

COMM370: Contemporary Political Communication with Dr. Christina Knopf ("Dr. K.")

Contact: Morey248 Tu/Th 10-10:45 & 3:30-5, M/W/F by apt, knopfcm@potsgdam.edu, [facebook.com/profknopf](https://www.facebook.com/profknopf)

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.

In the contemporary political realm, where New Media reigns and nightly network broadcasts have become all but obsolete, it's increasingly common to hear about individuals – particularly those in their 20s and 30s – getting the majority of their political information from entertainment: cartoons like *South Park* or fake news like *The Colbert Report*. This phenomenon has stirred up controversy with mainstream news media sources (CNN vs. Jon Stewart eclipsed Joe Frazier vs. Muhammad Ali as the "fight of the century"), and with scholars of political communication, but studies indicate that consumers of satire are potentially more politically knowledgeable than consumers of regular news. This course will offer a critical, and entertaining, examination of political satire – exploring its origins, effects, relevance in order to highlight the ways in which the genre of entertaining politics changes, and is changed, by the socio-political fabric it mocks.

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

- Understand and explain the roles of communication in society – including its relationship to other disciplines and the issues of marginalized and/or minority voices: This course is focused on the ways in which satire negatively and/or positively influences political efficacy in the United States.
- Read and understand contemporary scholarship, with knowledge of the discipline's history: Through the textbook and supplemental readings, you will learn about different scholastic studies of political satire and about changes in political media, both in terms of business practices and scholastic critiques.
- Construct and evaluate oral, written, and/or visual arguments & messages, with consideration to appropriate audience analysis: You will be expected to formally critique one satiric artifact and to teach the class how the satire functions.
- Demonstrate knowledge and application of contemporary communication theory, in both scholarship and practice: By the end of the semester you will be familiar with some of the major media theories used in political communication scholarship and will engage in class discussions related to media uses.
- Employ effective listening skills: As a political communication, and speaking intensive, class you will engage in formal and informal discussions and debate. Your attentiveness and engagement are graded portions of these activities.

This course carries the General Education 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 is ready to refine their speech skills. Students who take this class are expected know how to: find, use, and cite evidence to support ideas; decide what ideas to include in a speech; arrange ideas effectively; relate ideas directly to the audience; employ language to make ideas meaningful and interesting; construct clear and effective introductions and conclusions; and, use a delivery style that is vigorous, varied, and vivid.

DISCLAIMERS! ☠ There will be emphasis in this course about the place of satire and humor in politics. We will be looking at numerous examples of political humor. In these examples many worldviews will be mocked. No one is safe; please do not take personal offense to any of the examples. If you are easily offended, this may not be the right class for you. This class will make extensive use of media presentations – TV shows, films, clips, Web sites. If you are not prepared to

come to class regularly and to **actively** watch & listen to these presentations, this may not be the right class for you.

Texts & Course Materials:

Entertaining Politics by Jeffrey P. Jones
Course Syllabus
Assignment Packet
Additional readings distributed via email

Grading: Your final course grade is determined out of 100 possible points:

One-Minute Papers:	30 points total
Satire Analysis:	20 points
Original Satire:	20 points
NIF Discussion:	15 points
NCA Debate:	10 points
Participation:	5 points


Full assignment descriptions, instructions, explanations, and grading procedures are found in the accompanying "Assignments Packet."

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

4.0 = 95-100 points	3.7 = 90-94 points
3.3 = 86-89 points	3.0 = 82-85 points
2.7 = 78-81 points	2.3 = 72-77 points
2.0 = 67-71 points	1.7 = 61-66 points
1.3 = 56-60 points	1.0 = 51-55 points
0.0 = 0-50 points	

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 and 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.

 **IMPORTANT!** Often, students skip assignments or quizzes that are worth fewer points because they don't think doing so will have a big impact on their grade – and then they have an unpleasant surprise at the end of the semester. Choosing to not attend class regularly, for example, because participation is worth "only" 5 points will result in your final grade being one full measure lower than it might have been otherwise. Skipping 5 One-Minute Papers, each worth "only" 2 points will lower your final grade by another two measure. The highest grade now possible in this scenario is a 3.0, and that assumes you ace everything else.

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 student performance rests with the student.
- Resubmit the original work (complete with grade & comments) along with the rationale.
- Allow two weeks for reconsideration. *Be aware that in reconsidering a grade, I may find that it earned a lower grade than it originally received.*

- Accept the final decision. *I will reconsider each assignment only once.*

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.

