

COMM370: Contemporary Political Communication with Dr. Knopf

Morey248: Mon 1-3:00 by appointment & Tue/Thu 3:30-4:30 (also alternating Thursdays 9-10:30)
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Course Description & Objectives: An examination of domestic U.S. politics in order to better understand how "political reality" is constructed through communication. To that end, the course will examine communication during particular political events, during acts of governance, and particular campaigns, and will discuss how that communication effects and is effected by the media. We will consider five broad areas of political communication: civic engagement & deliberation, campaign communication (especially presidential), race & gender in politics, media, and satire.

By the end of this course you will be better able to...

- Understand and explain the roles of communication in society: This course is focused on the ways in which communication shapes political reality and influences political efficacy.
- Read and understand contemporary scholarship, with knowledge of the discipline's history: Through the readings, you will learn about different scholastic studies of political communication.
- Construct oral arguments & messages, with consideration to appropriate audience analysis: You will be engaging in three public speaking activities, each with different structures and purposes within civic/political life.
- Employ effective listening skills: You will engage in formal and informal discussions and debate. Your attentiveness and engagement are graded portions of these activities.

This course carries the GenEd designator of "SI" – Speaking Intensive. This means you will participate in a semester-long series of oral communication assignments that strengthen understanding of effective oral communication. The assumption is that everyone has already taken an FS course and therefore knows how to create and deliver a speech and are ready to refine their speech skills. Students who take this class are expected know how to: find/use/cite evidence; arrange ideas effectively; relate ideas to the audience; employ effective language; construct clear introductions and conclusions; and, use a dynamic delivery style.

Texts & Course Materials:

- Moodle access (readings, Syllabus, Assignment Packet)
- Syllabus & Assignment Packet

Grading: •Article summaries: 20% •Take-home final Exam: 10% •Participation: 15%
•Electoral Reform Speech: 20% •NIF Discussion: 20% •Satire: 15%

☆Full assignment descriptions & instructions are found in the "Assignments Packet." Use it. ☆

Final Grades are broken down **in this class** as follows:

- 4.0 = 95-100 • 3.7 = 90-94 • 3.3 = 86-89 • 3.0 = 82-85 • 2.7 = 78-81
- 2.3 = 72-77 • 2.0 = 67-71 • 1.7 = 61-66 • 1.3 = 56-60 • 1.0 = 51-55 • (0.0 = below 51)

☆Work that meets the minimum requirements of an assignment, is completed on time and displays average involvement with the course content is deserving of a 2.0. A 2.0 is a "satisfactory" grade that indicates the *minimum* has been achieved. Higher grades are awarded to work that goes above and beyond the minimum standards to produce papers or presentations that reflect superior intellectual effort, excellence in critical analysis and overall creativity in the approach towards any given assignment. A 4.0 is attainable but will require much more than minimal effort. ☆

Challenging a Grade: If you identify an error in grading, I am always willing to admit to a mistake and correct it. If you want me to *reconsider* a grade, follow these steps:

- Wait at least 24 hours before deciding to seek reconsideration, but no longer than one week.
- Write a 1-2 page explanation of why the grade should be reconsidered identifying what type of change you seek and providing a reasoned argument and evidence in support of that change. The burden of proof in any disagreement over evaluation of your performance rests with you.
- Resubmit the original work (complete with grade & comments) along with the rationale.
- Allow two weeks for reconsideration. Accept the final decision. *I will reconsider each assignment only once.*

Extra Credit: Extra credit will not be available as an end-of-semester option to make-up-for or replace work that you did not do throughout the semester. It will never be given on an individual basis.

Due Dates/Late Work: LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED. *If you know in advance you will not be in class when an assignment is due, turn it in early. If you wake up sick when something is due, please email it by class time.* All due dates are on the course calendar.

Attendance: This is a live, non-virtual, non-mediated, speech communication course. Being present on time (and AWAKE) is necessary. **If you cannot consistently be present, on time, for class, you should withdraw.** I do not tally absences as part of your grade, but I do reserve the right to adjust your grade if I believe your attendance has been problematic for you and/or for your classmates.

