



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

**School of the Arts and Media**

**Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**



**ARTS2064**

**A Case Study of Film Genre: Comedian Comedy**

**Session 1, 2017**

# Course Outline

## Staff Contact Details

### Conveners

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Lisa Trahair	L.trahair@unsw.edu.au	Wednesday 1.30-2.30	Robert Webster Building, Level 2, Room 226	93855011

## School Contact Information

Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building

Phone: (02) 9385 4856

Email: [sam@unsw.edu.au](mailto:sam@unsw.edu.au)

Website: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au>

## Attendance Requirements

A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a face-to-face (F2F) or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.

A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.

If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, their request should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.

A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance. A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course's learning outcomes and/or volume of learning. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.

For more information about the SAM attendance protocols, see the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

## Essential Information

All SAM students must make a valid attempt at all assessments in order to pass the course.

For essential student information relating to: attendance requirements; requests for extension; review of

marks; occupational health and safety; examination procedures; special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure; student equity and disability; and other essential matters, see the SAM Policies and Guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

## **Course Details**

### **Credit Points 6**

### **Summary of the Course**

Film genres are more than the mechanism of classification based on subject matter that we associate with the western, the horror film, the musical, etc. From producers to consumers, from studio moguls to directors, to critics, fans and aficionados, the notion of genre is used as a key determinant of a film's meaning. Genre films work within and have the opportunity to reflect on society's primary myths of identity and individuality, freedom and responsibility, cultural stability and social change. This course will consider some of the most fascinating questions raised by genre films: What are the parameters for standardization and innovation within film genres? How do individual filmmakers rework the conventions of a genre to maintain its relevance their time? In what sense can film genres operate as instigators of change? How do genre films reflect the ravages of history?

This course will investigate the conventions of the genre of Comedian Comedy in relation to theories of comedy and the comic. By attending to key works in philosophy, psychoanalysis and literature, in addition to film studies, and to different comic forms, such as slapstick, parody and satire, the course will consider both why we laugh and the cultural function of comedy.

### **At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to**

1. Understand key issues and debates in film genre study and theory
2. Identify the key features of the genres studied in the course
3. Recall key debates that have taken place around the genres studied
4. Develop a critical argument in relation to debates raised in the course
5. Conduct and deploy research in film genre studies
6. Work in small groups and teams to undertake small research tasks and present findings
7. Contextualise and articulate their own critical position in spoken and written form
8. Recognise some of the ways that aesthetic, technological, social, and industrial factors have shaped the development of the genres studied

## **Teaching Strategies**

### **Rationale for the inclusion of content and teaching approach**

The rationale for this course aligns with many of the aims and objectives of the Film Studies major. It builds on the foundational knowledges in Film Studies that students gain in the level 1 courses (skills in film analysis; introductory knowledge of the history of film and cinema; an awareness of the importance of national and international contexts for filmmaking) and develops these knowledges through the close study of particular genres and by raising and exploring questions about popular cinema(s) and cultural value. Through its focus on the interrelations between industrial, technological, social and aesthetic factors and their role in shaping film genres, it develops students' understandings of the historical development of film as both a specific medium and as part of a constantly evolving media landscape. By demonstrating some of the research methodologies deployed in genre studies and in studies of film history more generally, it provides students with some of the critical skills required for level 3 Film Studies courses. In addition, and in line with the aims of our level 2 courses, Film Genres allows students to practice and develop more generic skills such as theoretical and practical project planning,

academic research, critical thinking and writing skills, and skills in communication and in collaborative work.

### **Teaching Strategies**

Film screenings provide the focus of the course and will take place each week after the lecture. Films have been selected in order to demonstrate how the aesthetics of cinematic comedy has developed since the invention of cinema in 1895 and to introduce students to the work of the most significant comic performers in the twentieth century (Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Jerry Lewis, Woody Allen and Jim Carrey, to name a few). Particular emphasis is given to the comedy of the silent era because it was in this period that the distinctively visual components of the cinematic comedy were developed.

