WRTG 3020: The Comic Frame

Spring 2012

sections: 3020-001 (8:00 AM MWF) and 3020-006 (9:00 AM MWF)

Instructor Contact Info

Nathan D. Pieplow

Email: Nathan.Pieplow@colorado.edu. This is by far the best way to reach me. I strive to respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them. If you do not receive a reply from me within 24 hours, please resend your message.

Office Location: ENVD 1B50B (in the basement of Environmental Design)

Office Hours: MWF 10-11 a.m. and by appointment

Office Phone: (303) 735-4672 (but I rarely check the messages)

Disclaimer

I consider the course policies on this website, like the course schedule, a work in progress. Either may change significantly over the course of the semester. If in doubt as to which policies apply, please see me.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Amy Goodloe of the Program for Writing and Rhetoric, whose online course served as the template for part of this website. Some of her words are reproduced verbatim in sections of the course policies and the assignment instructions.

What We’ll Be Doing

“The Comic Frame” may be a little different from the writing courses you have taken in the past. This course is not about grammar; it’s not about the verb “to be” or the passive voice; it’s not about how many words you write.

It is about arguments and audiences. It’s about how writers frame arguments differently for different audiences and different purposes. It’s about how audiences react to those arguments. It’s about using this information to improve your skills in sending messages to a variety of audiences, in a variety of rhetorical situations and genres. You will practice using many aspects of writing — from word choice and organization to the generation of ethos and the invocation of shared values — to reach audiences both in small pieces of low-stakes writing and in in-depth, well-researched, highly focused analytical writing projects.
Our topic focuses on the rhetoric of humor. Can humor change minds? If so, when and how?

Many people believe that humor has great rhetorical power. According to popular culture, humor allowed jesters in medieval courts to say to kings what no one else could say—to “speak truth to power.” Some have argued that Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert fill the same role in contemporary America, like Lenny Bruce and Richard Pryor before them.

Others argue that humor is ultimately a rhetorical liability. An argument framed as a joke can be difficult to take seriously, and some subjects (like 9/11) are almost universally considered off-limits in comedy. More than any other kind of rhetoric, attempts at humor run the risk of a backlash from those who do not appreciate the comic or ironic approach.

Warning

In this course, we will encounter many different kinds of humor, some of which may be highly offensive to you. We will see examples of extremely foul language, racial/racist humor, sexual/sexist humor, and jokes about inappropriate subjects like 9/11, just to name a few. In each case, we will be examining the effect of this humor on the audience. Who is amused, and why? Who is offended, and why? Is the humor accomplishing the author’s rhetorical goals, or is it backfiring? What does the response say about the nature of the social boundaries that the humorist has crossed?

We will be doing this for the important reason that examining rhetoric that works (and doesn’t work) helps you improve your own writing by giving you good examples to follow and bad examples to avoid. It can also give you vital practice in anticipating and understanding audience responses to rhetoric, perhaps the single most important skill of a good writer. That said, if you don’t feel comfortable exploring and examining these types of humor, you should consider finding another course.

You will also take emotional risks in this course.

I will ask you to write humor. For example, in your first major assignment, I will ask you to write a true story about yourself that invites readers to laugh at your experience (in most cases, your misfortune). You will share your writing with your peers and you will give and receive in-depth comments and critiques on your work.

I will ask you to produce not just humorous writing, but analytic and scholarly writing as well. At all times, you will be emotionally and intellectually honest (yes, it’s required). You will learn techniques for analyzing the strengths and flaws of a piece of writing, and skills for communicating those strengths and flaws to the author in constructive, encouraging ways. Then you will apply the same skills to your own work, revising your own writing fundamentally.

At the end of the semester, you should be better at analyzing rhetorical situations, predicting audience reactions, and tailoring your writing to the situation and the audience. Many of the key
skills of this class, including revision and workshopping, will be useful to you in all of your classes regardless of your course of study, as well as beyond graduation. Evaluating the arguments of others and formulating your own will be crucial to your success in the role of global citizen.