☆You are solely responsible for catching up on work that you miss (always refer to the course calendar and to the potential kindness of classmates). I will not accept an absence as an excuse for being unaware of any course assignment or expectation. Work will not be accepted late because of an absence, except as indicated above. Any in-class work – whether it is a speech or an exam – should be treated seriously. Make-ups for such assignments will only be granted in rare instances and usually only with documentation of an unavoidable emergency, or with **advance notice** of college-sanctioned activities or religious observances.

Absences of two or more straight weeks: If you miss, or will miss, two straight weeks of class (4 consecutive class meetings), you must contact me before or within those two weeks. Four or more consecutive absences without contact will result in an automatic failure of the course.

Absences of four or more total weeks: If you miss, or will miss, four or more total weeks of class, particularly if the absences are close together, you must choose one of these options: Withdrawing from the course, or; Taking an Incomplete in the course.

Attendance for the Final Exam/Meeting: Finals week is part of the required number of class meeting hours set by the SUNY system. Final exams or activities scheduled during the final exam timeslot, will not be rescheduled unless you have 3 or more exams on a single day. (If that happens, please see the policy online at <http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/registrar/exams.cfm>). **You must make travel/work/childcare arrangements around the final exam.** If you do not attend the final exam, be prepared to accept the consequences to your grade. Final exam times are scheduled by the school to ensure that exams do not overlap, therefore the full week is needed – do not blame your professors or the school for end-of-the week exams; even though regular classes are not in session, the week is part of the semester.

Incompletes: Incompletes, or other arrangements for course completion, can be planned only in advance to the semester's end in extreme circumstances with documentation. To receive an incomplete, there must be a serious **emergency** so late in the semester that there isn't time to make up what you miss.

Academic Integrity & Dishonesty: A pledge of academic honesty is made by all students at SUNY Potsdam, indicating that you understand & comply with the requirements set forth by instructors the Academic Honor Code. **To plagiarize is to pass off ideas or words of someone else as your own without crediting the source.** Any time you incorporate the words, ideas, &/or organization of another person into your work, no matter what the medium/source, without giving their creator the credit, you have plagiarized - even if you make some changes to the wording or pepper it with some of your own words/ideas. (You can & should use a variety of sources in your work – but you must cite the sources) **I have a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism. In the event of plagiarism on an assignment in this course you will A.) Definitely fail the assignment. B.) Possibly fail the course.** Therefore, you will be responsible for authenticating any assignment submitted in this course. Other forms of dishonesty or cheating are also not tolerated and will result in a failure of the assignment and/or class. If you think you are engaging in questionable behavior, you probably are, so either don't do it or seek clarification.

Technology/Electronic Devices: Technology use is permissible in the classroom IF:

- Your usage is polite, does not bother your neighbors, & does not interfere with your performance
- You are willing to apply your technology use to course materials in productive ways.
- You do not secretly record any portion of a class without seeking permission

Consider your technology use outside of class, too. If contacting me via email, be professional: use an appropriate and informative subject, address me politely, and use good Standard English. Many (potential) employers will not be impressed by communication like, "hey-idk wuts du 2mrw. tia"

Etiquette: The success of this course is directly related to the sense of community that we develop in the classroom. Any communication or behavior– digital or live – that potentially interferes with the learning environment of other students will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior - even minor disruptions - will result in your being told to leave class. Repeated offenses may result in course failure.

Course Calendar: You are responsible for keeping track of what is due when. Expect no reminders.

