

Syllabus: WMST 20095

Feminist Humor/Feminist Discourse

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Course Description

At the heart of this course is a single word: laughter. It is the essence of a power that charges this course with its dynamics: relationships, meanings, purposes, navigations of humor's discursive terrain.

What is, after all, funny? How so? Darkly? Lightly? Tritely? Drop-dead seriously? And who says?

Within the traditions tinged by feminism, empowerment, liberation and justice, the personal and political choice to tip scales towards comedic has always factored into actual practice, real performance. It has also factored into the fear and anger with which the woman provocateur of laughter has been met. It has also factored into the less heralded feminist tradition of humor, comedy, laughing.

I mean, we know they're angry, but our culture has elected to construe a hot debate: Are women funny?

Also at the heart of this course is: woman. At the heart of "woman" is a sense of self as "she's" been regarded and treated in the world—and her response to that sense. In a word, *feminism*.

In another word, *anti-feminism*. It's less surprising than it seems.

The *feminist* in feminist humor matters. It's a descriptor than draws lines in sand, erases lines in sand. *Feminist* remains, of course, contentious: a word and idea and identity—a credo, standpoint, manner, school of thought, tradition of struggle—that we wrangle over and wrestle with and, ultimately, have wrenched it from its simple roots.

The course follows a thematic stream—captured in a sequence of Blackboard modules.

Altogether, and piece after piece, It is a course fueled by questions.

Course Times and Location

5:30-6:45 MW

Merrill Hall 112

There are no prerequisites for this course and this course does not presume you have prior knowledge of the scholarship or frameworks you'll discover in the ensuing materials/modules.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will:

1. See/hear/feel/understand/assess some very distinct and vital phenomena.

These phenomena tap at once into the struggles and feats of sexed/gendered bodies&persons, humor, laughter, comedic performances and what might be feminist therein.

2. Reconsider the role of humor in "serious" discourse—and the role of that discourse in performing feminism—as well as in performing its narratives and critiques, personal and political.

3. Detect the embodied values, meanings and significance in feminist humor.

4. Inquire into a unique type and temper of laughter one might term somehow feminist.
5. Fathom the embedded gender-asymmetry, its motive bases and deep traditions, at play in contexts which give rise to, shape and sustain the “popular” dynamics of humor to which women have been exposed and subjected
6. Develop requisite faculties for skillfully navigating feminist humor/feminist discourse.

Learning Materials

The majority of the learning materials can be found within each module folder. Some course readings will be made available in PDF format within the course via Course Reserves system. It is recommended that you download and save these materials for future reference.

Modules for Study

Each module centers on a theme or question and offers readings, clips and presentations.

Each module also provides a discussion board, a notebook and assignments you’ll find inviting, challenging and, we’re pretty sure (since this is a course that’s funny in its bones), you’ll find sorta fun.

What’s the Hitch

Women Aren’t Funny

Method, Madness, Tomfoolery

Performing Humor a la Feministe

The Laugh of the Medusa

Walk on the Wildside/Go to the Darkside

Hell-raising Humor

Righteous Indignation—Handling the Scourge

The Feminist Combo Platter

Mischief

Technology Requirements and Skills

Please review the relevant information in the Getting Started folder on Blackboard.

The Start Here folder contains important information including links to free or discounted versions of required software.

Computer

A personal computer with consistent, reliable Internet access is required: 1. A DSL or cable connection to the Internet; dial-up is not sufficient. 2. Laptop or desktop computer with a minimum of a 2 GHz processor and 2 GB of RAM You should have the following software installed on your computer: 1. Windows 7 system operating software or newer for PC computers OR Mac OS X 10.6 or newer for Apple Mac computers. 2. Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint). 3. Antivirus for Windows OS, Microsoft Security Essentials OR Antivirus for Mac OS, Sophos 4. A Blackboard Learn compatible browser, such as the latest version of Firefox, Chrome, or Safari. Internet Explorer is NOT a supported browser and should not be used.