**Attendance**

**Attendance is required.** This is a seminar/workshopping class. Attendance goes hand-in-hand with participation. Preparation and participation are crucial to your success as a writer and the success of other students in the class. You cannot make up assignments missed due to absences. The only exceptions will be for military obligations, religious observances, or absences for major medical emergency excused by a doctor’s note.

If you miss more than three (3) classes, for any reason, your final semester grade will be lowered 1% (one percentage point) for each additional absence. (For example, from an 88 to an 87.)

If you miss nine (9) or more classes, for any reason, you WILL fail the class.

Be punctual; if you walk in late, you miss important announcements and you disrupt the class. **Two late arrivals are counted as one absence.** Missing a conference equals one absence also. Since I take roll at or near the beginning of class, if you arrive late, you may already have been counted absent. I will gladly change your absence to a tardy, but it is YOUR responsibility to draw my attention to the matter.

**Texts and Technologies**

**Texts**

There is no paper text for this course. All of our texts will be electronic. **The principal text in the course will be your own writing and that of your classmates.** However, some will be PDF scans of book chapters or journal articles; some will be websites; some will be videos or audio tracks.

Sometimes I will assign and link to specific texts I want you to read. Other times I will ask you to find your own texts. For example, I may assign you the task of finding one or more sources on the internet that exemplify a particular concept or suggest answers to a certain question. This will test your ability to perform inquiry and analysis in a “real world” scenario. In these cases it will be up to you to make sure that the sources you find on the internet are good ones, and it will be up to you to incorporate those sources into your blog post and give them fair credit (usually by linking to them).

**Technologies**
This course uses a variety of technologies in the classroom and expects you to use a variety outside the classroom. If you are having trouble with your personal computer, please call ITS (5-HELP) during business hours. Computer problems do not excuse the failure to prepare. If you are having problems with your own computer, remember that there are computer labs all over campus where you can access the course websites or print out a draft. Plan ahead!

Course Blog

http://earbirding.com/3020-001 or http://earbirding.com/3020-006, depending on your section

This is where you will find the course schedule and assignment descriptions, the syllabus and course policies, course announcements, and some of the readings. This is also where you will post online responses, post drafts of your major papers, upload your portfolios, and conduct peer review exercises.

Email

Email is also essential to this course. I use email throughout the semester for updates, critical information and changes to the syllabus, and you may sometimes be required to email your classmates during out-of-class workshops. Please make sure that you check your University of Colorado email daily.

You may email me at Nathan.Pieplow@colorado.edu.

CULearn

I hate CULearn. In my opinion, it’s a great example of a technology that’s more trouble than it’s worth — and it’s nearly obsolete, as the university will switch to a new course management platform starting in Fall 2012. However, I am going to use it this term for web grading and quizzes. When you log in to CULearn with your Identikey, you should see this course on your main menu.

WordPress

WordPress is the blogging platform on which I created this website. It is a highly popular and versatile tool. Once you know how to navigate WordPress, you can create many different kinds of websites with ease — not just blogs.

I am hosting this course website on my own personal blog, which is devoted to bird sounds — hence the domain name (Earbirding.com). This website is where you will find the course schedule and assignment descriptions, the syllabus and course policies, course announcements, and some of the readings. This is also where you will write your own blog posts, comment on your classmates’ blog posts, and upload drafts of your major papers.
Word Processing

Microsoft Word is the default word processor for this course. If you regularly use another word processor, you will have to save all files in Word-compatible formats such as .doc, .docx, or Rich Text Format (.rtf). If you use a version of Word prior to Word 2007, you may need to download plug-ins from the Microsoft website to enable you to open files created in Word 2007 (those with a .docx extension). If you do not have word processing software on your computer at all, consider downloading OpenOffice, a free, open-source alternative to Microsoft Office.