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. There are some chances at bonus points built in to the course; remain attentive to course material and assignments to discover these opportunities.

Academic Integrity & Dishonesty: As stated in the Undergraduate Catalog, the following pledge is made on all academic work done by students at SUNY Potsdam. This pledge is regarded as an indication that you understand and have complied with the requirements and assignments as set forth by the course instructor and as stated in this Academic Honor Code.

"On my honor: I will not give nor receive any inappropriate assistance on any academic work in accordance with the SUNY Potsdam Academic Honor Code and the directions given to me by each course instructor"

To plagiarize is to pass off *ideas or words of someone else* as your own or to use created productions without crediting the source. Any time you incorporate the words and/or ideas of another person into your work, whether from a book, a film, T.V., the Internet, or any other source, without giving their creator the credit, you have plagiarized. It is literary and intellectual theft when you present work that someone else did as being new and original. This includes user-generated content on sites like Wikipedia.

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. I recommend that you keep copies of all drafts of your work, make photocopies and/or careful notes of research materials, save drafts or versions of assignments under individual file names on computer disks, etc. (This is a good practice for any and all classes. Not only will it protect you should you ever be accused of academic dishonesty, but it also protects you in instances of computer malfunctions, stolen bags, spilled coffee, and bad filing systems.)

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.

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. Incompletes are not granted because you partied the first 12 weeks of the semester and realized during the last 3 weeks that doing so wasn't such a good idea.


Attendance: Attendance is expected. See the Assignment Packet for more information.

Etiquette: The success of this course is directly related to the sense of community that we develop in the classroom. Participation is essential to this process. I encourage you to share your views and listen to those of others. Debate and discussion are an important part of the learning process. While there will no doubt be disagreements, I expect the members of this community (including myself) to challenge ideas in a manner that reflects respect and recognition of opposing viewpoints without attacking individuals.

Technology/Electronic Devices: Technology is permissible, and even welcome, in the classroom given the following:

- Your usage is polite. You are taught from kindergarten on that it is not acceptable to carry on personal conversations with others or to pass notes to people during class time. The same is true for the electronic versions of these (i.e., taking/making cell calls and texting).
- Your usage does not interfere with your performance in class. Multitasking is a fact of modern life, but if you're not good at Facebooking and listening at the same time, don't do it.
- Your usage does not bother your neighbors. Gaming, video viewing, downloading porn, etcetera may not be a distraction to you but may be a distraction to the people sitting near you. Phones and pagers should always be set to silent and should only be answered outside of the classroom.
- You are willing to apply your technology use to course materials in productive ways. Technology can enhance your learning, so if asked to look something up on the Web during class, please do so. *A refusal to use technology in the classroom as part of the class can result in revocation of technology use privileges.*
- You do not secretly record any portion of a class without seeking permission from all involved parties.

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.

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I, _____, have read the entire Syllabus AND the Assignment Packet for
[printed name]

COMM370 with Dr. Knopf, have understood it, and agree to observe it for the duration of my enrollment in the course.

If there was any part of the syllabus that I found troubling in any way, I have already spoken to Dr. Knopf about my concerns.

Signature

Date

COMM370 – Contemporary Political Communication – Fall 2011 Calendar: You are responsible for knowing and adhering to the due dates listed here. This calendar is the only “reminder” you will be given about work that is due.

Tuesday, August 30

In-class: discuss syllabus, assignments, and semester

Due (have ready) for class: NA

Thursday, September 1

This class will not meet today. Dr. K. is presenting research at the American Political Science Association conference in Seattle.

Be sure to carefully read through the entire Syllabus and Assignment Packet.

Tuesday, September 6

In-class: Student-directed discussion about Moyer article, satire, and media use. Possible viewing of *Dr. Strangelove*

Due (have ready) for class: Read article online: Bill Moyer's “Perspectives on Political Satire,” at <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/faithandreason/politicalsatire.html>
Carefully read Syllabus & Assignment Packet, if you have not yet done so.

Thursday, September 8

In-class:

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 1

Tuesday, September 13

In-class: Discussion of media theories

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 2

Thursday, September 15

In-class: Discussion of citizenship.

Due (have ready) for class: nothing ☺

Tuesday, September 20

In-class: Discussions of liberalism and of celebrity politics.

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 3

Thursday, September 22

In-class: NIF Media Town Hall Debate. [This is one of the main speaking assignments for the course. Attendance is critical.]