Fundamental Skills

The following fundamental technological skills are necessary for your success in this course: navigating a computer operating system, launching and quitting applications, connecting to the Internet, using a web browser to search the World Wide Web, downloading, saving, and uploading files, and sending and replying to email. You’ll also need to be proficient in using MS Word, working w/ files in various formats.

Blackboard (Bb) Learn

This class will use Blackboard (Bb) Learn, the official learning management system (LMS) used by Kent

State University to deliver course materials to university students. ALL course materials and activities will take place in Bb Learn. In order to login to the online Bb Learn LMS, you will need a Kent State FlashLine User Name ID and password. • You can login to Bb Learn either through FlashLine or via a direct link to the login page: <https://learn.kent.edu> For help using the Blackboard (Bb) Learn system use the “Bb Learn Tutorials for Students” link in the main navigation of your course. In general, Bb Learn works best using the latest version of most major web browsers, including Firefox, Chrome, and Safari.

Technology Help Guidelines

A. 30-Minute Rule: When you encounter struggles with technology, give yourself 30 minutes to ‘figure it out.’ If you cannot, then post a message to the discussion board; your peers may have suggestions to assist you. You are also directed to contact the KSU Helpdesk 24/7. As a last resort, contact me.

However, do not expect an immediate reply, and I cannot guarantee that I will be able to help with any and all technology issues. B. When posting or sending email requesting help with technology issues, whether to the Helpdesk or me, use the following guidelines: 1. Include a descriptive title for the subject field that includes 1) the name of course 2) the issue. Do NOT just simply type “Help” into the subject field or leave it blank. 2. List the steps or describe the circumstance that preceded the technical issue or error. Include the exact wording of the error message. 3. When possible, always include a screenshot(s) demonstrating the technical issue or error message. 4. Also include what you have already tried to do to remedy the issue (rebooting, trying a different browser, etc.).

Policies and Expectations

Face-to-face attendance might seem self-explanatory, but do please note, the presence of your body in a chair is not equal to participation. Participation is built into attendance. Indeed, attention—attend!—is built right into the word.

Check in often.

Students are expected to check their Kent State e-mail and to log into the system multiple times (at least every other day) during the week. All actions by students in the Bb Learn LMS can be tracked. At any time during the course, an instructor may generate a report that indicates when and how long individual students have been logged into the LMS, or engaged with course materials or course tools. Students who anticipate an absence from the online course due to technical or medical reasons should consult with the instructor individually. An absence due to illness or injury requires verification from a medical professional and should be presented to the instructor.

Communication Policy 1. Email course questions and personal concerns, including grading questions, to me privately using your @kent.edu email. Do NOT submit posts of a personal nature to the discussion board. 2. Email will be checked at least twice per day Monday through Friday; Saturday and Sunday, email is checked once per day. During the week, I will respond to all emails within 24 hours; on weekends and holidays, allow up to 48 hours. If there are special circumstances that will delay my response, I will make an announcement to the class. 3. For questions related to technology, please contact: 330-672-HELP for 24/7 support.

Student Conduct and Etiquette Communicating appropriately in any classroom can be challenging—those challenges now span physical classrooms and virtual space. In order to minimize this challenge, it is important to remember several points of “etiquette” that will smooth communication for both students and instructors: 1. Listen and/or Read first, Respond after a pause. On Blackboard, Read the ENTIRE set of posts/comments on a discussion board before posting your reply, in order to prevent