During the semester, you will be introduced to the Microsoft Word “Track Changes” and “Comment” functions for editing.

Off-campus Access

Some assignments will require you to access the University of Colorado Library subscription databases — for example, in order to find peer-reviewed academic papers for your research. No login is necessary if you are connecting to the website from a campus computer or via the on-campus wireless network. However, if you want to connect from off campus, you must arrange for what is called remote access. The instructions for obtaining remote access are on the library website, http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu. Remote access makes the library think you are on campus, which means you can access anything available through the library electronically any time of day or night. It takes about 10 minutes to set up remote access — and OIT can talk you through it.

Streaming Video

I will be asking you to watch streaming video on a regular basis, whether it be something uploaded to YouTube or a screencast I made to demonstrate a computer skill. Streaming video usually requires a high-speed internet connection, which is something most people have these days, but if you don’t have access to it on a regular basis, you’ll need to let me know ASAP.

Learning Goals

This course meets the requirements for an Advanced Writing Course (GT-CO3) as defined by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE).

The learning goals for WRTG 3020: The Comic Frame are adapted from the CCHE Advanced Writing Course Content Criteria, the CCHE Written Communication Competency Criteria, and the WRTG 3020 Curricular Goals established by the Program for Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

I have grouped the learning goals into eight categories. By the end of the course, students should be able to do all of the following things.

1. Primary rhetorical considerations
Understand writing as strategic—in other words, as a set of responses to particular rhetorical goals, or as a set of choices made by authors in order to affect audiences in particular ways. Identify the purposes and audiences of your own and others’ writing. Understand the ways in which authors and audiences respond to the rhetorical situation. Understand the rhetorical strategies that authors use to achieve their goals.

2. Medium and performance considerations

Understand writing and rhetoric as more than simply words on paper. Become familiar with the writing and rhetoric of various forms of digital composition (e.g., blog posts and videos) as well as the performance aspect of writing and rhetoric (e.g., the performances of debaters and standup comics), and the ways in which they can influence the form and effectiveness of the writing.

3. Audience considerations

Effectively tailor your own rhetoric to your audience. Learn to capture a reader’s attention and keep it by establishing and building some type of tension (intellectual, dramatic, comic, etc.). Evaluate the effectiveness of your own and others’ writing at provoking the desired response from audiences. Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which social dynamics, such as the give-and-take between speaker and audience (and among audience members), may influence the form and effectiveness of writing and rhetoric.

4. Genre considerations

Recognize and produce writing in multiple genres. Understand genre not as a formula or a set of rules, but as a set of strategies from which members of a discourse community can choose in order to accomplish similar rhetorical goals. Recognize that strategies appropriate to one discourse community or rhetorical context might be less appropriate for another.

5. Information literacy

Successfully locate resources to answer questions and fact-check claims. Evaluate the credibility, validity, timeliness, relevance, purpose, audience, rhetorical strategies, and effectiveness of these resources. Trace information to its original source.

6. Reasoning and argument

Draw inferences from a body of evidence. Distinguish flawed from sound reasoning, and be able to respond to and challenge claims. In writing, structure and develop points of argument in a coherent order to build a case; in reading, recognize this structure and development within texts. Demonstrate a willingness and ability to challenge (and perhaps even change) your own opinions, arguments, and/or values.

7. The writing process
Understand the concept of writing first (even if poorly) and revising later. Conceive of writing as an ongoing process that requires multiple drafts and various strategies for developing, revising and editing texts. Practice reading your own writing as though you had not written it. Make and accept constructive criticisms in response to writing.

8. Writing mechanics

Convey meaning clearly, using precise, highly readable language. Demonstrate an understanding of grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and other linguistic conventions. Develop skills in proofreading. Credit sources appropriately.

Grading

Note: these grading policies may be subject to revision during the term.

Your final grade in this class will be determined by weighting grade categories, as follows:

10% – Quizzes

- We will have roughly 5 graded quizzes, mostly in the first half of the semester. Most will be taken online, in electronic format. Once you have answered a given question, you cannot re-answer it or retake the quiz.

