy films in a somewhat chronological order.
- These Units and the Sections are ALL OPEN at the beginning of the Semester so you may proceed at your own pace. , Units will close periodically during the semester, based upon the semester’s academic calendar, so make sure you know when the Closing Dates are, or you could miss them. And that would be a terrible thing.

## ***Here’s the Order to Do Things In:***

- Each Section has different assignments you will need to complete. Chapter Readings, Instructor Lecture, Feature Film, Quiz and a Discussion Board.
- There are a list of the Chapters in the book (as well as the Supplemental Material) that are referenced directly for that Section. Read those Chapters.
- You will need to listen (and watch) each of the lectures. Each lecture is broken into different parts. They are listed Part 1, Part 2, sometimes there is a Part 3. Click the link and listen to that part of the Lecture.
- There is a feature-length film linked to each of the Twelve Parts of the class. Except a few that will need to be screened however you can find them. A lot of people like the Netflix option. In which case, you are free to get all of the films from Netflix or some other way of watching the film - instead of watching them through the interface. Just watch the film. And don’t pretend you don’t share your friend’s Netflix account. We all do it!

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- Then you need to go to the Quiz and then the Discussion Board. There's a whole ton of points you can earn on these activities that will help you in the overall goal of passing the class. Some of you may aspire to more than just passing the class!
- At the end of each Unit there is a Reflection Question where I ask you a comprehensive question based solely on the information from within Unit 1, and you need to respond with a written answer. Technically it's typed. But I think you know what I mean.
- The Reflection Answer has a minimum of 125 words and will need to be written in the standard essay format – introductory paragraph with a thesis statement, three paragraph body and conclusion paragraph. Oh and spelling and grammar. You know everything they taught you in grade school. Plus it's 2018 spell check is simple and sometimes happens on it's own. But you should still take the time to just go through your answer to make sure it's good before submitting it. Also let someone else read it. They will catch something that you didn't. Make sure you save your answer in a separate document before submitting!!
- So there are a total of Four Reflection Answers you will have to write for the class. Only four – sorry to disappoint all the overachievers out there.
- Are you still reading this? Just checking.

## **REQUIRED READING:**

You are forced to buy a book for this class. I know – you already spend a bunch of money to go to school, why am I making you buy a book?

Because this is a 400-level class...

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## ***Great Comedy Films: or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Funny Movies* by Chris LaMont**

Yes, ASU's very own Professor Chris LaMont wrote this, and it's brilliant. He also designed the class so you actually hear a lot from him.

The book is available as an e-book and also hard copies are available in the ASU bookstores. Get yours today! I prefer the hard copy – just because you get to keep it forever, as opposed to these ebooks that you are renting for one year.

Now the book is a monster. Professor LaMont spent a year working on it. And not all of the book is used for the class, for which I've designated the reading assignments for each of the Sections. So don't freak out. But you'll love this book. It's pretty funny – and yes, LaMont thinks he's funnier than you probably think he is.

### **MOORRRREE READING!**

There are also supplemental reading materials that are intrinsic to understanding the concepts of how comedy films are made. That's also included in the Reading Assignments and those Supplemental Materials are available through the Kendall-Hunt website that you have access to when you buy the book. So get on that.

### **MAJOR NOTE ABOUT THE FILMS THAT ARE SCREENING IN THE CLASS:**

Because of copyright issues, ASU Online cannot show all of the films that are required to watch in the class. These films can be watched through an alternative computer-based viewing system, such as Netflix, I-tunes, Amazon or Hulu. They are the newer films that will be found in Units 3 & 4.

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**They are: *The Graduate, This is Spinal Tap, Annie Hall* and *There's Something About Mary*.**

It is each student's responsibility to watch the films that are assigned in the class. You really should. Actually you may try and be clever and bluff your way through it. It never works. You have been warned...

## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

**This is an email from the IT Department.**

**Please do not contact your instructor with technical questions.** He's smart. But not that smart. Herberger Online handles all technical questions and issues that may arise in this course.

Please contact Herberger Online's support team immediately if you encounter technical issues while completing an assignment and you are unable to resolve the problem.

**Technical support is available 24/7 at:**

- **holsupport@asu.edu**
- **1-888-298-4117**
- **480-965-3057 (International)**

When contacting support, please provide:

- The full name of this course (ABC 123: Long Name)
- The title(s) of any assignment(s) you're having trouble with
- A brief overview of the problem
- Step-by-step instructions to reproduce the problem

**Thank you Professor! Back to your regularly scheduled syllabus!**

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## **CONTENT:**

Together we will understand the great American comedy films of the last century (and a couple of decades). The different types of comedy films, the major players over the last hundred years or so in comic cinema and what makes a comedy film will be thoroughly discussed.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

All necessary and appropriate sanctions will be issued to all parties involved with plagiarizing any and all course work. Plagiarism and any other forms of academic dishonesty that is in violation with the Student Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. For more information. Please see the ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>

## **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:**

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the ASU Disability Resource Center (DRC)

<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/#> ; 480-965-1234; TDD: 480-965-9000. This is a very important step as accommodations may be difficult to make retroactively.

