I. Course objectives
   A. General: This semester continues the objectives from last semester; 1) analyzing and defining humor, laughter, joking, and comedy; and 2) understanding this subject within the third year seminar focus on authority, values, and aesthetics.
   The course will continue to ask a series of questions about both categories of inquiry, among them the following: How do we define an aesthetics of comedy? Are their standards of judgment for comedy? Is there any such thing as the "perfect comedy"? Are there any objective aesthetic standards for judging a comedic production bad or good? Good, better, or best? Successful or unsuccessful? What is the relationship between comedy and "values"? How does comedy reflect social values? Does comedy sustain or challenge those values? How does it effect moral values? Is comedy moral, amoral, and or immoral? What is the relationship between social or political authority and comedy? How does comedy challenge or affirm social or political authority?
   While last semester the course explored anthropological, sociological, psychological, and philosophical theories of laughter and explored some manifestation of these values in five more or less contemporary films, this semester studies humor and laughter through literary comedy. It begins with Aristophanes and Menander in ancient Athens, running through Roman comedy and then culminating, effectively, with Shakespeare.
   While dealing with the theory of comedy and its manifestations in classic playwright, the course will also emphasize writing and argumentation. To this end, we will have a two small writing assignments on the assigned texts, one larger one, the carry-over assignment from last semester, and a final take-home essay.

II. TEXTS
   "Comedy," (from the Encyclopedia Britannica)
   Euripides, The Orestes
   Aristophanes, The Frogs
   Bowie, A. M., "Frogs" (from Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy)
   Menander, The Grouch
   Plautus, The Menaechmus Twins
   Shakespeare, Comedy of Errors
   ?Shakespeare, Twelfth Night
   Shakespeare, Midsummer Night's Dream
   Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet

III. SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS (Tentative)
Jan  8      PARTY AT PYRON'S: WELCOME BACK
             Last semester's last paper due
      10     Theories of Humor: Humor and Religion
      12     Humor; and Tragedy: The Human Condition (or not)
      17     "Comedy"
      19     "Comedy"
      24     Euripides, The Orestes
      26     Euripides, The Orestes
      31     Aristophanes, The Frogs
FEB  2      Aristophanes, The Frogs
      7      Bowie, "Frogs" (from Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy)
      9      The Transformation of Athenian society: Old Comedy to New
      14     Menander, The Grouch
      16     Menander, The Grouch
IV. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
   A. Shorter Papers
      The course requires two four- to five-page essays, one on classical comedy, the second on Shakespearean comedy.
      Due dates:
      March 7
      April 11
   B. Longer Paper
      This is the carry-over assignment from fall semester. Within the first two weeks of class, you should submit your essay on comic strips or other contemporary manifestations of comedy.
   C. Final Assignment
      This will be around six pages, an essay that summarizes your knowledge from the course. Due on April 20.

V. QUIZZES.
   Every time you have an assigned reading, you should be prepared to be tested on the material. Such quizzes are assigned in order to encourage you to 1) keep up with the material, 2) read the material on time, 3) prepare you to discuss the reading matter with some care in class on the assigned dates, and 4) guarantee your attendance. Discussion accompanies each reading, and you should be prepared to discuss any of the material assigned on the proper date. Failure to take the quiz on the assigned date merits a zero. Do not expect make-up quizzes except in the case of grave emergency, and advance warning to the professor.
   In the circumstance of emergency make-up quizzes, you must make up within a week of the missed test.

VI. GRADING
   Quizzes and Participation . . . . 1/3
   Essays . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 2/3
   The quizzes constitute a significant portion of your grade. Given the seminar-dialogue nature of the course, you will also be graded on your active participation in discussion.
VII. ATTENDANCE
You are expected to attend every class meeting and to come on time. You will be allowed one absence; otherwise your grade will drop with each session missed. If you must miss class unavoidably, you should confirm with your professor about taking your quizzes. Note, too: On every occasion of a reading assignment, the professor will quiz you on the material you read. Do not count on make-up quizzes unless you make prior arrangements with the professor.

VIII. ACADEMIC HONESTY
Submit only your own work. If you have any questions about what is yours, what belongs to another person, check with Pyron