15% – Conversations

- Thoughtful, meaningful comments on classmates’ blog posts;
- Constructive, helpful workshopping comments on classmates’ papers;
- High-quality participation in online activities and responses to homework prompts.

15% – Blog posts

- You will be writing many blog posts throughout the term; in fact, this might be the type of writing you practice most during the semester. Blog posts are a quintessential genre of the modern Internet, and they comprise a great deal of the best writing that is published worldwide on a daily basis. Blog posts do not have to be as formal as academic papers, if their audiences are not academic, but you do need to make sure that you are creating work that will engage your readers effectively — in other words, writing that will make people want to keep reading, and/or get them responding to you via the comments section.

15% – Personal Essay

- This will be your opportunity to tell a true funny story starring you. You can embellish certain aspects of the story for comic effect, but the essential facts of the plot must be true and drawn from your own life. We will work on crafting and revising this essay to make sure it has maximum effect on your audience — whether your intended outcome is a change of mind, a change of heart, or merely a good belly laugh.
15% – Rhetorical Analysis

- This will be an analytic essay for an academic audience, and can be considered the major scholarly paper of the semester. In it, you will analyze a piece of rhetoric of your choice, one that seeks to change an audience’s mind through humor. You will incorporate secondary research into your paper, revising it substantially through several drafts.

15% – Final Writing Project

- In this project, you get to choose your audience, your purpose, and your genre, as long as you are using humor in some way to convey a serious message. As long as you are working for a particular purpose on a particular audience, this project may take almost any form. It is the culminating showcase for the rhetorical skills you will practice over the course of the semester.

15% – Reflective Self-Assessments (7.5% midterm, 7.5% final)

- In two reflective self-assessments, one at midterm and one at the end of the term, you will reflect on your skill and progress as a writer during the course, using evidence from the writing you have produced. The Reflective Self-Assessment is your chance to draw my attention to things you think you do well, and also provide a clear-eyed assessment of the areas in which you still need to improve. It proves to me that you know how to evaluate yourself as a writer.

All seven parts of the course listed above must be completed with a passing grade in order to pass the course. In other words, if you fail to turn in one of the major assignments, you will fail. Drafted papers such as the Personal Essay, the Literature Review, and the Final Writing Project cannot receive a passing grade unless ALL drafts are completed and subject to peer review and comment.

The Conversations and Blog Posts grades are calculated in a random selective fashion. That is, instead of grading every single post and every single comment, I’ll be randomly choosing just a few of the blog posts and commenting tasks to grade, every couple of weeks or so. It’ll be the same for everyone: for example, if I roll the dice and come up with “Member Profile” and “Values,” then those are the two blogging assignments from that period that will be graded for everybody. Same with the workshopping comments and blog comments — I’ll randomly choose a few days’ worth to represent the rest.

Late work

Late work will not receive full credit; at my discretion, it may not receive any credit at all. Work is considered to be turned in on time if it is posted to the course website, in the correct category, before the deadline on the due date. Work that is posted to the wrong part of the site (e.g. in the wrong category) will not be considered to have been turned in until it is posted correctly.
Determining letter grades

Here, in general, is what the letter grades mean to me when I apply them to your writing:

- **A:** This is work that I can be unreservedly proud of — work that has no major flaws and few, if any, minor ones. Sometimes I will give this grade to work that could still use a little improvement, if it is exceptionally intelligent or original. I do not give out many A grades — typically only 2-4 per class. Effort alone will not earn an A; quality is also required. (Quality alone will not earn an A either; if you are a highly talented writer but you’re not striving to reach your full potential, don’t expect an A.)
- **A-:** This is high-quality work, well above average, but with room for improvement in one major area or multiple minor areas.
- **B+:** You have performed well across the board, meeting all expectations but not exceeding them.
- **B:** Meets minimum requirements. You’ve done what you were supposed to do, but nothing more.
- **B-:** Work is lacking 1-2 required elements and/or I feel you are putting in less effort than you should be.
- **C+:** Shows more than a few weaknesses in proficiency, and/or effort is seriously lacking.
- **C -- D range:** I reserve these grades for work that shows extremely low proficiency, or is incomplete or unrevised.
- **F:** Work was not done, came in too late to receive credit, was plagiarized, or fails to follow directions.