Wk1	Tu 8/27	Th 8/29: <i>Political Engagement (counter/publics)</i> READ – Porrovecchio article. SUMMARY DUE.
Wk2	Tu 9/3: <i>“Battle in Seattle” movie</i>	Th 9/5: <i>“Battle in Seattle” movie</i> <i>Deliberation</i>
Wk3	Tu 9/10: <i>Partisan Speech Patterns</i> READ –Jarvis article. SUMMARY DUE.	Th 9/12: <i>Campaign Speeches</i>
Wk4	Tu 9/17: <i>Campaign Speeches (cont.)</i>	Th 9/19: <i>Political Advertising</i> READ –Hoegg & Lewis article. SUMMARY DUE.
Wk5	Tu 9/24: <i>Political Debates</i> READ –Benoit article. SUMMARY DUE.	Th 9/26: <i>Gender & Politics</i> READ –Anderson article. SUMMARY DUE.
Wk6	Tu 10/1: <i>Race & Politics</i>	Th 10/3: <i>Review & prepare for speeches</i>
Wk7	Tu 10/8: Electoral Reform Speeches SEE DETAILS IN ASSIGNMENT PACKET & RESOURCES ON MOODLE	Th 10/10: Electoral Reform Speeches SEE DETAILS IN ASSIGNMENT PACKET & RESOURCES ON MOODLE
Wk8	Tu 10/15 – Fall Recess	Th 10/17: <i>Politics & News/Media</i>
Wk9	Tu 10/22: <i>“Bullworth” movie</i>	Th 10/24: <i>“Bullworth” movie</i> ~Dr. Knopf possibly @ conference (GIC)
Wk10	Tu 10/29: <i>Politics & Social Media</i> READ –Kushin article. SUMMARY DUE.	Th 10/31: <i>Political Polling</i> <i>“Public Opinion” film</i>
Wk11	Tu 11/5: NIF Forum/Class Debate SEE DETAILS IN ASSIGNMENT PACKET & RESOURCES ON MOODLE	Th 11/7 – Dr. Knopf @ conference (ISA-NE)
Wk12	Tu 11/12: <i>“All the President’s Men” movie</i>	Th 11/14: <i>“All the President’s Men” movie</i>
Wk13	Tu 11/19 – Dr. Knopf @ conference (NCA)	Th 11/21 – Dr. Knopf @ conference (NCA)
Wk14	Tu 11/26 – <i>“Prime-Time Politics” show</i> <i>Review & prepare for satires</i>	Th 11/28 - Thanksgiving
Wk15	Tu 12/3: <i>Late-Night Politics.</i> READ–Feldman & Young article. SUMMARY DUE.	Th 12/5: <i>Satirical News</i> READ –Hoffman & Young. SUMMARY DUE.
Finals	Tues 12/10, 12:30-2:30 (this room): Satire presentations <i>Take-home exam assigned: due 12/12 before 5pm, by email</i>	

Italics indicate the day’s class discussion.

Bold indicates work due. (Remember, for each reading, written work is also due.)

THE ENGAGED STUDENT BONUS

At the start of each semester, everyone has 6 bonus points that will be added on to their final grade – unless they become disengaged from the course. To keep this bonus, you must practice the best behaviors of an engaged student.

The engaged student...

- Is familiar with the course policies outlined in the Syllabus
 - Does not ask the professor questions about policies (such as due dates, attendance, or extra credit) until first looking at the syllabus to find the answer – & might also check the Undergraduate Catalog on topics like Incompletes, Withdrawal, etc.
- Keeps track of the course calendar & due dates – because they are your responsibility
- Turns assignments in on time, and does not ask for extensions
 - Understands the difference between emergency situations (such as severe illness or a death in the immediate family), bad luck (crashed computers, printer problems, getting sick, roommate problems, breakups, family issues), and poor planning; life is filled with “little” setbacks and we simply must learn to deal with and take responsibility for them. For example, don’t wait until 5 minutes before class to print the work that’s due...
- Reads the assignment information completely and carefully in the Assignment Packet
 - Does not ask the professor questions about the assignments until having read all the provided information
 - Checks Moodle for additional information, if appropriate
- Makes use of the provided grading rubrics to enhance assignment completion and course performance
- Makes use of the grading rubrics and additional grading comments to understand a grade before approaching the professor about it
- Misses no more than 4 classes during the semester, and makes appropriate and *timely* arrangements for absences (such arrangements do not include lengthy emails detailing fights with roommates or bathroom habits by way of explanation, asking for make-up opportunities more than a week after the fact, or seeking extra credit)
 - Submits work early when an absence is planned
 - Drops off or makes arrangements for submitting work if suddenly called away from campus
 - Immediately contacts the professor if an assignment, test, or project is unavoidably missed
- Rarely arrives late, and takes a seat quietly without disrupting the class if late.
- Rarely leaves early, and exits quietly without disrupting class if it’s necessary
- Pays attention during class time and refrains from distracting/disrupting behaviors, such as texting, Facebooking, web browsing, doing other course work, eating large meals, or talking during class, and does not use class time to sleep/nap, get food or drink, or to regularly use the bathroom
- Participates in class activities, and puts good effort into those activities, while staying on task
- Comes to class prepared to take notes
 - Takes at least some notes during class – as deemed appropriate by the student
- At least occasionally takes part in class discussion with comments, answers, or questions
- Gives the course his or her best effort from the start, rather than panicking and seeking special loopholes or extra credit later in the semester after having brushed off assignments and/or studying for too long
 - Seeks help or guidance from the professor as soon as it’s needed, understanding that the professor has office hours and contact information for that purpose
- Works politely with the professor, and college if appropriate, to overcome any challenges that could interfere with course performance or completion
- Recognizes that academic honesty/integrity is not only a matter of ethics and law, but also one of fairness to self, professor, peers, and friends and, therefore, does not cheat or take shortcuts on work under any circumstances (this includes sloppy citations, copy-and-paste plagiarism, changing a few words of someone else’s paper, article, webpage, etc. & submitting it as your own work, looking at others’ work or at prohibited notes/books during a test, trying to submit late work attached to on-time work, doing an assignment during class time the day it was due)