Due (have ready) for class: Read the NIF booklet distributed via email. Be prepared to participate in the forum. See Assignment Packet for more information.

Tuesday, September 27

In-class: Media viewing and open discussions.

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 4

Thursday, September 29

In-class: Discussion on sex & politics and family metaphors.

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 5.

Tuesday, October 4

In-class: Discussions on media literacy & on culture jamming

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 6, pages 111-128.

Thursday, October 6

In-class: Discussion on conversation in politics.

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 6, pages 128-145.

Tuesday, October 11

Fall Recess - No class

Thursday, October 13

In-class: Discussions on muckraking and mockumentaries; media viewing.

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 7

Tuesday, October 18

In-class: Satire analysis presentations

Due (have ready) for class: Red Balloons, Orange Stars, & Green Clovers 1-3 will present their satire analyses today.

Thursday, October 20

In-class: Satire analysis presentations

Due (have ready) for class: Blue Moons, Purple Horseshoes, & Green Clovers 4-5 will present their satire analyses today.

Tuesday, October 25

In-class: Discussions of on polling, ad watches, & the political spectacle – includes media

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 8.

Thursday, October 27

In-class: Discussion of American civil-religion; special media presentation

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 9.

Tuesday, November 1

In-class: Discussion on fandom

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 10.

Thursday, November 3

In-class: Discussion on satire and war; viewing of USO footage

Due (have ready) for class: Read articles online: Dan Miller's "War is Hell" at <http://blogcritics.org/politics/article/satire-war-is-hell-lets-make/> , Campbell Robertson's "Colbert Does His Shtick" at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/08/arts/television/08colb.html> , and Julius Cavendish's "Potholes, Parodies & Politics" at <http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/asia-pacific/potholes-parodies-and-politics-satire-hits-afghan-television>

Tuesday, November 8

In-class: Discussion on political ideology & satire

Due (have ready) for class: Read chapter 11

Thursday, November 10

In-class: Discussion of cartoons and political satire.

Due (have ready) for class: Read articles online: Andy Dehnart's " 'Family Guy' is no cheap 'Simpsons' knockoff" at <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/21627779> , and Kathleen Parker's " 'South Park' reignites cartoon debate" at http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2010-04-29-column29_ST_N.htm

Tuesday, November 15

In-class: NCA Debate. [This is one of the main speaking assignments for the course. Attendance is critical.]

Due (have ready) for class: Read and be familiar with the NCA articles debating fake news (provided by email). Be prepared to participate in the class forum. See the Assignment Packet for more information.

Thursday, November 17

This class will not meet today. Dr. K. is presenting research at the National Communication Association conference in New Orleans.

Tuesday, November 22

In-class: Special media presentation

Due (have ready) for class: nothing ☺

Thursday, November 24

It's Thanksgiving in the U.S. Instead of class, fill up on mashed potatoes and watch American football.

Tuesday, November 29

In-class: Original satire presentations

Due (have ready) for class: Hand in short paper that accompanies your satire (see Assignment Packet)

Blue Moons & Purple Horseshoes 1-2 will present their satires today

Thursday, December 1

In-class: Original satire presentations

Due (have ready) for class: Green Clovers & Purple Horseshoes 3 will present their satires today

Tuesday, December 6

In-class: Original satire presentations

Due (have ready) for class: Orange Stars & Purple Horseshoes 4 will present their satires today

Thursday, December 8

In-class: Original satire presentations

Due (have ready) for class: Red Balloons & Purple Horseshoes 5 will present their satires today

Thursday, December 15, 10:15-12:15

Final Exam

(Please note: Final exam times are set by the college based on the course schedule template.)

COMM370
Contemporary Political Communication
with Dr. K.

