

## **Term Information**

Effective Term Autumn 2026

## **General Information**

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area Film Studies  
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org Film Studies - D0206  
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences  
Level/Career Undergraduate  
Course Number/Catalog 3150  
Course Title Dark Comedy and Global Cinema  
Transcript Abbreviation Global Dark Comedy  
Course Description Students will explore the genre of black comedy or dark comedy in cinema and how it has been used to construct national and cultural identities. Students will learn about the historical, political, and social contexts that inform the genre writ large, and its specific deployment in cinema as it pertains to questions of citizenship and social justice.  
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

## **Offering Information**

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week  
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never  
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No  
Grading Basis Letter Grade  
Repeatable No  
Course Components Lecture  
Grade Roster Component Lecture  
Credit Available by Exam No  
Admission Condition Course No  
Off Campus Never  
Campus of Offering Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

## **Prerequisites and Exclusions**

Prerequisites/Corequisites  
Exclusions  
Electronically Enforced No

## **Cross-Listings**

Cross-Listings

## **Subject/CIP Code**

Subject/CIP Code 50.0601  
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course  
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

## Requirement/Elective Designation

Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World

## Course Details

### Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students will be able to describe the central principles of black comedy as a genre as it applies to cinema and media texts.
- Students will learn of various historical and cultural movements from diverse national origins that have been explored through the genre of dark humor.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate the genre's ability to articulate a wide variety national, social, and cultural questions of citizenship and social justice, as they appear in cinema and popular media.
- Students will be able to critically analyze moving image texts as an art form and as a cultural object.
- Students will be able to examine their own media consumption, identify texts that fit within the genre, and critically evaluate the text's cultural politics with regard to citizenship, belonging and justice in a diverse society.
- Students will be able to craft scholarly arguments for a cinematic text's ability to use the principles of black comedy to represent questions of citizenship for a diverse and just world.

### Content Topic List

- Dark comedy, film
- Genre studies
- Historical and cultural movements in film
- Citizenship for a diverse and just world

### Sought Concurrence

No

## Attachments

- Syllabus, GE documentation FILMSTD 3150 GE-CDJW Dark Comedy.pdf: Syllabus and GE documentation  
(Syllabus. Owner: Piper,Paige Marie)

## Comments

## Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Piper,Paige Marie	11/17/2025 02:59 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Piper,Paige Marie	11/17/2025 02:59 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	11/24/2025 05:42 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Neff,Jennifer Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Steele,Rachel Lea	11/24/2025 05:42 PM	ASCCAO Approval

**Course number: FILMSTD 3150**

**Course Title: Dark Comedy and Global Cinema**

**Course Description:** In this course, students will explore the genre of black comedy or dark comedy in cinema and how it has been used to construct national and cultural identities. Students will learn about the historical, political, and social contexts that inform the genre writ large, and its specific deployment in cinema as it pertains to questions of citizenship and social justice. Students will explore what necessitated the use of this particular genre as a mode of social, political, and cultural resistance across a variety of national and regional contexts, by surveying cinema from Korea, China, India, Senegal, Russia, the UK, and the USA, amongst others. By situating the course in cinema studies, students also gain and improve their understanding of the medium specificities of cinema as an art form, as well as the inherent similarities and differences between various global cultures of cinema.

Credit hours: 3

Length of course: 14 weeks

Distance Education Component: No

Grading basis: letter grade

Repeatable: No

Course components: lecture

Mode: In-person, on Columbus campus

Pre-reqs: none

**Elective Designation: GE themes – Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World**

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**Brief Justification:**

This course provides students with insight into genre studies, as a subset of cinema and media studies and how one particular genre—the black comedy—has been used to articulate issues of citizenship in a diverse world. Genres have been known to emerge from and thrive in specific historical and socio-political conditions, such as the western or the superhero film being markers of very specific moments of American history. In this particular course, the focus is on the black comedy as a genre or mode of cinema and moving image media. The course offers multiple cultural entry points: the USA, the UK, India, Spain and Senegal are some of the several film cultures to which students will be introduced. As such, it allows students to understand how humour and cinema have been used to express and articulate narratives of belonging and difference across a diverse set of cultures, especially as it pertains to questions of nationalism, citizenship, and social justice. It is one of the first FILMSTD GE offerings in the new GE curriculum and thus will be offering students an introduction to the methods of film and media studies.

## **SYLLABUS FILMSTD 3150**

### **Course Title: Dark Comedy and Global Cinema**

Dept. Theatre, Film, and Media Arts

Term: AU/SP

Credit Hours: 3

Instructor: Amrutha Kunapulli,

Office Location: TFM 458

Email: kunapulli.1@osu.edu

Office Hours: TBD

Class Meetings: 80 min, 2 days/week

**Course Overview:** In this course, students will explore the genre of black comedy or dark comedy in cinema and how it has been used to construct national and cultural identities. Students will learn about the historical, political, and social contexts that inform the genre writ large, and its specific deployment in cinema as it pertains to questions of citizenship and social justice. Students will explore what necessitated the use of this particular genre as a mode of social, political, and cultural resistance across a variety of national and regional contexts, by surveying cinema from Korea, China, India, Senegal, Russia, the UK, and the USA, amongst others. By situating the course in cinema studies, students also gain and improve their understanding of the medium specificities of cinema as an art form, as well as the inherent similarities and differences between various global cultures of cinema.

#### **Course objectives:**

- Students will be able to describe the central principles of black comedy as a genre—specifically as it applies to cinema and media texts.
- Students will learn of various historical and cultural movements from diverse national origins that have been explored through the genre of dark humour.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate the genre's ability to articulate a wide variety national, social, and cultural questions of citizenship and social justice, as they appear in cinema and popular media.
- Students will be able to critically analyse moving image texts as an art form and as a cultural object, as it pertains to genre studies.
- Students will be able to examine their own media consumption, identify texts that fit within the genre, and critically evaluate the text's cultural politics with regard to citizenship, belonging and justice in a diverse society.
- Students will be able to craft scholarly arguments for a cinematic text's ability to use the principles of black comedy to represent questions of citizenship for a diverse and just world.

#### **Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes as part of General Education theme of Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World:**

1. Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component. [Note: In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.]

