

Humor in Use

Prof. Susan Seizer

Indiana University CMCL-C635 (GNDR-G701)
Dept. of Communication & Culture, Spring 2010

Class meetings: Th 2:30 p.m – 5:00 p.m., Room 272

Film Screenings: T 7:15-10:15 p.m., Wylie Auditorium 015

Office hours: T 2:00-4:00 or by appt., 800 E. 3rd St. Rm. 241

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This seminar begins from the premise that humor is a good site for the study of culture. We will look at a variety of cultural contexts for humor, from staged public performance to private joking, and be primarily concerned with the many and varied social uses to which humor is put. One specific focus this spring will be the world of stand-up comedy, historically and in its current form as a U.S. entertainment genre.

While grounded in humor theory, we will also explore how our understanding of theoretical models changes when we consider making comedy ourselves (yes, we will!). Our springboard for the study of theories of gendered humor will be Freud's *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. In studying Freud's paradigm in relation to other theoretical models, and updating these with our own, our aim is to recognize the role of cultural knowledge and cultural literacy in what we find funny.

Course Requirements:

1) Readings

a) There are **four required books** for the course. These are available for purchase at **Boxcar Books**, 408 E. 6th St. (339-8710):

- Freud, Sigmund. 1960 [1905]. *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. Ed. and trans. James Strachey. NY: W.W. Norton and Co.
- Basso, Keith H. 1979. *Portraits of "the Whiteman": linguistic play and cultural symbols among the western Apache*. Cambridge U. Press.
- Seizer, Susan. 2005. *Stigmas of the Tamil Stage: An Ethnography of Special Drama Artists in South India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Martin, Steve. *Born Standing Up*. NY: Scribner.

b) There are also several **recommended books**, from which there are chapters assigned over the course of the semester. The assigned chapters **are** available on E-Reserve, but you might like to own these as reference books [I've indicated those that are out of print fyi]:

- Gray, Frances. 1994. *Women and Laughter*. Virginia U Press.

- Morreall, John. 1987. *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*. SUNY Press.
- Simon Critchley, 2002. *On Humour*. Routledge.
- Koestler, Arthur. 1989 [1964]. *The Act of Creation*. London & NY: Arkana Penguin/ Putnam Inc. [OUT OF PRINT]
- Jenkins, Ron. 1994. *Subversive Laughter*. NY: Free Press. [OUT OF PRINT].
- Woody Allen. 1972. *Without Feathers*. NY: Ballantine Books.

c) **All additional readings for the course are on E-reserve. Password: joking.**
 The direct link is: <http://ereserves.indiana.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=5082>.
 Please print and **bring the readings to class with you on the day we discuss them.**

Required course work:

You are expected to make notes on the readings and have them available for reference in class. Full attendance, preparation, and participation in a graduate seminar should go without saying, but just so that we're clear, I expect you to be here, to have read, and to participate in every course meeting.

1) Online Web Postings: In preparation for each weekly class session, each member of the seminar will prepare two different types of responses to the readings. Accordingly, you will find two separate folders on the Forums page of Oncourse. These are entitled "Reading Responses" and "Joke Journals." To give everyone a chance to read before class, **POST IN BOTH FOLDERS BY NOON THE WEDNESDAY BEFORE OUR CLASS MEETING.**

- **Reading Response folder:** This is the place to post your scholarly responses to the week's readings and film screenings. Write an approximately one-page response (roughly one paragraph per reading, essay, chapter, or film). Your post will be read both by myself and your fellow classmates. Your charge is to formulate a salient question or synthesizing statement relating to the subject of the upcoming session, keyed to one or more of the assigned readings, and framed in such a way as to elicit discussion. I encourage you to read, and comment on if you are so moved, each others' posts prior to Thursday's class. I will utilize this collective output as a point of departure for our class discussions. I will look to bring out thematic interests and concerns that bear on the study of humor more broadly. I'll be interested in learning 1) what you understand to be the main point here; 2) what you learned here that was new to you; and 3) what, if anything, you found clarifying or confusing. Likewise for the films: what struck you as interesting, funny, insightful? Again, feel free to ask questions to the class as a whole, as well as to respond to other students' posts; this folder is a forum for discussion that supplements our class meetings.
- **Joke Journals folder:** As a means of opening our eyes to the

