**COM 460: Seminar in Mass Media: Humor**

Dr. Joseph Blaney

Fall 2019

T/Th 12:35 PM

By appointment

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**Course Description**

This course will examine the use of humor as a form of persuasion and information. Of course, much humor is presented as mere entertainment. However, even the most seemingly innocuous humor asks us to subscribe to static notions about race, gender, religion, sexuality, class, occupation, etc.. Students will become better consumers of humor as a form of resistance and acquiescence.

**Required Reading**

See ReggieNet under Syllabus. Note that articles and chapters stored in ReggieNet are for the professor’s personal use.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**

Any students needing an accommodation covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act are encouraged to talk with me early in the semester about necessary accommodations. Students may also call ISU’s Office of Equal Opportunity and Access with any questions they may have: 309-438-5853.

**Course Policies**

I love teaching and want to make your learning experience as fun and enjoyable as possible. Let’s all maintain good humor and respect for each other in the course of our discussions. In recent years, discussions of issues with economic and social ramifications have a tendency toward controversy and strongly held opinions. Charity and understanding should guide our discussions, always with an end toward better understanding of communication phenomena.

The best place to reach me in the morning is in my College of Arts and Sciences office (438-5669). *The best way to reach me is via email*. I typically return email within an hour or two, but always within 24 hours.

Academic dishonesty will result in failure for the course. Turning in papers on time with content as requested and reading assigned material will likely lead to a positive grade outcome.

**Grading Scale**

90% and above=A

80% to 89%=B

70% to 79%=C

60% to 69%=D

Below 60%=F

**Assignments**

Paper Abstract: 10 Points

Midterm Exam: 15 Points

Seminar Paper: 35 Points

Participation: 15 Points

Final Exam: 25 Points

**Course Schedule**

Week 1: Introductions; some theory review

Week 2: “Television”; “Late Night”

Week 3: “New Millenium”; “Carol Burnett’; “Burning Man”; “Changing Directions”

Week 4: “Comedy and Power”; “Humor and Political Virtue”

Week 5: “Men Joking-Women Joking”; “Sexist and Anti-Gay Humor”

Week 6: “Aggressive Humor and Race”; “Racial Humor-Mexico-Peru”

Week 7: “Nigerian Children”; “Nature of Humor as Entertainment”; **Paper Abstracts Due**

**Week 8: Clean-Up CSCA Panels; Midterm, Thursday, October 10**

Week 9: “Cartoons Longitudinal”; “Poverty-Justice”

Week 10: “Political Efficacy and Humor”; “Satirical Tone”

Week 11: “Political Satire and Negativity”; “Political Disparagement Humor”

Week 12: “Other and Self-Directed Political Humor” “Disparagement Humor”;

Week 13: “Weaponizing Ridicule”; “Political Social Media Humor”

Week 14: “Simpsons-Satire-Religion”; “Religious Prejudice-Humor”

Week 15: **Papers**

Week 16: **Papers**

Midterm Exam: Thursday, October 10th

Final Exam: As scheduled by Registrar, TBD