*Students will be watching media and reading scholarly work that interrogates the genre of black comedy and argues its place in constructing national and cultural identities through moving image media. They will be watching cinema and series that deploy the mode of black comedy to discuss questions of citizenship and social justice in various national and cultural contexts. They will also be reading scholarly work from the field of cinema and media studies and popular culture that focus on specific films we watch, thus familiarising themselves with the methodologies of film and media studies. They will be expected to replicate these research & writing methods through their writing assignments. They will be*

*expected to be able to identify the tenets and limitations of the black comedy as a genre, apply them to the study of cinema and media, and formulate original arguments.*

Successful students are able to:

1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.

*Class discussions and fortnightly reflections will be geared toward this kind of critical thinking, as we go through the various primary and secondary texts and interrogate their purpose and methods, and reconcile them with broader topic of the course. Sample prompts and discussion questions are provided in the form and in the syllabus.*

1.2 Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.

*Students will be exploring high quality scholarly writing on the topic of black comedy from diverse sources every week, each offering a different insight into how the genre is reflective and symptomatic of a particular human condition. The primary viewings themselves will span a wide range of time, space, and mode, offering students a diverse starting point for their own exploration of the genre for the final essay.*

2. Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

*This course integrates work from philosophy, humour studies, literature, cinema studies, popular culture studies, and digital media studies. They will be able to apply the learnings of the course to the media they consume on a daily basis and be able to approach it from a more critical standpoint. In understanding the critical value of humour, and dark humour at that, they also will have a foundation to create their own narratives and conclusions about the genre and its use in discourses on citizenship for a diverse and just world.*

2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.

*The lectures and class discussions will focus on introducing students to the main topics and texts of the week. The movies and readings will offer a particular perspective on citizenship and social justice through comedic cinema, and the class discussions will help students unpack the various meanings and methods of the texts. The fortnightly reflection activity will be a prompted assignment, which will help consolidate their in-class learning. Aside from these, the longer writing assignments will require them to perform such intellectual work on a larger scale.*

2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

*The course assignments are scaffolded to provide the best opportunity for success in assignments. In class discussion prompts feed into their fortnightly reflection assignments. The midterm essay will be a consolidation of the various kinds of analysis they have done in individual reflection assignments. The final essay will be an argumentative essay where students apply these skills to a moving image text that they have not watched in class. They will be required to pick a text, research its context, analyse its content and form, and make an argument for the movie's status as a black comedy text that speaks to the theme of citizenship for a diverse and just world.*

3. Successful students will explore and analyze a range of perspectives on local, national, or global citizenship and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that constitute citizenship.

*The course offers an introduction to the film cultures and industries of several nationals including the USA, the UK, Spain, India, Senegal, and South Korea. The readings and viewings dive into how humour and dark humour have been used as methods of cultural and political resistance in these varied cultures as it pertains to citizenship and national and cultural identities. As such, students learn about the tenets of inclusion and exclusion, oppression and resistance, in many different cultures, that will then offer them the ability to identify those narratives in their more immediate surroundings.*

3.1. Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across political, cultural, national, global, and/or historical communities.

*Each week offers a different context in which to interrogate the questions of citizenship, justice, and diverse worlds. The course begins with the cold war and the implications of nuclear war on humanity, as a starting point to explore other state-related conflict. The second section of the course shifts gears from political issues and resistances (broadly speaking) to socio-cultural and historical conditions that have affected and effected local and global power imbalances. The final unit focusses on contemporary popular culture texts to discuss how the genre of dark comedy is becoming an increasingly popular mode to play out a range of conflicts affecting everyday life including race, class, mental health issues, religious dogma, both in America and globally.*

3.2. Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.

*Having studied about varied cultural contexts and their ideas of belonging and citizenship, students are trained to inquire into contexts and socio-political conditions when approaching unfamiliar situations and conflicts. In the final essay especially, they will be required to identify a movie on their own and make the argument for how that movie engages with questions of citizenship for a diverse and just world. As such they will need to have defined and unpacked the main tenets of citizenship, diversity, and justice, and be able to identify them in a brand new text and context, and be able to argue for the specific text's position in that particular discourse on citizenship and/or justice.*

4. Successful students will examine notions of justice amid difference and analyze and critique how these interact with historically and socially constructed ideas of citizenship and membership within society, both within the United States and around the world.

*Some historical and political contexts explored in this course include: the ethics of nuclear bombs during the cold war, dictatorship and fascist politics in Spain, after-effects of colonialism in Senegal, and the position of the global south in the contemporary global economy in the age of neoliberalism and late capitalism. As such, the students will have several opportunities to examine what justice and equity and social fairness have meant and continue to mean in each of these contexts, not only within national parameters, but on a global scale. It trains them to think at a global level when critiquing media forms and their relationship to social justice. It asks of them to understand but also move beyond the American diversity matrix of race, gender, and sexuality, and inquire into nationality, religion, postcoloniality, and class as important factors of identity.*

4.1. Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.

*Students will review a range of cinema and moving image media, whether its art, experimental, or mainstream, across languages and styles. These texts and the scholarship associated with them will give voice to oft ignored or understudied perspectives on a variety of topics such as war crimes, feminism, class structures, mental health issues, religious freedoms, postcolonial resistance etc.*

4.2. Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power, and/or advocacy for social change.

*Each of the units is geared to offer an intersectional / multi-perspective approach to a particular cultural context, allowing students the ability to see how a particular context could affect different groups of people in different ways. Each primary text offers a different diversity matrix for the students to explore. As such, students not only engage with American views on diversity i.e. race, gender, and sexuality, but also look beyond to understand how identity markers such as religion, nationality, class, tribe, caste, and linguistic belonging could affect one's place in national and global social structures and understand one's identity as a global citizen in a diverse world.*

### **Course Materials:**

All reading materials will be provided by the instructor on Carmen either as PDFs or through OSU libraries. Most required viewings will be made available for streaming through the library. For certain films, however, students will have to borrow the physical DVD from the library.

### **Assignments:**

For this course, students will have to watch one film (2-2.5hrs) and complete one reading (~20 pages) every week. They will have a written reflective essay assignment due every two weeks. Aside from these, there will be one mid term essay and one final essay.

Participation & Engagement – 20%

Fortnightly reflection assignments – 25%

Midterm essay – 25%

Final – 30%

### **Assignment Descriptions:**

Participation & Engagement – coming to class having completed the readings and viewings for the week, having detailed notes and questions about them, participation in class and online discussions, will be included in this grade. This grade will also include professionalism with regards to punctuality, email etiquette, and classroom conduct (in-person and online).

