



## **Writing 2213G – Online LOL- HUMOUR WRITING**

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LOL: Humour Writing is designed to help you write for greater impact while introducing you to different aspects of the genre, using a blend of online lecture and *workshop*. You will have the opportunity to write something funny for most Units, get feedback from me and fellow students, read and critique a variety of humourous stories and watch and critique humourous videos. You should also develop skills in the ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences while appreciating and writing a range of humour styles for different audiences. Early in the course you will be assigned to small groups that will take turns leading online discussion on readings and provide you with peers who can give you feedback on your draft assignments. You will examine your own work and that of others to better understand what makes us laugh and why.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

**Fierce Pajamas: An Anthology of Humor Writing from The New Yorker**, edited by David Remnick and Henry Finder, Modern Library Paperback, 2002.

Other stories/articles found online and indicated below for specific Units of the class

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

1.	Humour Analysis	5%	Due Jan. 19
2.	Personal Experience story	15%	Due Jan. 31
3.	Parody	15%	Due Feb. 10
4.	Satire	15%	Due March 8
5.	Online Discussion/Group work	10%	TBA
6.	<b>Writing Journal</b>	20%	Due March 24
7.	Final Exam	20%	TBA

**Note: You will keep a Humour Journal throughout the course to be submitted near the end of term as part of the final grade. You will be expected to make entries in the journal regularly throughout the course. You will submit your journal once during the course on Feb. 18 so that I can monitor progress and provide feedback. This submission will be graded as pass/fail only, but the final submission will be graded as indicated above. Journals are to be submitted in the same way as other assignments.**

### **PARTICIPATING/WRITING SUBMISSION:**

Although this is an online course, you are expected to check into the WebCT site on a regular basis, to participate in online discussions and to interact online with your fellow classmates.

I don't like to penalize late assignments; however, since one of the purposes of this course is to familiarize you with the writing profession, you need to know that deadlines are crucial. For this

reason, all assignments will be due on the date specified unless you negotiate an extension at least 48 hours in advance. Following any other policy would be an injustice to you as a future writer. Assignments should be submitted electronically via WebCT. **Late assignments will be penalized at 3% per day, including weekends.**

### **SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **PREREQUISITES:**

**Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded and that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) that they have taken. If the student does not have the requisites for a course, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the course and to delete it from the student's record. This decision may not be appealed. A student will receive no adjustment to his or her fees in the event that he or she is dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101, 2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 85 or more in Writing 1000F/G, or c) Special Permission of the Program.**

### **MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

**For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:**

**<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>**

**(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical or other grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or **more** of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth **less** than 10% of their final grade must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on non-medical grounds, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in

a grade penalty under an 'Attendance' policy in the course). All medical documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

**NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER APRIL 8, 2011. OUTSTANDING WORK AS OF THIS DATE WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO.**

**Unit 1      Introduction to the Course/Beginning as a Humour Writer**  
(Unless otherwise indicated, all readings assigned are from **Fierce Pajamas (FP)**)

What makes us laugh and why. Introduction to readings, different forms of humour, how to analyze humour, funny words and phrases. Reading and discussion of "**Disgruntled Former Lexicographer**," (posted on WebCT)  
<http://marnanel.livejournal.com/1009235.html>

Read for next class "**Subvarsity Smackdown**" and "**Approximately Seven Pillars of Humorous Fiction**"

**Unit 2      Funny in the Past... Funny Now? / Wordplay, puns, funny language**  
A look at humour from ancient times through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (which some of you might also consider as ancient ;-). In-class exercise and discussion.

**Assignment (5%): Write a short essay (500 words max.) analyzing either "A Guide to Summer Sun Protection", OR "The Last You'll Hear From Me" by David Sedaris. Due: Jan. 19**

Read "**Thank You for Stopping**," page 389 (FP)

**Unit 3      Writing from Personal Experience/ The Art of Parody**  
Mining your personal life for comedy gems. Writing styles that can be imitated twisted and massaged for effect.  
**Assignment (15%): Write a short piece based on a personal experience. Due Jan. 31**  
Read for the next class "**What We Talk About When We Talk About Doughnuts**" page 60, (FP)  
Submit two or three jokes to WebCt Discussion before next class.

**Unit 4      Parody (continued)/ A man walks into a bar... Writing Jokes**  
Why do some jokes make you laugh and others don't. Workshop your personal experience drafts.  
**Assignment: (15%) Write a parody that incorporates a particular style. Due Feb. 10**

Read for next class "**Teen Times**," page 62, (FP)  
Watch a satirical TV show (SNL, Jon Stewart etc.) before next class

**Unit 5      Satire: Cruel But Fair?/Writing Workshop**  
Poking fun at institutions that need deflating. How to find humour in the tragic. Workshop your parody drafts.

**Listen to/watch George Carlin's "Seven Words and Read "Inappropriate" by Paul Rudnick (online)**

**Unit 6      The Boundaries of Humour: Are there any?**  
Come prepared to discuss what kind of humour you consider offensive.  
Discussion of sick jokes as well as the difference, if any, between men's and women's humour.

**Assignment: (15%) Write a piece that satirizes a current event, person, or trend. Due March 8**

**Read “The Whore of Mensa” (on WebCT)**

**Unit 7 Fictional Humour/Journal Workshop**  
Letting your imagination soar and getting rid of any literary boundaries  
**Bring in your journal for workshop. A chance to read from your journal work and receive feedback from others. Email journals for pass/fail feedback by Feb. 18**

**Read “Double Diamond/Highest Difficulty” (On WebCT)**

## **READING WEEK FEB. 21-25**

**Unit 8 Found Humour/ Writing From Existing Materials**  
Using your senses to find what's funny in the world. Working with existing print and other materials to create original work that not only reads funny but looks funny. Workshopping your satire draft  
  
Homework: Post three examples of found humour before the next class  
**Read “Writing is Easy,” page 243 (FP)**

**Unit 9 Journals/ Group Humour Writing**  
What's it like to write as a team. You will have a small group assignment regarding video presentations that will be explained in this unit. A look at the ideas, comments, jottings of your journals which will be handed in on March 24 for final marking  
  
**Watch episode of Jon Stewart or Colbert Report or Saturday Night Live News Update before next unit.**

**Unit 10 Journalistic Humour/Guest Speaker**  
What's funny about the news and/or history. Hearing other perspectives on humour from a guest speaker  
  
**Read “My Living Will” (Online)**

**Unit 11 Writing to Perform/Short Films.**  
Writing material to be heard/seen by an audience. Watching some short films to be followed by analysis/critique in the discussion section

**Unit 12 Theories of Humour in 21<sup>st</sup> Century/ Markets for Humour**  
How has humour changed... and where is it headed? looking where you can sell your work and sharing excerpts from your journals.

\*Workshops will be done electronically in small groups to which you will be assigned. Prior to workshopping as listed in the syllabus class, you will provide copies of your draft work for your group members so they have time to provide you feedback before you email in your final version. Active participation in these group discussions and when leading the class on course readings and video presentations will be factored into your Discussion/Group Work mark.