Lectures are designed to provide a context for film screenings by referring to the impact of cultural and institutional factors on a given comedian's work and by focusing on the specific comic strategies developed by the comedian in response to them. Lectures will also suggest ways of theorizing such strategies. They will thus identify how particular films contribute to cinematic comedy, explain relevant concepts, and discuss aspects of cinematic form and style.

The basis of tutorials will be student-led discussion. In addition to facilitating discussion in a designated week, students will be assessed on their participation in tutorials. For further details of how such participation will be assessed see Assessment Task 3. Tutorials are thus designed to ensure that students develop the capacity to think independently about the course material and come to class adequately prepared to discuss it.

## Assessment

SEE COURSE GUIDE ON MOODLE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Length	Due Date	Submission
Research Essay	45%			
Collaborative tutorial facilitation	20%			
Individual classroom contributions	10%	null	null	null
Reading exercise	25%	3 summaries, each 500 words	one week after the tutorial for which the reading was set	null

### Assessment Details

#### Assessment 1: Research Essay

**Details:** 2500 words. This is the final assessment task. Students receive summative feedback and a grade. Students who want their work returned with comments must include a stamped self-addressed envelope with submission.

#### Learning outcomes:

- Understand key issues and debates in film genre study and theory
- Identify the key features of the genres studied in the course
- Recall key debates that have taken place around the genres studied
- Develop a critical argument in relation to debates raised in the course
- Conduct and deploy research in film genre studies
- Contextualise and articulate their own critical position in spoken and written form
- Recognise some of the ways that aesthetic, technological, social, and industrial factors have shaped the development of the genres studied

#### Assessment 2: Collaborative tutorial facilitation

**Details:** This assessment task is comprised of several components. Working in teams of two or three, students will develop and conduct a class quiz based on the weekly lecture and tutorial readings, direct students in small group activities devoted to sequence analysis and contribute questions for class discussion. Students will be assessed both as a team (based on their submission of slides) and individually based on their class room contribution. Each part of the assessment will attract 10% of your overall mark for the course. Students must submit a printout of slides and a breakdown of responsibilities at the end of the tutorial. Students presenting should aim to finish 10 minutes before the end of the class in order to leave time to discuss the topic for the written paper with their tutor. Students receive an individual marking rubric.

**Learning outcomes:**

- Understand key issues and debates in film genre study and theory
- Identify the key features of the genres studied in the course
- Recall key debates that have taken place around the genres studied
- Work in small groups and teams to undertake small research tasks and present findings

**Assessment 3: Individual classroom contributions**

**Details:** This task requires sustained contributions throughout the semester. Students will be given feedback on their performance twice during Semester in form of a rubric setting out strengths, weaknesses and specific areas for improvement.

**Turnitin setting:** This is not a Turnitin assignment

**Learning outcomes:**

- Identify the key features of the genres studied in the course
- Recall key debates that have taken place around the genres studied
- Recognise some of the ways that aesthetic, technological, social, and industrial factors have shaped the development of the genres studied
- Understand key issues and debates in film genre study and theory

**Assessment 4: Reading exercise**

**Details:** 1500 words. Students receive written feedback, including a rubric and grade.

**Turnitin setting:** This assignment is submitted through Turnitin, students do not see Turnitin similarity reports

**Learning outcomes:**

- Identify the key features of the genres studied in the course
- Recall key debates that have taken place around the genres studied
- Recognise some of the ways that aesthetic, technological, social, and industrial factors have shaped the development of the genres studied

## Submission of Assessment Tasks

Students are expected to put their names and student numbers on every page of their assignments.

## Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on [externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au](mailto:externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au). Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally in SAM there will no longer be any hard-copy submission; assessments must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible it will be stated on your course's moodle site with alternative submission details.

## Late Assessment Penalties

An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).

The late penalty is the loss of 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late. Lateness will include weekends and public holidays. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted fourteen days after the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted twenty-one days after the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will automatically fail the course.

