

## **ELS 240 MODERN COMEDY: MOLIERE TO SOYINKA COURSE OUTLINE**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course takes a panoramic tour of the universe of modern comedy, highlighting the major features of the genre and the specific nuances that characterise the works of different authors of different regions. The course will also survey the emergent literary trends in the genre of comedy beginning from the French playwright, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin with Moliere as his stage and pen name through the Nigerian Wole Soyinka. Finally the topics chosen cover questions of cultural history, literary theatrics and the career of the genre's major writers.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The course aims to develop the students'

- ✓ Appreciation of and informed personal response to comedy as a literary genre in a range of play texts from different regions of the world.
- ✓ Interdependent skills of reading, analysis and communication.
- ✓ Wider reading and understanding of how the plays and their study of them may contribute to their personal development.

### **ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES**

Students must demonstrate:

- ✓ The ability to respond to the plays as a literary form.
- ✓ An understanding of the ways in which writers' choices of form, structure and language shape meanings.
- ✓ The ability to produce informed independent opinions and judgments on the play texts.
- ✓ The ability to communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate for literary study.
- ✓ The ability to appreciate and discuss varying opinions of literary works of the Neoclassical era

### **ESSAYS**

- ✓ 'On the Comic Spirit' - - - -G.K. Chesterton
- ✓ 'The Comic Rhythm' - - - -Susane K. Langer

- ✓ 'The Structure of Comedy' - - Northrop Frye
- ✓ 'Comedy' - - - Bonamy Dobree
- ✓ 'An Essay on Comedy' - - -George Meredith

## BOOKS

- ✓ *Comedy: The New Critical Idiom* - -Andrew Scott
- ✓ *Comedy the Irrational Vision* - -Morton Gurewitsch

## PLAYS

- ✓ *Volpone* - - - -Ben Johnson
- ✓ *Tartuffe* - - - -Moliere
- ✓ *The Misanthrope* - - - -"
- ✓ *The Miser* - - - -"
- ✓ *An Ideal Husband* - - - --Oscar Wilde
- ✓ *The Importance of Being Earnest* - - -"
- ✓ *Mandragola* - - - -Nicolo Machiavelli
- ✓ *Arms and Man* - - - -George Bernard Shaw
- ✓ *Pygmalion* - - - -"
- ✓ *Uncle Vanya* - - - -Anton Chekhov
- ✓ *The Playboy of the Western World* - -John Millington Synge
- ✓ *The Lion and Jewel* - - -Wole Soyinka
- ✓ *Jero Plays* - - - -"
- ✓ *Prof Zemzi's Last Rehearsal* - - -Fidelis Okoro
- ✓ *The Parliament of Vulture* - - -Emeka Nwabueze
- ✓ *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* - -Ola Rotimi
- ✓ *Wives' Revolt* - - -J.P. Clark
- ✓ *The Marriage of Anansewa* - - Efua T. Sutherland

## POEMS

- ✓ 'Cupid' - - - - William Blake
- ✓ 'Lying' - - - - Thomas Moore
- ✓ 'Nora's Vow' - - - - Sir Walter Scott
- ✓ 'Buxom Joan' - - - -William Congreve
- ✓ 'No Fault in Women' - - - - Robert Herrick
- ✓ 'Cupid' - - - - Ben Johnson
- ✓ 'Song' - - - - John Donne
- ✓ 'An Actor' - - - - John Wolcot
- ✓ 'Ballade of Suicide' - - - - J.K. Chesterton

## TOPICS

1. Introduction
2. Defining Comedy
3. Brief History of Comedy
4. From Old Comedy to Modern Comedy
5. Stock Situation and Characterization in Modern Comedy

6. Structure of Modern Comedy
7. Classification(s) of Modern Comedy
8. Gender and Sexuality in Modern Comedy
9. Comedy in the Lyric Form
10. Revision