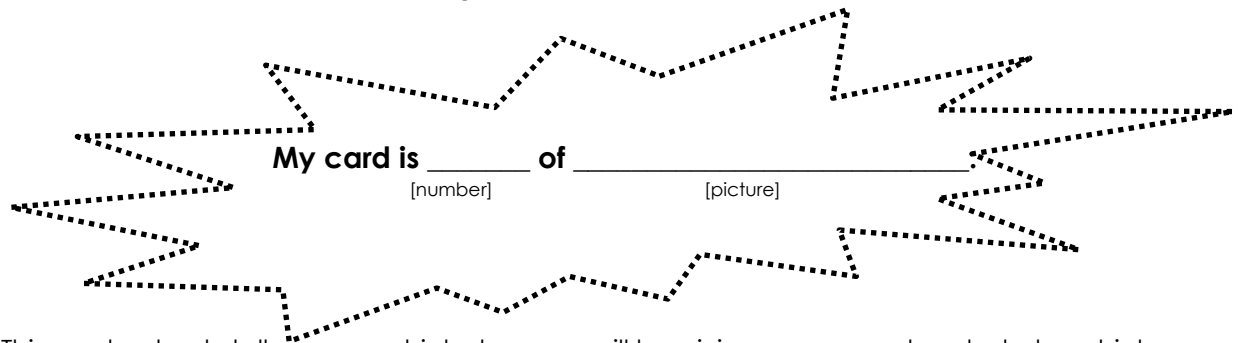
Fall 2011 Assignment Packet

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. You are responsible for reading the information in this packet just as you are responsible for reading any other assignment in class.

A Word about Due Dates & Attendance

Speech presentation days are all pre-assigned. When you look at the class calendar, you will see the speech days are divided according to a character and/or number designation.

On the first day of class, you received a card assigning you as a number 1-5 and as a Lucky Charms™ icon – red balloon, orange star, green clover, blue moon, or purple horseshoe. The professor kept a record of your designation. You should keep one as well. Use the space below.



This card not only tells you on which days you will be giving your speeches, but also which chapter section you are in charge of teaching (see the “Learning by Leading” assignment described in this packet).

The card may also be used to make group assignments and for random participant selection in class.

Please treat assigned presentation days the way you would a major exam. If you don't show up, you likely forfeit your opportunity to speak and will get a zero for the assignment. Not being prepared wastes your classmates' time, too. I know that we all get sick once in a while, but consider this: If you're in college to learn *job* skills, responsibility is one of them. Frequently in our careers, there is no way to reschedule a major presentation. Bosses expect, and need, reports at certain times. Not meeting those obligations will ruin chances for promotions and raises, possibly result in job loss, and could even severely damage the company or organization.

Attendance: This is a live, non-virtual, non-mediated, speech communication course. Being present is necessary to communicate. Regular, timely, attendance is expected.

Attendance is a job skill: failure to report to work on time can result in lost income, inability to be promoted, or termination. If you cannot consistently be present, on time, for class, you should consider withdrawing.

If you miss an assignment or a quiz when absent or late, it cannot be made up – unless the absence was caused by acute illness that mandated bed rest and/or quarantine or by an event like death in the immediate family.

- Absences for religious observances can, and will, be accommodated *with advance notice*.
- Repeated absences due to chronic illness can be accommodated through special arrangements, provided they are made early enough in the semester.
- If you have family or health concerns that could interfere with your success in this course, you should make arrangements with the professor and/or Accommodative Services (in the Student Success Center) as soon as possible.

Regular attendance is to your advantage. Not only do studies show that students who attend class earn better grades but your attentive presence will improve the chances that you get all needed information and assistance on assignments, reduce the number of quizzes or in-class grades that you miss, and increase the number of in-class extra credit opportunities in which you may be able to participate.

Readings & One-Minute Papers (30 pts, 30% of final grade)

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. Our class time together during these early weeks will be the most productive and the most interesting if you do the assigned readings on time. (Due dates for each chapter are marked on the calendar.) This way, discussions and activities will be more robust and meaningful.

Now, I know textbooks aren't always "fun" to read (though this one is really pretty entertaining). And, as a world-class procrastinator myself, I know how easy it is to put things off... and off... and off... So, to help motivate you to keep up on the readings, the following policies are in place:

- For each chapter, and several supplemental readings, there will be "1-minute papers." These will be kind of like a short-answer quiz in which you will have 1-minute to respond to a question posed to you, based on the reading for the day. There will be 11-15 papers, worth 3 points each. Only the highest 10 grades will be counted.
- To prepare for these papers you may choose to bring, and turn-in, one 4x6 index card with handwritten notes (front & back) from the chapter. (One card per chapter.) You would get to use the "cheat sheet" on the paper to help jog your memory about what you read. [Submitting cards for all assigned reading will result in extra credit!]

This is a 4x6 card.

If you do not have index cards available, you may cut paper to this size to use. It may not be any larger than this outline.

If you do not have a ruler, trace this box.

- You may have only 1 card per chapter.
- Cards may not be any larger than 4x6.
- Notes must be handwritten, not typed.
- Your name must be on the card, or it will be thrown away.
- Cards will be accepted *only on the day the chapter is due*, no exceptions.