*Students will read essays and watch movies that engage deeply with the issues at hand. Some readings like those by Andre Breton or Max Schulz will delve into the intricacies of black comedy as a genre, while others such as those by Egea or Mambéty will engage with the primary viewing of the week. Class discussions will be Socratic in method; students will have to think about questions posed to them and learn how to apply abstract arguments from the readings to their experience and understanding of the*

*movies they have watched. They will also be expected to relate their own personal social and political experiences to those discussed in the movie, specifically questions of citizenship, diversity, justice, and genre studies. Additionally, in-class writing exercises will give them practice in writing critically about film and media. Meets ELO 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2.*

Fortnightly writing assignments: Every two weeks, the students will be turning a formal, but not necessarily scholarly, writing assignment. There will be a prompt given for each of these assignments. These will often serve to scaffold longer writing exercises and will be varied in nature. These assignments may focus on learning forms of writing in film and media studies, reflecting on topics covered in class, and offering new questions and topics to explore. Each will be 500-600 words long.

*Some weeks, students will be expected to hone their formal film analysis skills i.e. being able to explain how this film makes meaning and what meaning it makes. They will learn to make short but clear critical arguments about film form. On other weeks, students will be asked to reflect on the issues of citizenship and social justice that were discussed in class in that unit and relate them to their own thoughts and experiences. Prompts are provided in the syllabus. Meets ELO 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2*

Midterm essay: Halfway through the semester, students will be asked to write a film essay that close reads a movie watched over the half of the semester and argue how it uses film language to make meaning, while maintaining a focus on one important genre concept discussed up until then. The essay will be 1200-1500 words long.

*This exercise will demonstrate student understanding of the methods of film analysis. They will be required to critically engage with the film form and explore how the language of cinema and moving images is used to create meaning. In this essay, they will be expected to focus on how these methods have been used to argue for the movie's position as part of the genre and its presentation of a cultural or political position on the question of citizenship. Meets ELO 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 4.1*

Final – The course culminates in a final paper, which will be an argumentative essay that will be about 2000-2500 words long. The student will have to choose a movie/moving image text that we have **not** watched in class, and will argue for the text's position within the genre of black comedy film, and how it uses the formal and narrative conventions of the film genre to present a specific idea of citizenship or justice. It will be an argumentative film essay that centres a single moving image text and analyses its formal and narrative elements in depth.

*This final will require students to reflect on the course as a whole and pick up on the terms and concepts that they found most relevant to their understanding of the theme "citizenship for a diverse and just world," as well as their understanding of the genre of black comedy. In providing a close analysis of film form and genre, they demonstrate their ability to apply their learnings in film studies to familiar and unfamiliar texts. It encourages them to apply their learning to their own experiences and everyday media consumption. Meets ELO 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.2, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2.*

### **Assignment policies**

Document format and submission: The final paper will be using the MLA style of formatting and citation. This means that submitted documents will Times New Roman, 12pt, double spaced fonts with standard margins.

Late submissions will be penalised 20% for each 24-hour period of delay. Effectively, not submitting an assignment within 5 days after it is due will be given a '0'. Talk to me beforehand if there are extenuating circumstances and you would like an extension.

## **Class Policies**

Participation: Course content, and thereby discussion topics will engage with diverse cultures and topics. I will engage with you in good faith i.e. I assume the best of your intentions in this class, and I would hope you assume the best of mine. This also means that I am committed to a safe and respectful classroom for everyone, but there cannot be a truly “safe” public space, since public space is inherently interactional. We will run a classroom of general common sense, mutual compassion and respect, and professional communication.

Life happens; if you feel you are falling behind or find the course too challenging, please talk to me.

Don’t plagiarise; seriously, it’s not worth it. Give every assignment your best honest effort and come talk to me anytime it’s too challenging. The use of generative artificial intelligence is prohibited for assignments, and discouraged for in-class work and discussions. See University policies on academic misconduct and the use of artificial intelligence at the end of the syllabus for more.

If you require learning accommodations, make sure to have your SLDS approval completed and communicate directly with me about any modifications. See University policy on disability and accommodation for illness at the end of the syllabus for more.

I also have mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as an Ohio State employee. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussion or in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct with the University’s Title IX Office. If I can be of assistance in helping you to make a report and in finding campus and community resources, please let me know. If you would like to access resources directly, please feel free to contact the Title IX office. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting Counseling & Consultation Services at 614-292-5766 or the 24 hour helpline from the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO) at 614-267-7020. For more information, please see the University policy on creating an environment free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct at the end of the syllabus.

## **Schedule**

### **Unit 0: introductions and histories**

#### **Week 1**

- 1: Introductions, syllabus | What is genre studies
- 2: Introduction to film analysis, in-class exercises

*Explanation: in this week, students will be introduced to the basic topics that the course will deal with, both in theory and methodology. They will be asked to think about their own understandings of the terms “citizenship,” “justice,” and “diverse world.” In parallel, they will be introduced to the basics of film studies required for the course: what is genre and genre studies and how does one study cinema through the lens of genre. They will also be introduced to the basics of film analysis and work on in-class exercises that trains them in analysing cinema through mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound.*

## Week 2

1: Discussing introduction to *Anthology of Black Humour* (Breton) (10 pages), introduction to *Black Humour* (Friedman) (5 pages)

2: Discussing excerpts from *Clouds* (Sophocles) (5 pages), *Gulliver's Travels* (Swift) (5 pages), and *Catch-22* (Heller) (10 pages); in-class clips from silent cinema

*In this unit, students are introduced to early theoretical writing on the genre of black comedy, as it applies to pre-cinematic media forms, specifically literature. They will read the complex (and funny) introductions to the genre by scholars and writers, who each lays out why they think the genre became popular.*

*Students will then read excerpts from Aristophanes' *Clouds* which was a critique of the political climate of his time, and considered to be one of the earliest surviving pieces of the genre. They will also read Swift, with whose work Breton engages, and an excerpt from *Catch-22*, which is seminal piece of American black comedy war literature. They will also watch early slapstick silent cinema like those of Max Linder and early experimental surrealist cinema such as *Anemic Cinema* by Marcel Duchamp.*

*Class discussions will revolve around being able to understand and apply the ideas of the scholars to the primary literary and cinematic texts, and how they relate to the theme of citizenship for a diverse and just world.*

