

Satire

ENGL 224, Summer 2015
Georgetown University
MTWR 1:00pm-3:00pm
Maguire 104

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Hours: By appointment

What does satire do? While contemporary pundits make "straightforward" arguments with varying degrees of success, outlets like *The Onion* and *The Colbert Report* take a satirical approach not only to entertaining audiences, but to conveying principles they deem important. This course explores the art and function of the satirical tradition that predates (and includes) these contemporary satirists. We will cover satire, in prose and in poetry, from its roots in antiquity (Horace, Juvenal) to contemporary novels, punditry, and television, with significant coverage of the formative years of satire in English, the 17th and 18th centuries. Dryden, Pope, and Swift will figure prominently in this course, as will the under-acknowledged satirical writings of women like Aphra Behn, Margaret Cavendish, and Mary Chudleigh. The main objectives of this course are:

- 1) To provide exposure to a representative range of satirical work from antiquity to the present.
- 2) To understand satire in its historical, cultural, media, and political contexts.
- 3) To investigate and evaluate the uses of satire.
- 4) To take satire as an occasion to sharpen our critical reasoning, writing, and speaking skills.



Part I: The Basics

Required Texts

Thomas More, *Utopia* (Penguin Classics)
Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World and Other Writings* (Penguin Classics)
Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Oxford World's Classics)
Voltaire, *Candide and Other Stories* (Oxford World's Classics)
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (Harper Perennial Modern Classics)
Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (Perennial Fiction Library)
John Kennedy Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces* (Penguin Modern Classics)

Other Required Readings

In addition to the longer readings above, I will post our additional readings in PDF on Blackboard. You are required to print these out and bring them to class on the appropriate days.

Assignments and Grading

You will be assessed on four components of this course. Each of the four graded components is worth 25% of your overall grade, or 25 points out of a total of 100 possible points for the course. At the end of the semester I simply add your total points for all four components to determine your overall letter grade according to the following scale:

A	100-92	B	87-82	C	77-72	D	67-60
A-	91-90	B-	81-80	C-	71-70	F	59-0
B+	89-88	C+	79-78	D+	69-68		

A more detailed breakdown of how I assess Maintenance and essays appears in the Assessment Rubrics appendices at the end of this syllabus. The four components of your grade include:

Maintenance (25 points): I call “maintenance” the day-to-day things you should be doing in the course to demonstrate your preparedness for the topic of the day. These include active participation in class discussion, in-class group work, and in-class exercises.

Content Examinations (25 points): I will assess your knowledge of readings and topics we cover in class with two 10-point tests and five one-point pop-quizzes. The 10-point tests will occur at mid-semester and end-of-semester (though the second test is not cumulative and is not a final exam). The five one-point pop-quizzes will be spread out over the semester and administered at random (**Test 1 on Thursday Jun 12; Test 2 on Monday Jun 30**).

Essay 1 (25 points): Write an analytical essay of 1200 words for which you use secondary (scholarly) sources to support your argument about any text or texts we have read this semester. In addition to the 1200-word essay, attach a 300-word position paper in which you relate your essay topic and argument to a contemporary issue, interest, or concern, and argue for why the material you cover in your essay is relevant to and important for today's world (**due in class Tuesday Jun 17**).

Essay 2 (25 points): Write an analytical essay of 1200 words for which you use secondary (scholarly) sources to support your argument about any text or texts we have read this semester and on which you have not yet written. In addition to the 1200-word essay, attach a 300-word position paper in which you relate your essay topic and argument to a contemporary issue, interest, or concern, and argue for why the material you cover in your essay is relevant to and important for today's world (**due via e-mail attachment Thursday Jul 10 at 4pm ET**).

Part II: The Policies

Subject to Change

As the semester progresses, I may find cause to add, subtract, or change reading assignments or elements of the syllabus, and will provide you with plenty of notice should I make any such additions or changes.

Late Work

Turning your work in late is unacceptable. Unless I have approved an extension for you, late work will result in a two-point deduction for each day your assignment is late. For example, an essay earning a 22/25 but turned in a day late will receive a 20/25.

