UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2014
Instructor: Dr. Joshua Ezra Burns
Course #: THEO 2010
Section: 101/901 (Majors/Honors--combined section)
Course Title: Hebrew Scriptures: Old Testament Selected Books
Topic: Comedy in the Bible

Description:

The object of this course will be to examine the occurrence and function of comedy in the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament, albeit with some attention to the New Testament and Deuterocanonical texts. Among the many and diverse literary forms utilized by the authors of the Bible, the comedic is often overlooked in view of the text's predominant sense of earnestness. Our goal will be to challenge this perception by highlighting instances of parody, satire, and the absurd within the biblical narrative. Assessing their authors' historical and literary objectives, we shall try to discern their purposes in infusing their otherwise serious compositions with occasional doses of levity.

The course will follow a seminar format. Course grades will be determined on the basis of class attendance and participation, regular reading response assignments, a research paper approximately 8 to 10 pages in length, and a final examination. The course is designed for students with some prior background in the critical study of the Bible and at least a moderately functional sense of humor. Reading knowledge of English is highly recommended.