*Fortnightly Reflection due Sunday 11:59pm (500-600 words). (Prompt: Given what we have learned about genre, black comedy, and its use in literature and experimental cinema to talk about the course theme, reflect on if **you** have watched cinema or other popular moving image media that you think engages with either black comedy as a genre or the theme of citizenship. Reference the readings and/or class discussions in the reflection.)*

## **Unit 1 – black humour as political commentary and resistance**

*The first section of the course focuses on four different national/political conditions; students will read and watch texts that argue for how and why black comedy has been used to engage with these conditions and questions of nation and citizenship.*

## **Week 3 – Being American in the Cold War**

1: Discussing *Dr. Strangelove; or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Kubrick 1964) (95m)

2: Discussing “Dr. Strangelove (1964): Nightmare Comedy and the Ideology of Liberal Consensus” (Maland) (22 pages); Introduction to *Deconstructing Dr Strangelove* (Maloney) (9 pages)

*In this unit, students are introduced to a key text of the film genre of black comedy. The film, *Dr. Strangelove*, is a satirical and at times absurdist take on America's response to the nuclear arms race of the Cold War era. Students will be asked to analyse the political commentary the movie is offering and the nuances of the positions being presented with regards to what it means to be American in the cold war zeitgeist. At the same time, they will be asked to closely analyse the film form, and how the filmmaker, Stanley Kubrick, creates the effect of satire and absurdist humour and what purpose it served. The movie is paired with a scholarly introduction to the Nuclear War Film by Sean Maloney, and an analysis of the movie by Charles Maland. Both these provide students with a model of how to critically analyse cinema. At the same time, Maland's reading will model an argument that weaves in a political reading of genre and film form.*

#### **Week 4 – The Comedy Film in Franco’s Spain**

- 1: Discussing *The Executioner / El Verdugo* (Berlanga 1963)
- 2: Discussing: Chapter 3 of *Dark laughter: Spanish film, comedy, and the nation* (Egea) (15 pages)

*In this unit, students watch a movie from the same decade as the previous one, but shift their focus to non-American political histories and European popular cinema. They watch Luis Berlanga’s *El Verdugo* that is set during Franco’s dictatorship of Spain. They will learn how the black comedy, (in this case by following the story of a government executioner) was used to articulate the common man’s experience of Franco’s rule. At the same time, the movie offers students an experience of a very different kind of cinema from Kubrick, and allows for a deep dive into film language such as long takes, tracking shots, and mise-en-scene, and how they are used to create meaning and critique. The reading paired is the primary work on comedy in Spanish national cinema and will introduce the students to the role of cinema in constructing and resisting Spanish nationalism and citizenship and will be discussed in detail in class.*

*Fortnightly Reflection, due Sunday 11:59pm (Prompt: Pulling from the readings, class discussion, and your own analysis, discuss the ways the concept of “citizenship” was brought out in either Dr Strangelove or The Executioner, and explain with an example of a scene/moment of your choice.)*

#### **Week 5 – 9/11 and the Decade of Dark Humour**

- 1: Discussing Introduction to *Decade of Dark Humor* (Gournelos & Greene) (21 pages); SNL 9/11
- 2: Discussing; *Four Lions* (Morris 2010)

*In this unit, the focus is on the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the response from American and British media. Students read Gournelos’ and Greene’s introduction to *Decade of Dark Humor*, which outlines the various ways popular American media used black comedy methods such as satire, irony, and parody, amongst others, as a way to engage with the incomprehensible and everlasting change to the “American” identity caused by the 9/11 attacks. This is paired with a discussion of popular sketch show, Saturday Night Live, in its first episode after the attack, with which the reading engages in detail. Along with this, the students will watch the feature length British film, *Four Lions*, that will allow them to further parse these tenets of comedy and citizenship in a post 9/11 world, while focussing on the language of cinema in depth.*

#### **Week 6 – Absurdity and Cinema in the Middle East**

- 1: discussing Introduction to *Humour in Middle Eastern Cinema* (Devi and Rahman; 20 pages)
- 2: Discussing *Divine Intervention / Yaduun Ilahi* (Suleiman 2014) and interview

*In this unit, students will read the introduction to scholars Devi and Rahman’s book, *Humour in Middle Eastern Cinema*, that outlines multiple theories about humour and comedy, specifically applicable to the trajectories of film comedy in the tumultuous political climate of the Middle East. This will offer context for the students’ discussion of Elia Suleiman’s seminal tragicomedy, *Divine Intervention*, that uses absurdism, repetition, and episodic narrative forms to offer commentary on the long-standing conflict between Israel and Palestine and what it means to be citizen and native in each of these contexts.*

*Fortnightly Reflection, due Sunday 11:59pm (Prompt: these last two weeks engaged with more recent events of war and terrorism; what were some similarities you noticed across the various films/sketches we watched in how they engaged with national belonging and citizenship? Use the readings for each unit to reinforce your thoughts.)*

#### **Unit 2 – black comedy as a reflection of the social justice in the human condition**

The second section of the course shifts gears from political issues and resistances (broadly speaking) to socio-cultural and historical conditions that have affected and effected local and global power imbalances. The weekly viewings and readings trace the use of cinema to represent and engage with these questions of social justice and equality in a comedic or tragicomic ways.

### **Week 7 - Coming to terms with modernity**

- 1: lecture on modernity, modernism, and relationship to humour
- 2: discussing *Playtime* (Tati 1969) Introduction to *Playtime: Jacques Tati and Comedic Modernism* (Turvey; 15 pages)

*Students will study modernism and modernity in this unit, and how black comedy as a genre thrived in the pessimistic and nihilistic conditions of twentieth century Europe and the UK. The film of the week, Playtime, will help explicate these topics through the stunning cinematic language of Jacques Tati and the French New Wave, that questions issue of loss of individuality, social and intellectual ennui, commodification, and mass-produced culture, and the concept a global and globalised citizen in modern times.*

### **Week 8 – And now for something completely different**

- 1: discussing excerpts from Breton’s “Surrealist manifesto” and Bishop’s “Bakhtin, Carnival, and Comedy” (15 pages)
- 2: discussing selections from *Monty Python’s Flying Circus*