Specifications for Turning in Essays

If your essay does not meet the following, required specifications when you turn it in, I will not accept the essay and you may be penalized for lateness:

- 1) Titled
- 2) Printed single-sided in hard-copy (I will not accept double-sided printouts)
- 3) Numbered pages
- 4) Stapled
- 5) Word count listed at the end of the essay
- 6) Correct MLA citation format

Essay Feedback Before the Due Date

I am happy to help you develop essay topics and theses throughout the writing process, and to answer specific questions about your essay-in-progress during office hours or, failing that, by email. However, I will not edit or pre-assess your entire essay. This means you should not email me with general requests like “I’ve attached my essay, can you look it over and tell me what you think?” Instead, ask specific questions like “I’m not certain if my thesis is argumentative enough; could you help me determine this?”

Pre-Arranged Absences and Extensions

Sometimes tragic events, emergency circumstances, and serious time-management conflicts mean that you will have good reason to approach me to request a pre-arranged absence from class or an extension on an essay assignment. I am a kind and reasonable person who will work with you under such circumstances if you approach me in advance, when possible; however, I will know if you are trying to take advantage of my willingness to be flexible. As a former student athlete, I summoned every sports-related excuse imaginable in attempts to trick my professors; so know that if you have an away game, a championship meet, a piano recital, etc., and I see fit to excuse you from class, I will follow up with your coach, piano teacher, talent agent, etc. If you have an emergency, a serious and unavoidable conflict, or are feeling overwhelmed with your academic workload, get in touch with me first; do not skip class or turn in an essay late and assume your circumstances will excuse you after the fact! You should also bear in mind that we might have a pop quiz on the day you miss, even if your absence is excused. Therefore, ask about the quiz when you return.

Attendance

I take it as a non-negotiable starting point that missing class will harm your ability to do your best in this course. As is self-evident, you will be unable to participate in a class at which you are not present. Nevertheless, I expect you are mature enough to make decisions for yourself, and to set your own priorities. I do not assign a *per se* attendance grade; however, if you miss class, you risk harming your maintenance grade. To put it simply, if you miss more than three classes this term, you will significantly harm your maintenance

grade, and you will risk undermining the trust of your classmates. You will also interrupt your progress in the course. If you miss more than five classes this term, you will be unable to pass this course. Please note, also, that chronic or disruptive lateness will count against your maintenance grade.

Laptops and Electronics in Class

Use of laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc. is not permitted in class. Unless you require the use of a laptop or electronic device due to a diagnosed condition or disability, there are no exceptions to this policy. I require an explanatory letter from a relevant physician or specialist to make exceptions for diagnosed conditions.

Academic Integrity

The work you submit should be your work, meaning you should neither copy someone else's work to pass off for your own, nor lend your work to another to pass off as his or her own. Should the work you turn in be found to be copied, plagiarized, or dishonestly cited, either by you or from you with your knowledge, the copied or plagiarized work of both parties will receive a final grade of zero. You must conduct your work with the utmost rigor, honesty, and integrity, as these are the foundations upon which rests our trust in all academic knowledge, from readings of *Don Quixote* to effective vaccines.

You should also familiarize yourself with Georgetown's Honor System Policies and Procedures, available at: <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/>.

Observance of Religious Holidays

Georgetown's policy on religious holiday observance is as follows: "Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday (see below) or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes. The Office of the Provost, in consultation with Campus Ministry and the Registrar, will publish, before classes begin for a given term, a list of major religious holidays likely to affect Georgetown students. The Provost and the Main Campus Executive Faculty encourage faculty to accommodate students whose bona fide religious observances in other ways impede normal participation in a course. Students who cannot be accommodated should discuss the matter with an advising dean."

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your academic work or well-being and for which accommodations may be necessary, I encourage you to approach me within the first two weeks of the course (or, in other circumstances, as soon as possible after accommodation becomes necessary) so that I can arrange for your needs to be met in this regard.