## Special Consideration Applications

You can apply for special consideration when illness or other circumstances interfere with your assessment performance.

Sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond your control may:

- \* Prevent you from completing a course requirement,
- \* Keep you from attending an assessable activity,
- \* Stop you submitting assessable work for a course,



\* Significantly affect your performance in assessable work, be it a formal end-of-semester examination, a class test, a laboratory test, a seminar presentation or any other form of assessment.

For further details in relation to Special Consideration including 'When to Apply', 'How to Apply' and 'Supporting Documentation' please refer to the Special Consideration website:  
<https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>

## Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

**Copying:** using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

**Inappropriate paraphrasing:** changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student's own analysis to bring the material together.

**Collusion:** working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

**Inappropriate citation:** Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

**Duplication ("self-plagiarism"):** submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices;

Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management

Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

# Course Schedule

## Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 27 February - 5 March		<p><b>Topic 1:</b> Introduction</p> <p>Lecture/Screening: <i>Austin Powers: The International Man of Mystery</i>, (1997), 94 mins.</p>
Week 2: 6 - 12 March		<p><b>Topic 2:</b> Early Film Comedy and Mack Sennett</p> <p>Lecture/Screening: <i>Tillie's Punctured Romance</i></p>
Week 3: 13 - 19 March		<p><b>Topic 3:</b> Comedy and narrative</p> <p>Lecture/Screening: Buster Keaton, <i>The General</i> (1927), 77 mins, dir: Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman</p>
Week 4: 20 - 26 March		<p><b>Topic 4:</b> Comedy and the bawdy</p> <p>Lecture/Screening: Charlie Chaplin, 1931, <i>City Lights</i>, dir: Charles Chaplin, 87 mins</p>
Week 5: 27 March - 2 April		<p><b>Topic 5:</b> Sound Comedy and the Marx Brothers</p> <p>Lecture/Screening: <i>Duck Soup</i>, dir: Leo McCarey, 1933, 68 mins</p>
Week 6: 3 - 9 April		<p><b>Topic 6:</b> Screwball Comedy and Romance</p> <p>Lecture/Screening: <i>It Happened One Night</i>, 1934, dir: Frank Capra, 105 mins</p>
Week 7: 10 - 16 April		<p><b>Topic 7:</b> The People's Choice</p>

Date	Type	Content
Week 8: 24 - 30 April		<b>Topic 8: The Comic Auteur</b> <b>Lecture/Screening: Jerry Lewis, <i>The Ladies' Man</i>, 1961, 95 mins.</b>
Week 9: 1 - 7 May		<b>Topic 9: Satirical Comedy</b> <b>Lecture/Screening: Peter Sellers, <i>Dr Strangelove, or how I learned to stop worrying and love the bomb</i>, 1964 dir: Stanley Kubrick, 91 mins</b>
Week 10: 8 - 14 May		<b>Topic 10: Comedy and Identity</b> <b>Lecture/Screening: Woody Allen, <i>Zelig</i> (1984), dir: Woody Allen, 91 mins</b>
Week 11: 15 - 21 May		<b>Topic 11: Comedy and Stupidity</b> <b>Lecture/Screening Jim Carrey, <i>Dumb and Dumber</i> (1994), dir: Peter Farrelly, 101 mins</b>
Week 12: 22 - 28 May		<b>Topic 12: Unruly Women</b> <b>Lecture/Screening: <i>Bridesmaids</i> (2011), dir: Paul Feig, 125 mins</b>

## **Resources**

### **Prescribed Resources**

MOODLE

### **Recommended Resources**

SEE COURSE GUIDE ON MOODLE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### **Course Evaluation and Development**

Students will have the opportunity to evaluate this course on My Experience. As a result of previous student evaluation a 'people's choice' week has been added where students will be able to elect a film they wish to collectively view and discuss in relation to the course criteria. Assessment procedures have been modified to allow more opportunity for me to provide students with feedback. Additional course materials have been provided on Moodle at students' request.