As you can see, then, students who complete all the assignments on time with reasonable effort should be able to earn at least a B in this class. **The number one reason students receive poor grades is failure to complete work on time,** especially when it comes to blog posts, comments, workshopping, and quizzes. **The number two reason is poor attendance,** which can have a significant impact on final semester grades (see “Attendance” section of these course policies).

It is my policy in all my classes to fail anyone who engages in academic dishonesty. Please see the Plagiarism section of these course policies (under “Other Policies”).

When I add up your numerical weighted composite grade at the end of the term, I round to the nearest whole number and translate the percentage back into a letter grade, using the following scale:

- **A:** 93% and up
- **A-:** 90-92%
- **B+:** 88-89%
- **B:** 83-87%
- **B-:** 80-82%
- **C+:** 78-79%
- **C:** 73-77%
- **C-:** 70-72%
- **D+:** 68-69%
- **D:** 63-67%
• D: 60-62%
• F: 59% and below

Extra Credit Policy

At my discretion, I may choose to offer extra credit opportunities, but these are rare and do not occur every term. When they occur, they are scheduled in advance and offered to the entire class. As a matter of strict policy, I do not offer extra credit opportunities to individual students looking to raise their course grades.

Grade Challenges and Grievances

The procedure to follow if you have questions about a grade you received, or have a complaint about your instructor, can be found in *Knowing Words*, which is the required text for WRTG 1150, or online at http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/policies.html.

Other Policies

Edit

Participation

You are expected to attend class. If you anticipate missing a day (that is, not being able to log in and complete work on a particular day), please let me know in advance so that we can attempt to adapt the assignments for you. Not all assignments can be adapted or made up.

You are also expected to come to class prepared. This not only means having done the homework, but also coming ready to learn — i.e., alert and well-rested. **Getting adequate sleep the night before class is part of your homework.** Make time for it.

Participation is more than just showing up. In a writing workshop course like this one, participation entails putting honest effort into every assignment; it involves cooperating and communicating with classmates; it means being willing to revise your own writing, sometimes drastically; it means completing your work on time; and more. It also means helping to build and maintain a constructive and respectful atmosphere among all members of the class.

Drafts

You do not need to write drafts of blog posts, but your major papers will be drafted, workshopped, and revised.

The following rules always apply:

1. Drafts are required. All drafts must be posted online.
2. Please date all drafts and put the draft number on them (e.g., Rhetorical Analysis Draft 2). Change the date for each draft. This makes it much easier for both you and me to determine whether something is a first draft, a second draft, etc.

3. Drafts are to be typed and double-spaced. Font must be 12 points. Margins must not exceed one inch on any side.

4. Late drafts will be reviewed at the instructor’s discretion.

5. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated: the paper may receive an automatic F, your case may be reported to the Honor Code Committee and the Dean, and you may fail the course.

6. I will NOT accept final papers that have not been workshopped on a regular basis over the course of the assignment. Papers that are not workshopped or not revised will receive a zero, which will result in failing the class.

**Plagiarism**

It is my policy in all my classes to fail anyone who engages in “academic dishonesty.” Academic dishonesty includes, among other offenses, plagiarism of the writing or ideas of others, cheating on exams, falsification and fabrication of data, and submitting the assignments or papers of others as your own. One type of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. Plagiarism is adopting or using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution. Improper citation can result in plagiarism. Incidents of plagiarism are serious offenses and will be dealt with accordingly.