Reading the assignments ON TIME is also critical because class lectures will **not** be a review or a summary of the chapters. They will be topics related to ideas presented in the chapters in order to make the textbook information fuller and more meaningful to you, while also exposing you to a wider avenue of political communication scholarship.

NIF Discussion (15 pts, 15% of final grade)

"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 Blackboard.

To prepare for discussions, read pages 2-29 in the **NIF Discussion Guide on "News Media and Society," distributed via email.**

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.

Grading is as follows

-Remaining attentive, tuned in, and focused during the discussion = 4 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)

-Making at least one contribution to the discussion that demonstrates familiarity with the readings = 6 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.) 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 = 2 pts

-Thoughtful completion of NIF questionnaires administered after discussion = 3 pts

NCA Debate (10 pts, 10% of final grade)

One of the supplemental readings you will receive this semester is a series of academic position papers that were presented by renowned political communication scholars at the National Communication Association in 2006. The authors/speakers debate the value of fake news in real politics. We're going to read what they have to say and, combined with our understandings from the other course readings, enter the debate through a Town Hall style class session.

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

To prepare for discussions, read all the NCA articles **distributed via email**.

Carefully consider each perspective offered. What view(s) would you propose or support? What do you like/dislike, agree/disagree with? Can you think of possibilities that are not presented here? 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.

Grading is as follows

-Remaining attentive, tuned in, and focused during the discussion = 2 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)

-Making at least one contribution to the discussion that demonstrates familiarity with the readings = 7 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.) *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 = 1 pts

Satire Analysis (20 pts, 20% of final grade)

Select any piece of satire that speaks to you. It can be an episode of a television program like *The Daily Show*, *The Simpsons*, *The Colbert Report*, *South Park*, or *Family Guy*. It can be a movie. It can be an issue or story of *The Onion* or a satiric Web site. It can be new or old, liberal or conservative, political or social... Whatever you select, get it approved with the professor. You will do an analysis/criticism of the satire that you will present to the class. Take a look at how Jeffrey Jones breaks down the Jon Stewart formula in chapter 6 or the "satirical reporter formulas" he identifies in chapter 7. Consider the satirical and comedic devices provided below. Apply this sort of analytic breakdown of your chosen satire.

Purposes of this Assignment:

- Enhance your understanding of how satire works
- Take a closer look at the media that you interact with in your daily life
- Improve your public speaking and presentation skills

You will present your analysis to the class as a sort of lesson in political satire. Explain how the satire works: What issue(s) is being discussed? What point is being made? How does the satire get the audience to view or understand something in a new way? What techniques are being employed?

- Your class presentation should give any necessary background about the core issue and about the source of the satire.
- It should accurately identify the satiric/rhetorical strategies being used (rely on the text, class discussions, the following information, and your knowledge of rhetoric from other classes).
- It must incorporate clips, visuals, or quotes where appropriate.
- It must be clearly organized.
- It must be well prepared and rehearsed.
- It must be 10-15 minutes.
- It must be accompanied by a 3-5 page paper giving a more complete analysis of the satire than you can fit into a 10-minute presentation.

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Satire Analysis Rubric

Category/Points	5	3	1
Satirical Techniques	Accurately identifies 4 or more examples of satirical/comedic techniques	Accurately identifies 2 or more examples of satirical/comedic techniques	Does not adequately identify satire.
Related Commentary	Accurately identifies & explains the commentary or criticism being made through the satire and explains how the satire accomplishes the critique.	Begins to recognize the commentary or criticism being made through the satire and explains how the satire accomplishes the critique.	Does not adequately connect the comedic techniques to political or social commentary.
Presentation Quality	Presentation is well organized & delivered, utilizing all the basic principles of public speaking.	Presentation was adequate but could have been improved with more preparation and/or rehearsal.	Presentation was poorly executed.
Paper Quality	Paper was complete and thoughtful, using good spelling, grammar, and organization.	Paper was complete and thoughtful, but had significant technical problems.	Paper was incomplete and/or exhibited substantial technical errors.

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).

Original Satirical Presentation (20 pts, 20% of final grade)

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.

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, "The Wit and Wisdom of Bill O'Reilly."
- A video purportedly from Canada mocking Michael Moore's pledge to leave the US if Bush won re-election in 2004.
- A report from the future on a wacky religion based on the discovery of sacred texts that turn out to be Dr. Seuss books.
- Fake campaign commercials showing candidates who went to elitist colleges presenting an idealized version of the American Dream
- A parody of "Leave it to Beaver" where a distant relative from the future visits the Cleaver family and explores issues such as race, war, gender and global warming
- A children's book about "No Child Left Behind"

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.)