*The course moves towards the late modernist/ postmodernist questions of surrealism, absurdity, and in the case of the primary text for the week, nonsense, as a way to engage with everyday life. The students will read about concepts such as surrealism, the carnivalesque, and absurdism (both in theory and as they apply to moving image media). They will then apply this to a study of significant sketches of the classic British comedy, Monty Python’s Flying Circus. The unit deals with how the troupe used their absurdist comedy to critique class, gender and other social constructs of a diverse and just world that pertained to the turn-of-the-millennium western world.*

### **Midterm essay due, Sunday 11:59pm.**

### **Week 9 – postcolonialism, race, comedy**

- S1: discussing postcolonialism, African cinema, *Le Franc* (Mambéty 1994);
- S2: discussing *Osuofia in London* (Ogoro 2003)
- Reading: Okome (19 pages)

*The unit delves into the condition of postcolonialism and postcoloniality, specifically the construction of national and global citizens in a postcolonial world. The week holds a specific focus on Africa and the reversal of the colonial gaze through cinematic comedy. Students watch Djibril Diop Mambéty’s important film *Le Franc* that looks at the conditions of Senegal post the devaluation of the franc through the perspective of a tragicomic protagonist to explore France’s continued hold over Senegalese citizens. The other film presents the story of the Nigerian travelling to the UK and engaging with the complexities of race and social inequity as a Nigerian citizen from the periphery travelling to the colonial centre. The accompanying reading situates a reading of *Osuofia in London* in the discourse of comedic African cinema and the postcolonial gaze. Class discussions will rest on questions of colonialism, citizenship, and postcolonial cinema.*

### **Week 10 - capitalism, crime, gender**

- S1: discussing *Soodhu Kavvum* (Kumarasamy 2012) (2h10m)
- S2: discussing *Kolamavu Kokila* (Nelson 2018) (2h25m)

*This unit centres Tamil cinema from south India and its recent turn towards the black comedy and neo-noir modes as a way of grappling with the growing globalisation of the Tamil public. From a culture of deeply political cinema, the two films of the week will show two trends of how cinema has been used as a vehicle for social and political ends, in this case engaging with the growing neoliberalism, failure of local political structures, and their impact on class and gender systems and the possibility of a global Tamil citizen. There is no reading for this week as it would be excerpts from my own book, which I will cover as part of the lecture/discussion. Instead, students will watch a second movie to be able to get a more comprehensive account of the industry and to meet the workload requirement for the credits.*

### **Week 11 - globalisation and global cinema**

S1: discussing world cinema, globalisation, transnational cinema and reception

S2: discussing *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (Kwan 2024)

Reading: “Genre destroyed and being obnoxious: The metamodernism of Everything everywhere all at once” (Corbett)

*In this week, students watch the recent globally acclaimed absurdist comedy, Everything Everywhere All at Once and contemplate the possibility of a globally popular mode of cinema i.e. the transnational ensemble spectacle-based comedy to reflect a growing globally understood set of progressive ideals. The movie specifically engages with the cultural politics of the East Asian diaspora in North America and thinks through questions of cultural assimilation, racism, immigration and queerness among other topics of citizenship for a diverse and just world.*

*Fortnightly reflection due Sunday 11:59pm (Prompt: In unit 2, we shifted our focus from explicitly political ways to understand citizenship to a more cultural and philosophical approach of understanding citizenship, justice, and diverse world. Picking one of the last three weeks as a focus, summarise your understanding of the topic with reference to the movie and readings, and use that to expand on your experience of one of those topics and how it affects your identity as a citizen in national or global context.)*

### **Unit 3 – the here, the now, the new**

*In the final few weeks, students turn their attention to current contemporary popular series and short form media to learn about the most recent trends in both media technology as well as the recent social and political preoccupations of the black comedy genre. In this unit, there are no readings, as these are contemporary texts with little scholarly engagement thus far. This will become a site for students to practice the critical and analytical skills learned over the semester. Instead of readings, the weeks have multiple viewings to meet the workload requirements.*

### **Week 12 – contemporary anglophone pop culture**

S1: discussing *The Black Lady Sketch Show* and *Fleabag* (50m)

S2: discussing *Patriot* and *Righteous Gemstones* (90m)

*The unit looks at 4 major English language black comedy series and their formal and narrative conventions. Students will be asked to create their own arguments regarding the nature of black comedy in these texts and how they work towards the themes of citizenship and social justice in America. Sample discussion topics include: Blackness in America, resurgence of nuclear discourse, organised religion, and the potential to use black comedy as a means of resistance and healing for a diverse and just world.*

### **Week 13 – contemporary global popular culture**

S1: discussing *Mask Girl* (50m)  
S2: discussing *Where's Wanda* (50m)

*This week focusses on two non-American series and requires students to be able to identify similarities or differences between their own culture and these non-native texts as it pertains to the course topics and themes. The week has a lighter direct workload, as students will be tasked with reflecting on and presenting their comparative analysis of the week's texts with the previous week, that will compensate for the workload.*

*Fortnightly Reflection due Sunday 11:59pm (Prompt: Aside from the 6 we watched for class, are there other short form comedic series that you think fit the tenets of either black comedy or of citizenship for a diverse and just world that you think would fit on this syllabus? Can you explain why? Use any reading from the semester to augment your point.)*

### **Week 14 – Concluding discussions**

S1: student-brought texts, revising concepts and analytical methods  
S2: workshopping potential final essay theses

*The final week will involve a discussion that reviews the major concepts and topics, in both black comedy as a genre and the tenets of film analysis and film studies. It will also be a space for students to reflect on their understanding of the GE theme of citizenship and justice in a diverse world. Students will be asked to recommend and analyse short videos within this framework. It solidifies the semester's learning and sets them up for the final essay. There are no readings or viewings for this week, instead students will have to research and bring in texts of their own, have worked on their final essay, and come prepared with a comprehensive recall of the semester's concepts and methods.*

### **Final essay due**

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### **University Policies:**

#### **Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct**

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a welcoming community. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office (CRCO):

Online reporting form: <http://civilrights.osu.edu/>

Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605

[civilrights@osu.edu](mailto:civilrights@osu.edu)

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Civil Rights Compliance Office to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

## **Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity**

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite, and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology, but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work, in scholarship, or on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

## **Academic Misconduct**

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the [Committee on Academic Misconduct](#) (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's [Code of Student Conduct](#), and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute Academic Misconduct.

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so please review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If an instructor suspects that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, the instructor is obligated by University Rules to report those suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that a student violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in the course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If students have questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, they should contact the instructor.