culture of humor that surrounds us, all class participants are asked to keep a joke journal. Each week, write down at least one humorous event (or attempt at a humorous event) to which you were witness or in which you participated. If you maintain your journal privately, share at least a portion of your entries for that week as your weekly entry in this forum. When recounting a joke's telling, or when writing an account of a humorous event (or an attempted humorous event), try to remember and record as much of the context of the event as possible: who said what to whom, where, and when; what happened prior to and after the telling; who laughed; who didn't; what kind of laughter did the event elicit; and anything else that strikes you as important to the telling/event. The instance of humor should be "live" for these journals, i.e. **not** a list of jokes you downloaded from the internet, or a joke from a sitcom (unless this proved the trigger for a "live" incident among a particular viewing audience). I expect this journal will prove useful to think with throughout the course, and will provide the raw material for one of your short papers (and perhaps even for your final project if you so choose). *Have fun with this!*

- 2) **Application Opportunity:** Beginning on Feb. 4th, for each class one student will be given the opportunity to apply the theme and readings of that week to selected subject matter of their choosing. This application exercise is an opportunity to extend the theoretical concerns addressed in the week's materials to a domain that interests you. Your job is to demonstrate to the class how the key ideas of the text(s) can be applied to the material you've selected. On the day of your application exercise, please provide the class with a handout that outlines what you see as the interconnection between theory and your chosen object. I recommend that you discuss with me the application you plan to make prior to Thursday's class; my office hours on Tuesday afternoons are generally a good time for this. We'll assign dates at the first class meeting.
- 3) **Writer's Workshop:** I like to structure my graduate seminars in ways that offer professionalization opportunities. Creating mechanisms for you to read and offer feedback on each others' work constitutes a critical tool that will stand you in good stead later in your careers (when you are subject to reviews by your peers). Thus on or before Nov. 25th, each student will submit a fully-developed section of your paper, with footnotes, references, and an accompanying outline indicating where this section fits within it, for the entire class to read on either the December 3rd or 10th classes (per sign-up). This is an opportunity to share with the class both a sample of the data you are working with in your final paper project, as well as how you are writing about it. Sharing writing while in process in this way can be incredibly useful, as you get feedback from your colleagues on what is working, what is not yet working, how the tone is coming across, which terms and ideas need more explanation. For these two weeks at the beginning of December the class will effectively turn into a writing group

in which we will share ideas on how to approach and analyze the topics. You may steer discussion to what you are finding especially problematic, difficult, or surprising in working with your topic, and you may also take a few minutes in class to show us any media you might be working with.

- 4) **Schedule** for class meetings: The first half of each class will be dedicated to discussion of the readings. The second half will be allotted to the student who is providing us an application of the week's ideas to a topic of his/her choice, reserving the final twenty minutes of class for discussion of the week's Joke Journals.

- 5) **Papers and projects:**
 - a) There are **two short (2-3 page) papers** due in the first half of the semester. Each paper is 5% of the course grade. These are exercises to help make sure you understand the concepts covered in the readings and class discussions.
 - b) In the second half of the semester, students are expected to begin work on their **final projects** (25% of course grade). The final project for this course is fairly open. You may conduct a research project that builds on material covered during the course of the semester, for which you will need to identify and read at least three new textual sources. Or you may conduct ethnographic research into a topic that interested you during the semester, for which you will need to meet with me to discuss your planned methodology, giving me a one page outline of the project 24 hours before we meet. Finally, you may create a performance that utilizes at least three ideas discussed in the course, that you will perform for the class at the time officially designated for the final exam to be held in this class. Any of the above options – research, ethnography, performance -- may be conducted as an individual or a group undertaking. The research and ethnography projects should result in a 15 page paper. The performance project may be live or recorded, but must be presented to the class as a whole on exam day. Those opting for the latter must provide a written statement to Prof. Seizer (2-3 pages) and an outline of your presentation as a handout to accompany your performance for the class. The last two meetings of the semester are reserved for workshopping student writing of the final papers.
 - c) Students should plan to discuss their ideas for the final project or paper with Prof. Seizer during the week of March 22nd. A **proposal** for the final project (2-3 pages) is due at the screening on Tuesday, April 6th (evaluation of this proposal counts towards the final project grade).