Papers submitted by any student, written in part or in whole by someone other than that student, shall be considered to constitute fraud under the University Honor Code, and result in the assignment of an ‘F’ for the entire course.

Please visit the University of Colorado’s Honor Code website for further information: http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/ and http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html

**Privacy**

This website will be private, readable only by members of this class. All work you do for this class, including all drafts of papers and all workshopping comments you write on your classmates’ drafts, will be visible only to your classmates and me. All communications regarding grades will be strictly confidential, involving only the individual student and the instructor. Grades will be posted online in CULearn. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding these policies.

**Disabilities Assistance**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter from Disability Services to me in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities.
Students should notify the Counselor for Students with Disabilities, Disability Services Office, located in Willard 322 (phone 303-492-8671) and their instructors of any special needs. http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/

You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Services Office in Willard 322 (phone 303-492-8671).

This University abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which stipulates that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education “solely by reason of a handicap.” Disabilities covered by law include but are not limited to learning disabilities and hearing, sight or mobility impairments.

I encourage students with documented disabilities, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, lupus, attention deficit/hyperactive disorder, or psychiatric disabilities, to discuss appropriate accommodations with me after class or during my office hours.

**English as a Second Language**

If you speak English as a second language, you should contact me during the first week of classes so that I can better assist you in the course, advise you about special ESL courses, and/or refer you to appropriate services on campus.

**Military Obligation**

Please give me as much advance notice as possible if you must be absent to fulfill a military obligation. You will need a note from an officer verifying the reason for your absence. You will also need to arrange in advance for any work that needs to be completed.

**Permission to Use Work**

Enrollment in a course offered through the Program for Writing and Rhetoric implies permission to reproduce and use any part of a student’s writing for educational purposes. Any writing used will be used anonymously, unless you give permission to use your name.

**Religious Observances**

If conflicts arise between class meetings, assignment deadlines, or examinations and holidays or celebrations observed by your religion, please notify me during the first two weeks of the semester so that suitable schedule accommodations can be made.
## Course Schedule