If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, in order to assure that you receive your accommodations in a timely manner, please present this documentation to the instructor no later than the end of the first week of the semester so that your needs can be address effectively.

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## **WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE:**

If you wish to withdraw from this course, it is your responsibility to do so. Course registration changes can be processed through My ASU: <http://my.asu.edu> but you need to withdraw pretty quick. Go to the Academic Calendar and check out the deadline.

## **IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THE CLASS:**

- Some of the films shown in this class will contain language that is considered obscene or profane, scenes that are graphically explicit in portraying violent or sexual acts. And that's just the lectures.
- Also, some films could be in black and white, foreign with – God-forbid - subtitles, and may represent ideas, lifestyles or practices that are considered immoral or amoral by some standards.
- And the language - Good heavens! Some of these films may say words that are considered “Dirty” or “Obscene”. I will not go into detail, but it could be pretty shocking.
- Also since this is a course on Great Comedy Films, some of the humorous acts portrayed in the motion pictures we will study could offend particularly sensitive students.
- Pratfalls, sex, bodily functions/excrement/fluids, sarcasm, sex, animal humor, stuttering, racism, genderism, ageism, politics, religion, drugs, alcohol, sex (did I already say sex?)– all topics can be explored in the comic medium. And you may not like this!

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- Also Professor LaMont may be one of the most vital instructors at the University, but some of his comments can be considered overly sarcastic, critical, annoying, ironic, cynical, sardonic and wry. He may say things that shock you! It could be scandalous!
- Seriously, he might be waaay too annoying for you. This could be another stumbling block for your full appreciation of this educational experience. He also tries to be funny sometimes. That's when it gets tough to stomach.
- And since he wrote the textbook, there's a lot of things in there that may question your moral fibre. Language, descriptions of unholy acts, bad jokes – it's all there.

**Please consider these cautions and decide  
whether or not this class is for you.  
If not, you may wish to withdraw at this time.**

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## **COURSE GRADING:**

This course is graded on the scale system.

<b><u>POINTS AVAILABLE</u></b>	<b><u>GRADE SCALE</u></b>
<b>A+ = 1000 -</b>	<b>980</b>
<b>A = 979 -</b>	<b>920</b>
<b>A- = 919 -</b>	<b>900</b>
<b>B+ = 899 -</b>	<b>880</b>
<b>B = 879 -</b>	<b>820</b>
<b>B- = 819 -</b>	<b>800</b>
<b>C+ = 799 -</b>	<b>780</b>
<b>C = 779 -</b>	<b>700</b>
<b>D = 699 -</b>	<b>600</b>
<b>E = 599 -</b>	<b>0</b>



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## MORE INFO

Remember there are 4 Units of 3 Sections Each. So from there...

There are TWELVE DISCUSSION BOARDS – one for each Unit and your participation is **worth up to 20 points for a total of 240 points.**

There are TWELVE QUIZZES WITH 10 TRUE AND FALSE QUESTIONS ON EACH, each question is **worth 3 points.** So each Quiz is worth up to **30 (forty) points** for a grand total of **360 points available.**

There are FOUR REFLECTION QUESTIONS – one for each Unit and your participation is **worth up to 50 points for a total of 200 points.**

- Also as part of each Unit, the Instructor will pose a Reflection Question, querying your thought processes. Your responses will be evaluated on content, communication and understanding.
- Your Reflection answers will need to be a minimum of 125 words. This is serious college-type writing. Yes, I know this is supposed to be an “Easy-A” class. It’s not quite. But still it’s pretty good.

And at the end of the course, there is the **FINAL EXAM.** Oh, yeah. That’s a toughie. You just can’t show up on the last day and expect to ace that without at least going through the course.

- The questions are all true/false and multiple-choice. That’s not so bad!
- The **Final Exam** is worth **UP TO 200 points** (50 questions worth 4 points each) and the window for taking the Final Exam will be available for **a 48 hours.**

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- If you are unable to take the Final Exam during the scheduled window of opportunity, you will not be able to take it again. **There are no make-up tests.**
- Even if you are in the hospital (okay, a verifiable medical excuse is an exception) or bereaving the loss of a beloved family or friend (fine, I will also work with you on this) but you still can jump online within the exam period and take it.