### **Religious Accommodations**

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement **and** the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#).  
Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#)

### **Disability Statement (with Accommodations for Illness)**

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If students anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health and medical conditions, whether chronic or temporary), they should let their instructor know immediately so that they can privately discuss options. Students do not need to disclose specific information about a disability to faculty. To establish reasonable accommodations, students may

be asked to register with Student Life Disability Services (see below for campus-specific contact information). After registration, students should make arrangements with their instructors as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that accommodations may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If students are ill and need to miss class, including if they are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of viral infection or fever, they should let their instructor know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu), <https://slds.osu.edu/>, 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave, 614-292-3307 phone

### **Intellectual Diversity**

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

### **Grievances and Solving Problems**

According to University Policies, if you have a problem with this class, you should seek to resolve the grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by speaking first with the instructor or professor. Then, if necessary, take your case to the department chairperson, college dean or associate dean, and to the provost, in that order. Specific procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-8-23. Grievances against graduate, research, and teaching assistants should be submitted first to the supervising instructor, then to the chairperson of the assistant's department.

## **GE DOCUMENTATION:**

Goals of the GEN Theme category, the ELOs, and a statement that explains how the course expects to fulfil the GEN Goals & ELOs.

**Course number: FILMSTD 3150**

**Course Title: Dark Comedy and Global Cinema**

**Prof: Amrutha Kunapulli**

### **Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes as part of General Education theme of Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World:**

1. Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component. [Note: In this context, "advanced" refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.]

*Students will be reading scholarly work that interrogates the genre of black comedy and argues its theoretical and philosophical function. They will also be reading scholarly work from the field of cinema and media studies, and popular culture, that focus on specific films we watch, thus familiarising themselves with the methodologies of film and media studies. They will be expected to replicate these research & writing methods through their writing assignments. They will be expected to be able to identify the tenets and limitations of the black comedy as a genre, apply them to the study of cinema and media, and formulate original arguments.*

Successful students are able to:

1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.

*Class discussions and fortnightly reflections will be geared toward this kind of critical thinking, as we go through the various primary and secondary texts and interrogate their purpose and methods, and reconcile them with broader topic of the course.*

1.2 Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.

*Students will be exploring high quality scholarly writing on the topic of black comedy from diverse sources every week, each offering a different insight into how the genre is reflective and symptomatic of a particular human condition. The primary viewings themselves will span a wide range of time, space, and mode, offering students a diverse starting point for their own exploration of the genre for the final essay.*

2. Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

*This course integrates work from philosophy, humour studies, literature, cinema studies, popular culture studies, and digital media studies. They will be able to apply the learnings of the course to the media they consume on a daily basis and be able to approach it from a more critical standpoint. In understanding the critical value of humour, and dark humour at that, they also will have a foundation to create their own narratives.*

2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.

*The lectures and class discussions will focus on introducing students to the main topics and texts of the week. The movies and readings will offer a particular perspective on citizenship and justice through comedic cinema, and the class discussions will help students unpack the various meanings and methods of the texts. The fortnightly reflection activity will be a prompted assignment, which will help consolidate their in class learning. Aside from these, the longer writing assignments will require them to perform such intellectual work on a larger scale.*

2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

*The course assignments are scaffolded to provide the best opportunity for success in assignments. In class discussion prompts feed into their fortnightly reflection assignments. The midterm essay will be a consolidation of the various kinds of analysis they have done in individual reflection assignments. The final essay will be an argumentative essay where students apply these skills to a moving image text that they have not watched in class. They will be required to pick a text, research its context, analyse its content and form, and make an argument for the movie's status as a black comedy text that speaks to the theme of citizenship and justice.*

3. Successful students will explore and analyze a range of perspectives on local, national, or global citizenship and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that constitute citizenship.

*The course offers an introduction to the film cultures and industries of several nationals including the USA, the UK, Spain, India, Senegal, and South Korea. The readings and viewings dive into how humour and dark humour have been used as methods of cultural and political resistance in these varied cultures. As such, students learn about the tenets of inclusion and exclusion, oppression and resistance, in many different cultures, that will then offer them the ability to identify those narratives in their more immediate surroundings.*

3.1. Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across political, cultural, national, global, and/or historical communities.

*Each week offers a different context in which to interrogate the questions of citizenship, justice, and diverse worlds. The course begins with the cold war and the implications of nuclear war on humanity, as a starting point to explore other state-related conflict. The second section of the course shifts gears from political issues and resistances (broadly speaking) to socio-cultural and historical conditions that have affected and effected local and global power imbalances. The final unit focusses on contemporary popular culture texts to discuss how the genre of dark comedy is becoming an increasingly popular mode to play out a range of conflicts affecting everyday life including race, class, mental health issues, religious dogma, both in America and globally.*

3.2. Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.

*Having studied about varied cultural contexts and their ideas of belonging and citizenship, students are trained to inquire into contexts and socio-political conditions when approaching unfamiliar situations and conflicts. In the final essay especially, they will be required to identify a movie on their own and make the argument for how that movie engages with questions of citizenship and justice in a diverse world. As such they will need to have defined and unpacked the main tenets of citizenship and justice and be able to identify them in a brand new text and*

*context, and be able to argue for the specific text's position in that particular discourse on citizenship and/or justice.*

4. Successful students will examine notions of justice amid difference and analyze and critique how these interact with historically and socially constructed ideas of citizenship and membership within society, both within the United States and around the world.

*Some historical and political contexts explored in this course include: the ethics of nuclear bombs during the cold war, dictatorship and fascist politics in Spain, after-effects of colonialism in Senegal, and the position of the global south in the contemporary global economy in the age of neoliberalism and late capitalism. As such, the students will have several opportunities to examine what justice and equity and social fairness have meant and continue to mean in each of these contexts, not only within national parameters, but on a global scale. It trains them to think at a global level when critiquing media forms and their relationship to social justice. It asks of them to understand but also move beyond the American diversity matrix of race, gender, and sexuality, and inquire into nationality, religion, postcoloniality, and class as important factors of identity.*

4.1. Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.

*Students will review a range of cinema and moving image media, whether its art, experimental, or mainstream, across languages and styles. These texts and the scholarship associated with them will give voice to oft ignored or understudied perspectives on a variety of topics such as war crimes, feminism, class structures, mental health issues, religious freedoms, postcolonial resistance etc.*

4.2. Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power, and/or advocacy for social change.