repeating commentary or asking questions that have already been answered. 2. Avoid language that may come across as incendiary or offensive. Language can be easily misinterpreted—sometimes more or less when LIVE, more or less in written electronic communication. 3. Think twice. Review email and discussion board posts BEFORE submitting. Humor and sarcasm—ironically our subject of study—can work for or against you. Be smart; be wise. Where warranted, Try to be as matter-of-fact and professional as possible. 4. Follow long-established rules of the social game. These rules evolved to help. Do not shout or write using all capital letters, because it will appear as shouting. Also, the use of emoticons can be both effective and ineffective, a crutch, but then again, a crutch is helpful when used to undergird something weighty. Feel free when online to convey nonverbal feelings with a face that matches 😊 5. Consider the privacy and well-being of others. Secure assent or permission prior to doing things like giving out a classmate's email address or other information. 6. No inappropriate material. Do not forward virus warnings, chain letters, jokes, etc. to classmates or instructors. The sharing of pornographic material is forbidden. NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to address behaviors that are seriously out of line with good manners. The instructor may and likely will remove posts that are not collegial in nature and/or do not meet the Online Student Conduct and Etiquette guidelines listed above. Students may appeal.

University Use of Electronic Email A university-assigned student e-mail account is the official university means of communication with all students at Kent State University. Students are responsible for all information sent to them via their university-assigned e-mail account. If a student chooses to forward information in their university e-mail account, he or she is responsible for all information, including attachments, sent to any other e-mail account. To stay current with university information, students are expected to check their official university e-mail account and other electronic communications on a frequent and consistent basis. Recognizing that some communications may be time-critical, the university recommends that electronic communications be checked minimally twice a week.

Assignments and Grades

A detailed breakdown of course assignments and due dates by lesson module is available as a separate .pdf document that can be accessed in Bb Learn by clicking on the Syllabus & Course Schedule link in the course menu. These include:

Discussion Boards

Notebooks

& two **Case Studies.**

Assessment and Grading Feedback

Grades and feedback on discussion posts/replies, notebook entries, and Case Study assignments will generally be available in the Grade Center within one week of their final due date.

Late and Make-up Work Policy

Late work will not be accepted except with prior instructor approval. Please ask.

Circumstances that warrant consideration for late work include university recognized absences such as illness and injury, or a death in the immediate family. Please ask.

Grading Scale is the University Standard

Grade 94% - 100% A // 90% - 94% A-

87% - 89% B+ // 84% - 86% B // 80% - 83% B-

77% - 79% C+ // 74% - 76% C // 70% -- 74% C-

67% - 69% D+ // 64% - 66% D // Under 64% F

University Policies

Students are required to be aware of and follow all general and academic policies established by Kent State University. A list of the general academic policies is listed on the Kent State University Policy Register, which can be found in the University policies section of the Getting Started in Your Online Course link within the Start Here folder. Specific policies related to the successful completion of this online course can be located and reviewed in your Blackboard Learn course.

University policies are located in the University policies section of the Getting Started in Your Online Course link within the Start Here folder in your Blackboard Learn course.

Students with Disabilities

University policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments.

Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information on registration procedures). The Blackboard accessibility statement can be found in the University policies section of the Getting Started in Your Online Course link within the Start Here folder.

Course Enrollment and Withdrawal

University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending.

Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated.

If registration errors are not corrected by this date and you continue to attend and participate in classes for which you are not officially enrolled, you are advised now that you will not receive a grade at the conclusion of the semester for any class in which you are not properly registered. Also, it is your responsibility to check the withdrawal dates for each semester. Every class has its own schedule of deadlines and considerations. To view the add/drop schedule and other important dates for this class, go to Student > Resources > Courses and Registration in FlashLine. Choose View or Print Course Schedule and Purchase Textbooks. To see the deadlines for this course, click on the CRN. The add/drop schedule and important dates may also be found on the Drop or Add a Course link. Click on the green clock next to the course under Registration Deadlines.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Students enrolled in the university, at all its campuses, are to perform their academic work according to standards set by faculty members, departments, schools and colleges of the university; and cheating and plagiarism constitute fraudulent misrepresentation for which no credit can be given and for which appropriate sanctions are warranted and will be applied. For more information see the Kent State policy on plagiarism in the University policies section of the Getting Started in Your Online Course link within the Start Here folder. Subject to Change Statement The syllabus and course schedule may be subject to change. Changes will be communicated via email or the Blackboard Learn announcement tool. It is the responsibility of students to check email messages and course announcements to stay current in their online courses.