Part III: The Course Schedule

M Jul 6	Course introduction; Horace, Satires 1.1, 1.3, 2.1; Juvenal, Satires 1, 6, 14
T Jul 7	Alexander Pope, "Imitation of Horace" (2.1); Alexander Pope, "Epistle to a Lady" John Wilmot, "A Satyre on Charles II"; *GR Pope, <i>Rape of the Lock</i>
W Jul 8	John Dryden, "A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire"; Aphra Behn, "The Disappointment"; Maria Edgeworth, "Essay on the Noble Science of Self-Justification"
R Jul 9	Margaret Cavendish, <i>The Blazing World</i> (Parts I and II); *GR William Wycherley, <i>The Country Wife</i>
M Jul 13	Jonathan Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> , Parts I and II; *GR, Neil Chudgar, "Swift's Gentleness"
T Jul 14	Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> , Part III
W Jul 15	Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> , Part IV; *GR, Philip Harth, "The Problem of Political Allegory in <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> "
R Jul 16	Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal"; William Hogarth, "Gin Street," "Beer Lane"; Test 1
M Jul 20	Voltaire, <i>Candide</i> ; *GR John Gay, <i>The Beggar's Opera</i>
T Jul 21	Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i> , Book I; Essay 1 due in class ; *GR Essay 1 is 1500 words
W Jul 22	More, <i>Utopia</i> , Book II
R Jul 23	Mark Twain, "Poor Little Stephen Girard"; James Thurber, "The Secret Life of James Thurber"
M Jul 27	Aldous Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> , Chapters 1-6
T Jul 28	Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> , Chapters 7-12
W Jul 29	Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> , Chapters 13-end
R Jul 30	Thomas Pynchon, <i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> , Chapters 1-3 *GR Aphra Behn, <i>The Rover</i>
M Aug 3	Pynchon, <i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> , Chapters 4-6; Test 2 ; *GR Kristin Matthews, "Reading America Reading in Thomas Pynchon's <i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> "
T Aug 4	John Kennedy Toole, <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i> , Chapters 1-5
W Aug 5	Toole, <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i> , Chapters 6-10
R Aug 6	LAST DAY OF CLASS; Toole, <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i> , Chapters 11-end
M Aug 10	Essay 2 due by 4pm ET via e-mail attachment ; *GR Essay 2 is 5000 words

Appendix: Essay Assessment Rubric

I assess your essays based on five categories, each worth five points. With each graded essay you will receive a rubric like the one below indicating your score and characterizing your performance on each category.

Structural Coherence (5 points)

- 5 Argument builds logically; clear thesis, strong topic sentences and transitions, and coherent paragraphs
- 4 Argument builds logically with transitions and topic sentences; unclear thesis or minor sequencing issues
- 3 Evident but inconsistent logic; paragraphs lack internal coherence; faulty topic sentences/transitions
- 2 Some paragraphs placed randomly, sometimes unrelated to argument; topic sentences/transitions lacking
- 1 Paragraph sequence is without discernible logic (including laundry-listing or 5-paragraph style)
- 0 Chaos

Analytical Rigor (5 points)

- 5 Arguments supported clearly and persuasively with precise, reasoned, evidence-based conclusions
- 4 Support of argument is mostly evidence-based, but minor assumptions undermine persuasiveness
- 3 Assumptions, generalizations, innuendo take the place of reasoned, evidence-based argument
- 2 Reportage: essay reports without moving to the level of argument; thesis is not argumentative
- 1 Opining or editorializing takes the place of reportage or analysis
- 0 Bedlam

Style and Rhetoric (5 points)

- 5 Clear, clean, varied prose; precise and accurate language usage: every word belongs; lively and compelling
- 4 Few stylistic and mechanical errors; few awkward sentences; mostly varied, effective sentences
- 3 Problems with mechanics, clarity, cliché, “There is/it is,” colloquial language, passive, word choice, etc.
- 2 Problems with typos and other careless errors in addition to the above; recurrent errors from prior essay
- 1 Sloppy abundance of stylistic problems noted above, gravely undermining the communication of ideas
- 0 Babel

Knowledge and Content (5 points)

- 5 Thorough understanding of material, no factual or content errors; a learned essay
- 4 Strong understanding of material, few or minor factual or content errors
- 3 Satisfactory understanding of material, some factual or content errors that detract from argument
- 2 Substandard understanding of material, many factual or content errors significantly undermine argument
- 1 Abundant factual or content errors reflect poor grasp of material and render argument incredible
- 0 *Tabula rasa*

Contemporary Linkage (5 points)

- 5 Makes a persuasive argument for contemporary relevance; insightful, sophisticated, and specific linkages
- 4 Makes a persuasive argument for contemporary relevance using specific linkages
- 3 Makes a plausible argument for contemporary relevance using specific linkages
- 2 Draws tenuous connections between subject matter and contemporary issues; broad linkages
- 1 Implausible connections based on broad, circumstantial linkages, innuendo; “A sort of reminds me of B”
- 0 TED