*Each of the units is geared to offer an intersectional / multi-perspective approach to a particular cultural context, allowing students the ability to see how a particular context could affect different groups of people in different ways. Each primary text offers a different diversity matrix for the students to explore. As such, students not only engage with American views on diversity i.e. race, gender, and sexuality, but also look beyond to understand how identity markers such as religion, nationality, class, tribe, caste, and linguistic belonging could affect one's place in national and global social structures.*

### **Assignment Descriptions:**

Students will read essays and watch movies that engage deeply with the issues at hand. Some readings like those by Andre Breton or Max Schulz will delve into the intricacies of black comedy as a genre, while others such as those by Egea or Mambéty will engage with the primary viewing of the week. Class discussions will be Socratic in method; students will have to think about questions posed to them and learn how to apply abstract arguments from the readings to their experience and understanding of the movies they have watched. They will also be expected to relate their own personal social and political experiences to those discussed in the movie. Additionally, in-class writing exercises will give them practice in writing critically about film and media. Meets ELO 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2.

Fortnightly writing assignments: Every two weeks, the students will be turning a formal, but not necessarily scholarly, writing assignment. There will be a prompt given for each of these assignments. These will often serve to scaffold longer writing exercises and will be varied in nature. These assignments may focus on learning forms of writing in film and media studies, reflecting on topics covered in class, and offering new questions and topics to explore. Each will be 500-600 words long. Some weeks, students will be expected to hone their formal film analysis skills i.e. being able to explain how this film makes meaning and what meaning it makes. They will learn to make short but clear critical arguments about film form. On other weeks, students will be asked to reflect on the issues of citizenship and social justice that were discussed in class in that unit and relate them to their own thoughts and experiences. Meets ELO 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2

Midterm essay: Halfway through the semester, students will be asked to write a film essay that close reads a movie watched over the half of the semester and argue how it uses film language to make meaning, while maintaining a focus on one important genre concept discussed up until then. The essay will be 1200-1500 words long. This exercise will demonstrate student understanding of the methods of film analysis. They will be required to critically engage with the film form and explore how the language of cinema and moving images is used to create meaning. In this essay, they will be expected to focus on how these methods have been used to argue for the movie's position as part of the genre and its presentation of a cultural or political conflict. Meets ELO 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 4.1

Final – The course culminates in a final paper, which will be an argumentative essay that will be about 2000-2500 words long. The student will have to choose a movie/moving image text that we have **not** watched in class, and will argue for the text's position within the genre of black comedy film, and how it uses the formal and narrative conventions of the film genre to present a specific idea of citizenship or justice. It will be an argumentative film essay that centres a single moving image text and analyses its formal and narrative elements in depth. This final will require students to reflect on the course as a whole and pick up on the terms and concepts that they found most relevant to their understanding of the theme "citizenship and justice for a diverse world," as well as their understanding of the genre of black comedy. In providing a close analysis of film form and genre, they demonstrate their ability to apply their learnings in film studies to familiar and unfamiliar texts. It encourages them to apply their learning to their own experiences and everyday media consumption. Meets ELO 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.2, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2.

*Please see syllabus document for detailed description of weekly theme and materials/readings that will engage students directly to fulfil the GEN Goals and ELOs.*

# GE Theme course submission worksheet:

## Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World

Course number: FILMSTD 3150

Course Title: Dark Comedy and Global Cinema

Prof: Amrutha Kunapulli

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Courses in the GE Themes aim to provide students with opportunities to explore big picture ideas and problems within the specific practice and expertise of a discipline or department. Although many Theme courses serve within disciplinary majors or minors, by requesting inclusion in the General Education, programs are committing to the incorporation of the goals of the focal theme and the success and participation of students from outside of their program.

Each category of the GE has specific learning goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) that connect to the big picture goals of the program. ELOs describe the knowledge or skills students should have by the end of the course. Courses in the GE Themes must meet the ELOs common for **all** GE Themes and those specific to the Theme, in addition to any ELOs the instructor has developed specific to that course. All courses in the GE must indicate that they are part of the GE and include the Goals and ELOs of their GE category on their syllabus.

The prompts in this form elicit information about how this course meets the expectations of the GE Themes. The form will be reviewed by a group of content experts (the Theme Advisory) and by a group of curriculum experts (the Theme Panel), with the latter having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals common to all themes (those things that make a course appropriate for the GE Themes) and the former having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals specific to the topic of **this** Theme.

Briefly describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme (Citizenship)

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In a sentence or two, explain how this class “fits’ within the focal Theme. This will help reviewers understand the intended frame of reference for the course-specific activities described below.

The course centres on genre and its ability to reflect a particular social, historical, or philosophical condition. Taking black comedy as the main focus, the course allows students to understand how humour and cinema have been used to express and articulate narratives of belonging and difference across a diverse set of cultures, especially as it pertains to questions of nationalism, citizenship, and social justice.

## Connect this course to the Goals and ELOs shared by *all* Themes

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Below are the Goals and ELOs common to all Themes. In the accompanying table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The specifics of the activities matter—listing “readings” without a reference to the topic of those readings will not allow the reviewers to understand how the ELO will be met. However, the panel evaluating the fit of the course to the Theme will review this form in conjunction with the syllabus, so if readings, lecture/discussion topics, or other specifics are provided on the syllabus, it is not necessary to reiterate them within this form. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

**Goal 1:** Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

**Goal 2:** Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
<b>ELO 1.1</b> Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.	<p>The various readings and movies will present diverse views from a variety of contexts, and students will have to learn to engage with each text in its own context, and figure out how and why they are different and similar. Class discussions will be geared toward this kind of critical thinking, as we go through the various primary and secondary texts and interrogate their purpose and methods, and reconcile them with broader topic of the course.</p> <p>A sample class discussion topic might be: both <i>El Verdugo</i> and <i>Divine Intervention</i> use humour to comment on the power of the state over its citizens, but what are the different methods they use, in terms of comedic cinema? How is it reflective of the differences in those contexts? Or, <i>Monty Python</i> comes off as irreverent and nonsensical, yet there are important social critiques embedded in its method, what are some you identified?</p> <p>The two longer written assignments will require them to be present logical arguments and train them in writing critically in the field of cinema and media studies.</p>
<b>ELO 1.2</b> Engage in advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.	<p>Students will read essays and watch movies that engage deeply with the issues at hand. Some, like those by Breton, Schulz, Egea, or Devi &amp; Rahman are essays by philosophers and scholars leading in their field, often responding to each other and building on each other's work, which will give students an interesting scholarly road map. Other essays, such as the interview with Mambety will be by the filmmaker for the movie of the week, thus offering students a firsthand insight to the aesthetic and political choices made in the movie.</p> <p>The primary viewings themselves will span a wide range of time, space, and mode, offering students a diverse starting point for their own exploration of the genre for the final essay.</p>