The first time you become disengaged from the course, you will forfeit 2 of the 6 bonus points. The second time you become disengaged from the course, you forfeit the remaining 4 bonus points. Becoming disengaged means displaying behaviors that are contrary to those of the engaged student, as outlined above. Most grades are earned, starting from 0. The Engaged Student Bonus starts with the extra credit of 6 points because everyone has the potential to be an engaged student. As an added benefit, these behaviors of engagement will improve your chances for overall course success, even without the 10 bonus points.

COMM370

Contemporary Political Communication

Fall 2013 Assignment Packet

This packet is designed to provide you with all the basic information and instructions to succeed at the graded portions of this course. Instructions and grading schemes for every assignment in this class, for the entire semester, are provided here for you. Use this resource in conjunction with the Syllabus and class meetings.

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Note About Political Preferences & Partisanship: This class is designed to encourage student participation. This is not, however, a forum for arguing about political positions, beliefs, and affiliations; partisanship in class is not encouraged and it is asked that students keep their praise and criticisms focused on the communication elements of campaigning, not on parties or individual candidates (that is, it's OK to criticize or compliment a candidate's communication strategy but not to discuss at length the merits or weaknesses of people & parties). Views from all political affiliations are welcome in class and a friendly environment should be maintained, without students feeling threatened for having conflicting views; I will not tolerate excessive unrelated political discussions. I will likewise strive to keep my personal partisanship out of the classroom - though I occasionally make wise-cracks, none of which are partisan-motivated because I think all parties are pretty silly. ☺

Also, you may find that excessive cynicism about politics generally will be as counterproductive to you as partisan zealousness; to get the most out of this class, you will need to keep an open mind, be willing to self-challenge your current beliefs, and think critically about all perspectives and positions.

READINGS & ARTICLE SUMMARIES: There is no textbook for this class. Instead, you will be reading a series of scholastic journal articles about political communication. The articles are available on Moodle. The use of individual journal articles rather than one or two textbooks offers several advantages:

- **Cost & convenience.** The articles are freely available, and can be read according to your preference: on the computer, a tablet, an e-reader, or paper.
- **Currency.** Books take a long time to write and publish, so many political communication books available don't yet discuss the 2008 election – and here we are in 2013. Our journal article selection focuses entirely on politics since 2000, making the readings up-to-date.
- **Breadth.** Most political communication textbooks have a singular focus, such as campaign communication, civic deliberation, presidential rhetoric, media, etc. This is good to let readers go in-depth, but is not always engaging at the undergrad level (especially if you don't like politics.) Using articles lets us explore 5 different areas of poli-comm this semester.
- **Exposure & practice.** You'll gain valuable experience in learning to read/ understand academic writing. (Many textbooks don't use the same style.) If you are a comm major, you'll have to read journal articles on your own for Communication Theory. If you are a politics major, you may have to read journal articles for your Senior Seminar. This class provides you with more structured exposure to this kind of reading, if you haven't yet experienced it elsewhere – and is also good prep for graduate school.

This is a 300-level (upper-division), speaking-intensive class. The expectation, therefore, is that class will be participatory and that everyone will actively engage the material as much as possible. Discussions will be more robust and meaningful if you do the assigned readings on time – especially because class lectures will not be strictly a review of the assigned articles, but will build on the readings for more in-depth information. To encourage you to keep up with the readings, and to help you through them, **for each article you are required to HAND write an article summary in your own words on a half-sheet of paper.** (The reason for this approach is to reduce the urge to copy-and-paste things from the internet and to keep your workload in check, pushing you to be concise and keep your focus narrow).

