

## Duke TIP Summer Studies Program (2016)

*The Pen as Weapon: The Art of Satire*

University of Georgia, Term I

**Instructor:** Andrew Marzoni, PhD

**TA:** Justine Von Arb

### Required Texts:

Andy Borowitz, ed. *The 50 Funniest American Writers: An Anthology of Humor from Mark Twain to The Onion* (Library of America, 2011)

Nathanael West, *Miss Lonelyhearts* & *The Day of the Locust* (New Directions, 2009)

John Kennedy Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces* (Grove, 1987)

Select essays, films, videos, websites, and other media (provided by instructor)

### Course Description:

What do *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*, Gary Trudeau's *Doonesbury*, and *The Simpsons* all have in common? In a word: satire. Join your witty peers in an exploration of satire, the art of exposing the foibles and pitfalls of society, institutions, and individuals through wit and comedy. Discuss satire's role in social and political movements and examine the ways in which pointed humor, irony, and exaggeration can quickly lead to controversy and even violence depending upon political, religious, and geographic contexts. Analyze what constitutes well-written satire, and how authors successfully navigate an ever-changing cultural landscape to create humorous and constructive social criticism.

### Course Objectives:

- Develop close reading skills
- Apply the terms and methods of literary analysis to print and filmic media
- Demonstrate understanding of how to think critically about various texts within their cultural, political, and intellectual contexts
- Engage complex ideas and issues throughout multiple modes of writing
- Provide constructive criticism to other writers
- Encounter and explore various genres, modes, and media
- Increase fluency in both spoken and written English
- Cultivate cooperative problem-solving skills through collaborative work

### Assignments and Evaluation:

The assignments in this course are designed to foster creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, the ability to consider an issue from multiple perspectives, and to articulate a clearly defined point-of-view in both written and spoken English. Although some fundamental material will be delivered via lecture, this will be a reading, writing, and speaking-intensive course with components of creative writing, critical writing, and sustained collaboration. Students will be expected to actively participate in class discussions, frequent but informal writing exercises, and group work. Aside from reading, watching, listening to, and discussing assigned texts, students will work together throughout the course to produce an issue of a satirical newspaper (à la *The Onion*) from scratch. Most afternoons, the classroom will be transformed into a newsroom, and students will adopt individual roles (editors, writers, cartoonists, photographers, designers, etc.) under the supervision of the instructor and the TA. As such, attendance is mandatory for all class meetings. Evening study will be primarily dedicated to reading, with occasional discussions and

activities. Students will receive personal feedback from the instructor on in-class writing assignments and their individual contributions to the course project.

### Course Outline

#### *Week One: The Clown and the Bouffon*

Monday, June 13	<b>Morning:</b>	Introductions Lecture: What Is Satire? Read Jonathan Swift, <i>A Modest Proposal</i> (online)
	<b>Afternoon:</b>	Introduce course project Read <i>The Onion</i> First editorial meeting Assign roles, plan newspaper
	<b>Evening:</b>	Get to know each other Design class t-shirt
Tuesday, June 14	<b>Morning:</b>	Lecture: Satire in Literature Read Mark Twain, Anita Loos, Woody Allen, and Philip Roth (in anthology)
	<b>Afternoon:</b>	Editorial meeting Work on newspaper
	<b>Evening:</b>	Begin reading <i>Miss Lonelyhearts</i>
Wednesday, June 15	<b>Morning:</b>	Lecture: The World of <i>Miss Lonelyhearts</i> Read and discuss Ring Lardner, Dorothy Parker, Calvin Trillin, and George Saunders (in anthology)
	<b>Afternoon:</b>	Editorial meeting Work on newspaper
	<b>Evening:</b>	Continue reading <i>Miss Lonelyhearts</i>
Thursday, June 16	<b>Morning:</b>	Lecture: The Newspaper as Satirical Medium Read and discuss 1930s newspapers Write satirical advice columns
	<b>Afternoon:</b>	Editorial meeting Work on newspaper
	<b>Evening:</b>	Finish reading <i>Miss Lonelyhearts</i>
Friday, June 17	<b>Morning:</b>	Lecture: <i>Miss Lonelyhearts</i> and Bergsonian Laughter Write critical essay Workshop and critique student writing
	<b>Afternoon:</b>	Editorial meeting Work on newspaper
Saturday, June 18	<b>Morning:</b>	Watch and discuss <i>The Great Dictator</i>

#### *Week Two: The Modern World*

Monday, June 20	<p><b>Morning:</b> Lecture: Satire and Counterculture Read and discuss Terry Southern, Lenny Bruce, and Hunter S. Thompson (in anthology), <i>Mad Magazine</i></p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Editorial meeting Work on newspaper</p>
Tuesday, June 21	<p><b>Evening:</b> Begin reading <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i></p> <p><b>Morning:</b> Lecture: Physical Comedy Watch and discuss clips of Buster Keaton, The Three Stooges, and <i>Saturday Night Live</i></p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Editorial meeting Work on newspaper</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Continue reading <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i></p>
Wednesday, June 22	<p><b>Morning:</b> Lecture: Race and Satire Read and discuss Langston Hughes, Henry Beard, et al. and Larry Wilmore (in anthology), watch Eddie Murphy's "White Like Me"</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Editorial meeting Work on newspaper</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Continue reading <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i></p>
Thursday, June 23	<p><b>Morning:</b> Lecture: The Battle of the Sexes Read and discuss Nora Ephron, Dave Berry, David Sedaris, and Wanda Sykes (in anthology)</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Editorial meeting Work on newspaper</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Finish reading <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i></p>
Friday, June 24	<p><b>Morning:</b> Conclusions: The Curse of Ignatius J. Reilly Cast and script hypothetical adaptation of <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i></p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Editorial meeting Work on newspaper</p>
Saturday, June 25	<p><b>Morning:</b> Watch and discuss <i>Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb</i></p>
<i>Week Three: High &amp; Low</i>	
Monday, June 27	<p><b>Morning:</b> Lecture: Satire and Music Watch, listen to and discuss Weird Al songs and videos</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Watch <i>This Is Spinal Tap</i></p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Finalize all newspaper submissions</p>
Tuesday, June 28	<p><b>Morning:</b> Lecture: The Mockumentary Watch <i>Documentary Now!</i></p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Editorial meeting</p>

		Work on newspaper
	<b>Evening:</b>	Read Nathan Rabin hand-outs, prepare questions for Q&A
Wednesday, June 29	<b>Morning:</b>	Lecture: The Simpsons Decade Watch <i>The Simpsons</i>
	<b>Afternoon:</b>	Lecture and Q&A with Nathan Rabin, writer for <i>The A.V. Club</i> and author of <i>Weird Al: The Book</i>
	<b>Evening:</b>	Group activity: write a pop song parody
Thursday, June 30	<b>Morning:</b>	Lecture: Political Satire Watch and discuss clips from <i>The Daily Show</i> and <i>The Colbert Report</i>
	<b>Afternoon:</b>	Final editorial meeting Send newspaper off to the printers!
	<b>Evening:</b>	Evening-study wrap-up
Friday, July 1	<b>Morning:</b>	Lecture: Political Cartooning & the <i>Charlie Hebdo</i> Attacks Read and discuss selections from <i>Charlie Hebdo</i> and Teju Cole letter to PEN
	<b>Afternoon:</b>	Review and reflect on newspaper Evaluations, debriefing, and final student conferences
Saturday, July 2		Parent Conferences