Objectives:
This course offers an introduction to the comic plays of William Shakespeare through a study and appreciation of *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *1 Henry IV*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Twelfth Night*. In addition to learning the theatrical conventions and literary modes of Shakespeare’s dramatic poetry, we will explore the plays in the cultural and historical contexts of medieval and early modern England. We will situate the plays in their historical moment, but we will also endeavor to appreciate the plays in performance while sampling a few cinematic adaptations of the Shakespeare’s comedies. Over the course of the term, students will (1) become more sensitive readers of Shakespearean drama, developing an appreciation of character, scene, and incident, dramatic tone and irony; (2) learn to engage critical arguments about the meaning and implications of Shakespeare’s plays while recognizing the variety of approaches and methods enlisted to understand the plays; and (3) practice the writing process while gaining facility in developing interpretive arguments in critical writing.

Required Texts:

Course Requirements:
To receive credit for this course, students are expected to attend class regularly, read all of the assignments on the syllabus, and participate in class discussion. Students will also sit for a mid-term and final examination, as well as taking periodic reading quizzes. Students are further expected to write two critical essays (4 to 6 pages each).

Unexcused absences and habitual tardiness will not be tolerated and will result in a reduction of the final grade at the discretion of the instructor. Since this is an accelerated summer course, attendance and punctuality are of the utmost importance.

Written assignments are due on the dates designated on the syllabus at the beginning of class. Papers submitted late will be penalized with the reduction of a letter-grade for each two-day period past the due date. Work submitted more than a week late will not be accepted. *Quizzes cannot be made up.*

Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Student writing should be original, and any outside sources must be duly quoted, cited, and credited. Plagiarized papers will result in a summary failure of the course and may lead to further disciplinary proceedings (see the relevant sections of *The Student Handbook*, pp. 40-45).

Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments should be typed or printed.

Grading:
For the satisfactory completion of these requirements, letter-grades will be awarded and will constitute percentages of the final grade as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
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<td>Essay 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Shakespearean Comedy & Film
Schedule of Readings & Assignments

July
6 M  Introductory: Shakespearean Comedy & the Social Functions of Laughter; FILM: Branaugh’s Much Ado About Nothing
8 W  Much Ado About Nothing; Quiz 1; FILM: Wheedon’s Much Ado About Nothing

13 M  A Midsummer Night’s Dream; Quiz 2; FILM: Hall’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream
15 W  The Taming of the Shrew; Quiz 3; FILM: Zefferilli’s Taming of the Shrew

20 M  Mid-term Exam; Essay 1 due
22 W  1 Henry IV; Quiz 4; FILM: Globe’s 1 Henry IV

27 M  The Merchant of Venice; Quiz 5; FILM: Radford’s The Merchant of Venice
29 W  Twelfth Night; Quiz 6; FILM: Nunn’s Twelfth Night

August
3 M  Synthesizing Shakespearean Comedy; As You Like It: Essay 2 due
5 W  Final Exam