<p><b>ELO 2.1</b> Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.</p>	<p>The lectures and class discussions will focus on introducing students to the main topics and texts of the week. They will learn the meanings of terms and concepts related to the text (mise-en-scene or key lighting), to the topic (irony, parody, satire) and to the theme (relevant national and international histories). The movies and readings will offer a particular perspective on citizenship and justice through comedic cinema, and the class discussions will help students unpack the various meanings and methods of the texts.</p> <p>The fortnightly reflection activity will be a prompted assignment, which will help consolidate their in class learning. Some prompts might be to do with film analysis: picking a scene from a movie we have watched, identify some key technical and aesthetic choices that you think built comedic momentum. Some prompts will require synthesizing information about the genre: we talked about irony as a mode of resistance when it comes to 9/11, how do you define irony in your own words, and describe a popular media text you have come across where you can apply it. And finally some prompts will be about the theme: Briefly name the various socio-political issues that either Dr Strangelove or The Executioner dealt with, and explain your understanding of one of those issues in detail.</p> <p>Aside from these, the longer writing assignments will require them to perform such intellectual work on a larger scale.</p>
<p><b>ELO 2.2</b> Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.</p>	<p>The course assignments are scaffolded to provide the best opportunity for success in assignments. In class discussion prompts feed into their fortnightly reflection assignments. The midterm essay will be a consolidation of the various kinds of analysis they have done in individual reflection assignments. For instance, the prompts described in the previous ELO for fortnightly reflections will provide practice for their midterm essay where they will be expected to analyse a particular scene in a film we have watched for the course, and argue how its aesthetic and stylistic choices build its comedic momentum, and how that comedy is then used to articulate a socio-political critique of its context.</p> <p>The final essay will be an argumentative essay where students apply these skills to a moving image text that they have not watched in class. They will be required to pick a text, research its context, analyse its content and form, and make an argument for the movie's status as a black comedy text that speaks to the theme of citizenship and justice.</p>

## Goals and ELOs unique to Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World

Below are the Goals and ELOs specific to this Theme. As above, in the accompanying Table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

**GOAL 3:** Successful students will explore and analyze a range of perspectives on local, national, or global citizenship, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that constitute citizenship.

**GOAL 4:** Successful students will examine notions of justice amidst difference and analyze and critique how these interact with historically and socially constructed ideas of citizenship and membership within societies, both within the US and/or around the world.

	Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs
<b>ELO 3.1</b> Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across political, cultural, national, global, and/or historical communities.	<p>Each week offers a different context in which to interrogate the questions of citizenship, justice, and diverse worlds. The course begins with the cold war and the implications of nuclear war on humanity, as a starting point to explore other state-related conflict. Franco's dictatorship in Spain, the everyday effect of political unrest in the middle east, and the various socio-political changes to Anglo-American society post 9/11 comprise the opening unit.</p> <p>The second section of the course shifts gears from political issues and resistances (broadly speaking) to socio-cultural and historical conditions that have affected affected and effected local and global power imbalances. In other words, the first unit focusses more on citizenship, while the second unit looks to questions of social justice and global human conditions. The topics include modernity and its effect on identity and humanity, postmodernism and its imperative to question grand narratives of history and social power structures, postcolonialism's resistance to colonial histories and power structures. More recent texts look to critique neoliberalism and global capitalism and their impact on social equity in the global south and its diaspora.</p> <p>The final unit focusses on contemporary popular culture texts to discuss how the genre of dark comedy is becoming an increasingly popular mode to play out a range of conflicts affecting everyday life including race, class, mental health issues, religious dogma, both in America and globally.</p>

<p><b>ELO 3.2</b> Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.</p>	<p>Given the various cultures and histories that are put into conversation in the syllabus, every class session will offer the chance to reflect on diverse issues of citizenship and justice. Some fortnightly reflection assignments, and the midterm and final essays, will engage the students in reflecting on the topics covered in each week. In the final essay especially, they will be required to identify a movie on their own and make the argument for how that movie engages with questions of citizenship and justice in a diverse world. As such they will need to have defined and unpacked the main tenets of citizenship and justice and be able to identify them in a brand new text and context, and be able to argue for the specific text's position in that particular discourse on citizenship and/or justice.</p>
<p><b>ELO 4.1</b> Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.</p>	<p>Students will review a range of cinema and moving image media, whether its art, experimental, or mainstream, across languages and styles. These texts and the scholarship associated with them will give voice to oft ignored or understudied perspectives on a variety of topics such as dictatorship, war crimes, feminism, class structures, mental health issues, religious freedoms, citizenship, postcolonial resistance, queer identities etc. The geographical areas in focus will be heterogeneous ranging from present day Anglophone America through highly specialised subnational film industries from India. The accompanying lectures will offer students a detailed introduction to the historical contexts that are relevant to the movie, while the readings will offer a more in-depth critical analysis of the movie's relationship to that context. The class discussions and assignments will help students articulate and refine their own opinions and arguments about these filmic texts.</p>
<p><b>ELO 4.2</b> Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power, and/or advocacy for social change.</p>	<p>Each primary text offers a different diversity matrix for the students to explore. As such, students not only engage with American views on diversity i.e. race, gender, and sexuality, but also look beyond to understand how identity markers such as religion, nationality, class, tribe, caste, and linguistic belonging could affect one's place in national and global social structures. For instance the question of blackness as identity is studied as a question of racial discrimination and underscores a history of slavery and the slave trade in the American context through texts like The Black Lady Sketch Show. But the question of blackness takes on a different nuance in an African text like Le Franc or Osuofia in London, where characters are not identified primarily by their race but their postcolonial nationality. Similarly, while a show like Fleabag can highlight the various dysfunctionalities of being a woman in contemporary Anglo-American society, the Black Lady Sketch Show offers the same with an added layer of critique through the lens of race. As such, the students are trained to move beyond absolutes and to always interrogate the various contexts and histories of a particular media form when consuming and critiquing it.</p>