Your Name

Abbreviated Article Title & Author Last Name(s)

Article Topic

2-3 Things you found interesting from the Literature Review/Introduction

The article's goal/or research question

What the author(s) discovered in the research.

HOW TO READ AND TAKE NOTES ON A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL ARTICLE

Keep in mind that authors of journal articles always have an argument; they are trying to convince you of something. *This does not mean it is biased!* Quality academic journals have a rigorous review process to ensure that articles are built on new, research-based information

Steps to Read the Article

- I. Look at the structure of the article (most scientific articles follow the same specific format)
 1. **Abstract** (summary of the whole article)
 2. **Introduction & Literature Review** (why they did the research & what related research has already been done. This lays the foundation –the broader academic dialogue– for the article's contribution)
 3. **Methodology** (how they did the research. Ex: surveys, experiments, textual analysis...)
 4. **Results** (what happened/what was observed)
 5. **Discussion** (what the results mean)
 6. **Conclusion** (what was learned)
 7. **References** (whose research they referenced & built upon)
- II. Read the abstract and conclusion **first** (these have the main points)

iii. Read through the other sections, focusing on the literature review and the discussions. (Don't worry if you don't understand the terminology in statistical studies, and don't let them freak you out.)

How to Take Notes on the Article

- Pay attention to what each section is about. The Abstract, Discussion, and Conclusion sections usually have the most important information. (Skim the methods section; it's not critical to you right now.)
- Write summarizing notes for main points (in the margin, or on a separate piece of paper)
- Don't hesitate to look up words you don't know

FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM

All those article summaries aren't just busy-work, you will use them. Not only will they be helpful to you for class discussions, but they will also be helpful to you for our take-home final exam.

At its root, political communication is about participation. The Speaking Intensive component of this course emphasizes that, and it will be reinforced through a short-essay, take home, final exam. For the exam, you will be presented with an NIF-inspired question (see the National Issues Forum speaking assignment later in this packet for more information). You will be asked to write a response to this question using information you have learned in class.

To make this process easier, you will have your article summaries returned to you with the exam to use. (Additionally, the article summaries replace the need for quizzes or tests throughout the entire semester.)

Your exam essay will only need to be 500-1000 words long and you will have 48 hours to complete it. Detailed instructions will be provided with the exam question at the end of the semester.

PARTICIPATION

"The world is run by those who show up."

Whether politics and public debate happens live in a town hall or virtually on Twitter engagement and involvement are necessary. This particular political forum (aka: the class) happens to be live and face-to-face. Your involvement is, therefore, part of the course expectations. Your

participation grade will take into consideration your attendance and attentiveness (keep this mind if you tend to use class-time to multitask) in addition to your contributions to class discussion.

ELECTORAL REFORM SPEECH: Public speaking is the most fundamental communication practice in any campaign and speeches are the result of careful planning, research, and investments

Purposes of this Assignment:

- Provide the opportunity to engage in actual political discourse
- Improve public speaking skills in a discipline-specific format
- Use an analytic process in political deliberation
- Engage problems/issues that matter to, or at least interest, you

For this assignment you will consider the various aspects of political communication we've discussed, along with your own political knowledge, and present a persuasive speech to the class about electoral reform. You choose the issue/problem and the solution.

Your grade will not be affected by your issue or position. It is based your ability to present the issue in an analytical and deliberative way. Your speech should be 5-6 minutes long. (You will be cut off after 7 minutes, so time your speech carefully!) To help you with this assignment, there is an additional reading offered on Moodle.