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.

Participation (5 pts, 5% of final grade)

"The world is run by those who show up." With this in mind, it is only fitting that a course about politics emphasizes the importance of participation, engagement, and civic/community accountability. Therefore, participation is a graded component of this class.

In college, a frequent complaint among students is that classes are boring: the topics are uninteresting and the class meetings are not engaging.

In the "real world," a common complaint of people is, "you can't fight city hall" – that government and business leaders do what they want without the consent or the interests of the people.

In both of these cases, there is some truth and some untruth. Classes might be boring and leaders might not have the best interests of the community in mind. But, students and citizens are not as helpless as they might think. If we want to improve conditions, we have to get involved. As the saying goes, "It takes two to tango." Teachers can't interact with students who aren't prepared, aren't present, or aren't responsive. Leaders can't/won't adapt to a community that is uninvolved. Your voice needs to be heard.

This is especially true in this class.

★ *What good participation is:*

- Being in class, on time, consistently
- Being prepared for class, with readings and other assignments done on time
- Paying attention to the professor and to other students
- Closely & critically watching media presentations in class
- Answering questions posed by the professor
- Asking questions of the professor and/or other students
- Listening
- Showing respect to others in the room

★ *What good participation is NOT:*

- Skipping out on media presentations that are part of the course
- Staring at the screen of your personal electronic devices for extended periods of time in class
- Checking email, Facebook, sports scores, and Twitter frequently during class
- Answering and sending text messages during class
- Showing up to class late
- Leaving class early
- Sleeping during class (seriously, if you need sleep that badly – stay home, it's less rude)
- Carrying on private conversations during class
- Doing work for other classes during our class time
- Trying to catch up on homework or reading that should have been done prior to class

COMM370: Contemporary PoliComm – Fall 2011 Date Dues: This is a quick reference of due dates. Be sure to also refer to the full course calendar in the syllabus.

Tuesday, September 6

Read article online: Bill Moyer's "Perspectives on Political Satire," at <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/faithandreason/politicalsatire.html>
Carefully read Syllabus & Assignment Packet, if you have not yet done so.

Thursday, September 8

Read chapter 1

Tuesday, September 13

Read chapter 2

Tuesday, September 20

Read chapter 3

Thursday, September 22

NIF: Read the NIF booklet distributed via email. Be prepared to participate in the forum.

Tuesday, September 27

Read chapter 4

Thursday, September 29

Read chapter 5.

Tuesday, October 4

Read chapter 6, pages 111-128.

Thursday, October 6

Read chapter 6, pages 128-145.

Thursday, October 13

Read chapter 7

Tuesday, October 18

Red Balloons, Orange Stars, & Green Clovers 1-3 will present their satire analyses today.

Thursday, October 20

Blue Moons, Purple Horseshoes, & Green Clovers 4-5 will present their satire analyses today.

Tuesday, October 25

Read chapter 8.

Thursday, October 27

Read chapter 9.

Tuesday, November 1

Read chapter 10.

Thursday, November 3

Read articles online: Dan Miller's "War is Hell" at <http://blogcritics.org/politics/article/satire-war-is-hell-lets-make/> , Campbell Robertson's "Colbert Does His Shtick" at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/08/arts/television/08colb.html> , and Julius Cavendish's "Potholes, Parodies & Politics" at <http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/asia-pacific/potholes-parodies-and-politics-satire-hits-afghan-television>

Tuesday, November 8

Read chapter 11

Thursday, November 10

Read articles online: Andy Dehnart's " 'Family Guy' is no cheap 'Simpsons' knockoff" at <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/21627779> , and Kathleen Parker's " 'South Park' reignites cartoon debate" at http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2010-04-29-column29_ST_N.htm

Tuesday, November 15

NCA debate: Read and be familiar with the NCA articles debating fake news (provided by email). Be prepared to participate in the class forum.

Tuesday, November 29

Everyone. Hand in short paper that accompanies your satire (see Assignment Packet)
Blue Moons & Purple Horseshoes 1-2 will present their satires today

Thursday, December 1

Green Clovers & Purple Horseshoes 3 will present their satires today

Tuesday, December 6

Orange Stars & Purple Horseshoes 4 will present their satires today

Thursday, December 8

Red Balloons & Purple Horseshoes 5 will present their satires today