

Original Political Satirical Presentation

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 it that 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 Comedy Central. 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.

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

Possible projects, depending on your own style and skills: News story (ala Stewart & Colbert), children's book, comic book, song, web site, speech, film (documentary or fiction), skit... Classes with a similar assignment came up with:

- An irreverent video
- A "fake news" report, ala John Oliver or Weekend Update
- A report from the future making a wacky interpretation of things happening now
- Fake campaign commercials
- A parody of a show, movie, or song
- A satirical children's book

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

(The purpose of this paper is to help guide you through all the necessary steps of creating satire. Also, it makes the workload of the project more equitable because regardless of what medium each person chooses, everyone must think through the same number of issues in creating the final product.)

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).

Presentations should be approximately 10 minutes long.

Grading will be as follows:

Satire	Clarity/Unity	5 pts
	Ingenuity/Creativity	3 pts
	Presentation/Performance	5 pts
Explanatory Paper	Grammatically correct	2 pts
	Justified with course content/lessons learned	5 pts

Clarity/Unity: Your satire must target a specific problem/vice/corruption/etc. and address an identifiable audience.

Ingenuity/Creativity: How well you integrated your satirical critique.

Presentation: You should rehearse your presentation to the class and demonstrate all the characteristics of a good public address.