Note: This course schedule may be expanded and revised throughout the semester. Be prepared to visit the online version continuously to get the most up-to-date information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>In class</th>
<th>Due that day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/18</td>
<td>introductions&lt;br&gt;website registration, profile settings, Gravatar, etc</td>
<td>Blog post: Member profile (including picture)&lt;br&gt;Upload: Gravatar photo&lt;br&gt;Read: course syllabus&lt;br&gt;Online quiz over the syllabus&lt;br&gt;Bring: something funny to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>What is humor?&lt;br&gt;Discussing theories of humor</td>
<td>Conversations: read classmate profiles; comment on 4-5&lt;br&gt;Revise: your member profile: explain where your sense of humor comes from&lt;br&gt;Watch online video: Peter McGraw’s TED talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>The “benign violation” theory of humor and its limits: &lt;br&gt;---“Bambi” cartoon and shock value;&lt;br&gt;---“The Onion” and style;&lt;br&gt;---“Make ‘Em Laugh” and slapstick</td>
<td>Listen to online Radiolab podcast&lt;br&gt;Write: online comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/25</td>
<td>name quiz in class&lt;br&gt;Social/evolutionary theories of laughter: why do we laugh at things that aren’t funny?&lt;br&gt;---Daniel Pinkwater, “Direct from a Triumphant Engagement in Karachi”</td>
<td>Read: Robert Heinlein, excerpt from “Stranger in a Strange Land”&lt;br&gt;Read: Laurie Notaro, “Let Me In”&lt;br&gt;Read: Bailey White, “Porsche”&lt;br&gt;Write: online comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1/30</td>
<td>The Dave Barry Challenge: results and discussion</td>
<td>Online activity: The Dave Barry Challenge&lt;br&gt;start on blog post: “10 Ways to Make People Laugh”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Funny on paper vs. funny out loud:&lt;br&gt;The importance of delivery and timing</td>
<td>Blog post: “10 Ways to Make People Laugh”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>Claims vs. facts&lt;br&gt;The line between comedy and argument</td>
<td>Read: Banks: “A Short Handbook on Rhetorical Analysis”&lt;br&gt;Online quiz: rhetoric quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>In-class rhetorical analysis: how do comics establish ethos?&lt;br&gt;The line between comedy and argument&lt;br&gt;George Carlin on religion</td>
<td>Read: “Standup Comedy as Rhetorical Argument”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>Activity: A Few Good Blogs</td>
<td>Blog post: Rhetorical analysis of standup</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>A Few Good Blogs concluded&lt;br&gt;Brainstorming/workshopping ideas in groups</td>
<td>Read: Matt MacDonald, “Standup Comedy”&lt;br&gt;Read: Demetri Martin, “How to Build a Joke”&lt;br&gt;Read: Gurmeet Mattu, “How to Write a Joke”&lt;br&gt;Write: 10 initial ideas for jokes or funny stories from your experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>Workshopping sample PE in class</td>
<td>Read: Sample Personal Essay&lt;br&gt;Write: workshopping comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>Unspoken assumptions</td>
<td>Personal Essay first draft due</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/17</td>
<td>Introduction to genre</td>
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<td>2/20</td>
<td>Introduction to framing theory: Discuss Seidman</td>
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<td>2/22</td>
<td>Introduction to the Burkean Frames</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>Burkean analysis: discuss “ACT UP”</td>
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<td>2/27</td>
<td>Poe’s Law: identifying satire</td>
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<td>2/29</td>
<td>Offensive humor: fired-for-jokes &amp; Paul Provenza interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>Research quality challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Midterm reflection activities: What have we learned?</td>
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<td>3/7</td>
<td>How to write introductions</td>
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<td>3/9</td>
<td>Workshop rhetorical analysis pitches</td>
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<td>3/12</td>
<td>Racial humor: Richard Pryor</td>
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<td>3/14</td>
<td>Racial humor: Richard Pryor / Dave Chappelle</td>
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<td>3/16</td>
<td>Sextist humor: Hitchens vs. Weingarten</td>
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<td>3/19</td>
<td>Racial humor: Williams &amp; Ree</td>
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<td>3/21</td>
<td>Race/sex humor: Margaret Cho</td>
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<td>3/23</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>3/25</td>
<td>Spring Break: March 26-30</td>
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<td>4/2</td>
<td>Discuss the backlash against Karson: Does Karson qualify as satire?</td>
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<td>4/4</td>
<td>Can satire make a difference? The case of Stephen Colbert</td>
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<td>4/6</td>
<td>Americans for a Better Tomorrow, Tomorrow: Has it accomplished anything?</td>
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<td>4/9</td>
<td>Values: What they are and how they impact rhetoric</td>
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<td>4/11</td>
<td>Discuss Mooney and values</td>
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<td>4/13</td>
<td>Conservative humor: Dennis Miller</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>Workshopping FWP ideas Brainstorming material</td>
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<td>4/18</td>
<td>Conservative humor: Brad Stine and Christian comedy</td>
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<td>4/20</td>
<td>Conservative humor: The Half Hour News Hour</td>
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<td>4/23</td>
<td>When humor is not allowed: Comedian responses to 9/11</td>
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<td>4/25</td>
<td>Laughing at tragedy: The Onion and 9/11</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>4/27</td>
<td>Improv comedy I</td>
<td>Final Writing Project second draft due</td>
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<td>4/30</td>
<td>Improv comedy II</td>
<td>Write workshopping comments on groupmates’ FWP</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Improv comedy III</td>
<td>Final Writing Project final draft due</td>
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<td>5/4</td>
<td>Semester wrap-up / presentations</td>
<td>Blog post: Becoming a better writer</td>
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<td>final</td>
<td>5/8 (no final exam; paper due electronically)</td>
<td>Final Reflective Self-Assessment due</td>
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