## **A Note About Missing Assignments:**

Nothing is so pressing that you can't get online to do the quiz, reflection question or discussion board. Think about it - the Units have been open since the day the class opened. Even if it's Unit 1, you've had NEARLY TWO WEEKS to complete Unit 1.

- So there is **no excuse** for missing any assignment deadlines. And I've heard them all. My dog ate the wi-fi is my favorite.
- Part of the deal with an online course is that you will have access to a computer. It is NOT the Instructor's responsibility if your laptop dies and the Genius Bar is booked. Go and find another computer. If you are close to ASU then hey! Guess what?! They have communal computers for students!! WHAT? NO WAY! YES WAY!
- That includes the internet. You must have full access to the internet to take this course. If your internet goes out, that's not the course's fault. You need to remedy that situation fast. Get to someone's house or a library or Starbucks or McDonalds – pronto! Don't! I repeat DO NOT contact me two weeks later saying something happened. Contact me immediately.

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## Unit 1: Assignments & Possible Points

Opens	Closes	Assignments
<b>10/10/2018</b> <b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>10/19/2018</b> <b>11:59 PM</b>	<p><i>Sec 1 Quiz - 30 points</i></p> <p><i>Sec 1 Discussion Board – 20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sec 2 Quiz - 30 points</i></p> <p><i>Sec 2 Discussion Board –20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sec 3 Quiz - 30 points</i></p> <p><i>Sec 3 Discussion Board – 20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>UNIT 1 Reflection Answer – 50 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>TOTAL (up to) 200 points</i></p>

## Unit 2: Assignments & Possible Points

Opens	Closes	Assignments
<b>10/10/2018</b> <b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>10/29/2018</b> <b>11:59 PM</b>	<p><i>Sec 1 Quiz - 30 points</i></p> <p><i>Sec 1 Discussion Board – 20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sec 2 Quiz - 30 points</i></p> <p><i>Sec 2 Discussion Board –20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sec 3 Quiz - 30 points</i></p> <p><i>Sec 3 Discussion Board – 20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>UNIT 2 Reflection Answer - 50 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>TOTAL (up to) 200 points</i></p>

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## Unit 3: Assignments & Possible Points

Opens	Closes	Assignments
<p><b>10/10/2018</b> <b>9:00 AM</b></p>	<p><b>11/09/2018</b> <b>11:59 PM</b></p>	<p><i>Sec 1 Quiz - 30 points</i> <i>Sec 1 Discussion Board – 20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sec 2 Quiz - 30 points</i> <i>Sec 2 Discussion Board 20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sec 3 Quiz - 30 points</i> <i>Sec 3 Discussion Board – 20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>UNIT 3 Reflection Answer - 50 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>TOTAL (up to) 200 points</i></p>

## Unit 4: Assignments & Possible Points

Opens	Closes	Assignments
<p><b>10/10/2018</b> <b>9:00 AM</b></p>	<p><b>11/21/2018</b> <b>11:59 PM</b></p>	<p><i>Sec 1 Quiz - 30 points</i> <i>Sec 1 Discussion Board – 20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sec 2 Quiz - 30 points</i> <i>Sec 2 Discussion Board –20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sec 3 Quiz - 30 points</i> <i>Sec 3 Discussion Board – 20 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>UNIT 4 Reflection Answer – 50 points</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>TOTAL (up to) 200 points</i></p>

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## Final Exam

<b>Opens</b>	<b>Closes</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>11/28/2018 11:59 PM</b>	<b>11/30/2018 11:59 PM</b>	<b>Online Final Exam – Up to 200 points</b>

## TOTALS FOR GRADING:

UNIT 1 – up to 200 points

UNIT 2 – up to 200 points

UNIT 3 – up to 200 points

UNIT 4 - up to 200 points

Final Exam - up to 200 points

GRAND TOTAL of up to 1000 Points

## AND FINALLY - THE BOLD AND ALL CAP EDITION

THE BEST WAY TO CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR IS THROUGH E-MAIL [cschand2@asu.edu](mailto:cschand2@asu.edu) - I'm good at getting back with you. And if I don't get back with you in 48 hours, please EMAIL ME AGAIN.

LAST WARNING ABOUT UNIT CLOSING DEADLINES, if you have an issue with meeting a Unit closing deadline, you cannot appeal missing a Unit or any assignment within the Unit.

This is due to the fact that these Units and Sections have been open SINCE THE SEMESTER STARTED. Waiting until the last minute is not acceptable. Don't bother asking. I will send out reminders so make sure you keep an eye on your email.

That's It! Send me questions if you need to! I AM HERE FOR YOU!  
[cschand2@asu.edu](mailto:cschand2@asu.edu) - and have fun this semester!