Electoral Reform Speech Grading Rubric (out of 100 points)

Basics			
Speaker is prepared & has taken the assignment seriously	2	4	8
Verbal delivery shows rehearsal	2	4	8
Nonverbal delivery shows rehearsal	2	4	8
Deliberation (see chart below* for explanation)			
Create a solid information base	2	4	8
Prioritize key values at stake [audience adaptation]	2	6	10
Identify a range of solutions/acknowledge other ideas	2	4	8
Weigh the pros & cons	2	4	8
Make the best decision possible	2	4	8
Speech Structure			
Solid introduction	2	4	8
Well organized	2	6	10
Engaging language use	2	4	8
Clear conclusion	2	4	8

*Key Features of Citizen Deliberation (from John Gastil's *Political Communication & Deliberation*)

Analytic Process

Create a solid information base	Combine expertise and professional research with personal experiences to better understand the problem's nature and its impact
Prioritize key values at stake	Integrate the public's articulation of its core values with technical &/or legal expressions &/or social, economic, and democratic costs/benefits
Identify a broad range of solutions (consider other ideas & experiences)	Identify both conventional and innovative solutions (take into consideration opposing viewpoints, alternative experiences)
Weigh the pros, cons & tradeoffs among solutions	Systematically apply the public's priorities to the alternative solutions, emphasizing the most significant trade-offs among alternatives
Make/offer the best decision possible	Identify and propose the solution that best addresses the problem, potentially drawing on multiple approaches

NIF DISCUSSION/CLASS DEBATE: "For over 10 years, thousands of Americans have met each year through the National Issues Forums (NIF). These Forums have looked at important public issues. They have encouraged Americans to think about the hard choices we face on major questions like AIDS, racial inequality, and health care" (Patrick Scully, NIF Project Director).

In this class, we will use NIF publications and discussion questions to consider and reconsider the political system. "More and more people feel our politics does not work. They feel no one cares what they think. Many Americans feel that our system needs to be changed, But they do not know how to fix it" (Scully). We will talk about different actions we can take. "These are called 'choices.' Some of these choices have been suggested before. More than once choice could be right. All are presented fairly" (Scully). You will be asked to think through which choices are good or bad and to consider alternatives.

Purposes of this Assignment:

- Provide the opportunity to engage in actual political discourse
- Improve public speaking skills in a discipline-specific and "real-world" format
- Consider not only political concerns but also political remedies
- Demonstrate the potential of citizen involvement in the Political Process

The NIF discussion will coincide with our examination and consideration of the role of the media in American politics. Therefore, we are going use the NIF on "News Media and Society: How to Restore the Public Trust." This reading is available on Moodle.

To prepare for discussions, read pages 2-29 in the NIF Discussion Guide on "News Media and Society," available on Moodle.

Consider the three approaches presented. What do you like/dislike, agree/disagree with? Can you think of alternatives that are not presented here? What solution(s) would you propose or support? Be prepared to state a position or pose a question during the "Town Hall" discussion in class. Be familiar enough with the information that you can even question, challenge, or defend the comments other people might make.

NIF Debate/Discussion Grading Criteria (out of 20 points)

-Remain attentive, tuned in, and focused during the discussion = 5 pts

(texting, leaving, arriving late, doing work for other classes, surfing the Web, checking the weather or the sports scores are all examples of poor listening and rudeness)

-Make at least 1 contribution to the discussion, demonstrating familiarity w/ the readings = 5 pts

(come to class with some notes, thoughts, or opinions about the materials you read jotted down on a piece of paper or an index card.)

-Make at least 2 contributions to the discussion = 5 pts

If you're really active in the discussion, you'll have a chance to earn extra credit.

-Showing your fellow citizens (classmates) courtesy; paying attention to what they have to say, and respecting their opinions even if you disagree = 3 pts

-Thoughtful completion of NIF questionnaires administered after discussion = 2 pts

ORIGINAL SATIRICAL PRESENTATION: Many people in your age group now get their political news primarily from comedy or satire outlets. This project gives you an inside look at the satire process.

Purposes of this Assignment:

- Enhance your understanding of how satire works
- Learn more about an issue that interests you.
- Improve your public speaking and presentation skills in a discipline-specific format

In order to criticize something, we must know a lot about it. The quality of a piece of satire is in its details. I therefore encourage you to satirize something close to you, about which you feel strongly. For example, if you play sports or are in a fraternity/sorority you might want to satirize the school's perception of student athletes or Greek life. If you've lived in suburbia, you might channel that experience to satirize the suburban lifestyle. Look around for something that really ticks you off and then form a serious, rational argument about you can turn on its head. If you are having difficulty thinking of a topic, have a look through our readings and your notes, talk to a friend, talk to me, or just turn on *South Park*. Do not copy other satire, but there is no harm in learning from examples. For example, you might find that you can apply Stephen Colbert's methods to a different subject.

Alone or with a group, you will compose and give a satirical presentation. It must take the form of traditional oral communication, such as: a speech, a skit, an ad, a news broadcast, an interview, a panel or roundtable discussion, a stand-up comedy routine, or even a take-off of Colbert's "The Word," for example.

Along with the satire itself, you will turn in a short paper that addresses the following:

- a) the target of your satire (What problem will you address?)
- b) the earnest argument you wanted to make (What is your real opinion on this issue?)
- c) the satirical argument you made (What satirical or humorous "mask" did you use?)
- d) the reason you chose a particular medium and how that shaped your arguments (website, cartoon, fiction, prose [e.g. newspaper editorial, magazine column, etc.], photography, film, audio recording [music and/or vocal]), etc. How will your choice of medium dictate your rhetorical strategies?)
- e) the authorial persona you used in your satire (For example, if you wrote a story, what was the narrator like? Or, if you wrote a newspaper editorial, what personality did the author have - a right-wing pundit like Colbert, or an absurd leftist perspective?)
- f) the intended audience of your satire (who would "get it" and who wouldn't?)
- g) the research you needed to do about the subject

Presentations should be approximately 10 minutes long.

Satire Grading Rubric (out of 50 points):

Satire	Specificity	1	4	7
	Unity	1	3	6
	Ingenuity	1	4	7

	Presentation	2	4	8
Explanatory Paper	Grammatically correct	2	4	8
	Complete & on time	2	4	8
	Justified, esp. with course content where approp.	1	3	6

Specificity: *Your satire must target a specific problem/vice/corruption/etc.*

Unity: *Your satire must address a specific audience.*

Clarity: *Your argument must be identifiable*

Ingenuity/Creativity: *Evidence of effort, demonstration of creativity, &/or thoroughness of satirical integration*

Presentation: *Demonstrate all the characteristics of a good public address.*

** Information on the next page provides you with some common techniques of satire and comedy to help you with your project! **

SATIRIC AND COMEDIC DEVICES-

1. **Mockery**--insulting or contemptuous action or speech
2. **Malapropism**--an act or habit of misusing words ridiculously, esp. by the confusion of words that are similar in sound. Ex. "that's just a Fig Newton of your imagination"
3. **Pun**--the humorous use of a word or phrase so as to emphasize or suggest its different meanings or applications, or the use of words that are alike or nearly alike in sound but different in meaning; Ex. "Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana." (Groucho Marx)
4. **Understatement**—1. A disclosure or statement that is less than complete. 2. Restraint or lack of emphasis in expression, as for rhetorical effect.
5. **Hyperbole**--Exaggeration--To represent as greater than is actually the case; to enlarge or increase to an abnormal degree
6. **Irony**--a technique of indicating, as through character or plot development, an intention or attitude opposite to that which is actually or ostensibly stated.
 - a. an outcome of events contrary to what was, or might have been, expected.
 - b. an objectively sardonic style of speech or writing
 - c. an objectively or humorously sardonic utterance, disposition, quality, etc.Note: *Alanis Morissette's "Isn't it Ironic" is not ironic. She's really just singing about bad luck and coincidence.*
7. **Sarcasm**--A cutting, often ironic remark intended to wound; A form of wit that is marked by the use of sarcastic language and is intended to make its victim the butt of contempt or ridicule.
8. **Litote**--A kind of understatement, where the speaker uses negative of a word ironically to mean the opposite. Ex. *She's not the friendliest person I know.* (= she's an unfriendly person)
9. **Tautology**--Two near-synonyms are placed consecutively or very close together for effect. Ex. "Beseechingly, urgingly..."
10. **Slang**--An informal nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech
11. **Parody**—A performance or piece in which the style of another is closely imitated for comic effect or in ridicule
12. **Mondegreen**—Words that result from the mishearing or misinterpretation of a statement or song lyric. Ex. "Hold me closer Tony Danza" (from *Hold me closer tiny dancer* by Elton John); "I led the pigeons to the flag" (for "I pledge allegiance to the flag"); "the girl with colitis goes by" (for "the girl with kaleidoscope eyes," in "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," by the Beatles).

Additionally, an extra reading will be available on Moodle that might help you to better understand how the rhetoric of satire functions.