- 6) **Grading** for the course is based on the following percentages:
 - Class participation and attendance (at screenings and in class) = 15%
 - On-line postings = 30% total (15% Reading Responses, 15% Joke Journals)
 - Application opportunity using one week's readings = 10%
 - Two short papers = 10% (5% each)
 - Writer's workshop participation = 10%
 - Final paper or project = 25%

Syllabus

PART I: HUMOR THEORY, ITS APPLICATION AND USES

Class 1, Jan. 14: Introduction to course

- Organization, requirements, syllabus.
- Examples of joke journals from Prof. Seizer
 - Discussion of “gentile jokes” hand-out
 - In-class viewing of “Roseanne” (the Bar Mitzvah episode).

1/19 Tuesday screening:
“*The Celluloid Closet*,” Vito Russo (dir. Rob Epstein & J Friedman, 1995. 102 min.)
“*Ellen*” (the coming-out episode, original broadcast date 4/30/97; 47 min)

Class 2, Jan. 21: The basis for humorous deviation in cultural norms & standards; the classics of humor theory: “superiority,” “relief,” and “incongruity”

Reading:

- Mandel, Oscar. 1970. “What’s So Funny: The Nature of the Comic,” in *The Antioch Review*, Vol. XXX, No.1, pp. 73-89.
- Morreall, John. 1987. *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humor*, “Introduction,” pp. 1-7, and excerpts:
 - Plato, p. 10-13 (+ERes supplemental pages from Plato, *Republic*, 386a-398b; 605c-608b)
 - Aristotle, p. 14-16 (+ERes supplemental pages from Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1447-1450, Pts. 1-6, 12-13 & catharsis, 81-91).
 - Hobbes, p. 19-20
 - Spencer, p. 99-110
 - Bergson, p. 117-126 (+ERes supplemental pages from Bergson, pp 186-190 in Sypher, ed., *Comedy*)
- Simon Critchley, 2002. Ch. 4, “The Laughing Machine: A Note on Bergson and Wyndham Lewis”, pp. 55-62, in *On Humour*. Routledge.

Recommended reading, optional:

- Gray, Frances. 1994. “Theoretical Perspectives,” Ch.1 in *Women and Laughter*, pp. 1-40.
- Apte, Mahadev. 1985. “Introduction,” *Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 13-26.

In-class viewing:

- Homophobic jokes in sit-coms: 15 minutes of clips from 1995 episodes of “Seinfeld,” “Frasier,” “Ellen,” “The Nanny,” “Friends.”
- Charlie Chaplin, excerpts from “Modern Times” and “The Gold Rush” (the first 17 minutes of “Modern Times,” and shoe-eating scene from Gold Rush)

1/26 Tuesday Screening:
“*The Mask*”, Jim Carrey (dir. Chuck Russell, 1994, 97 min.)

Class 3, Jan 28: Freud's triangulated model of dirty jokes and the gendered locations of pleasure, relief and aggression in Freud's theory

Reading:

- Freud, Sigmund. 1905. *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. Read the whole book if you can. If not, skim pp. 1-105 and read pp. 106-193 carefully.

* **Short paper # 1**, distributed in class on Jan. 28th, due Tuesday Feb. 2nd @ screening: apply your understanding of Freud's analysis of jokes

2/2 Tuesday screening

"*Jesus is Magic*" Sarah Silverman (dir. Liam Lynch, 2005; 72 min.)

Class 4, Feb. 4: The Distances Appropriate to Humor

Application provided by: _____

Reading:

- Seizer, Susan. 2005. "Introduction" & "The Buffoon's Comedy: Jokes, Gender, and Discursive Distance" Ch. 4 in *Stigmas of the Tamil Stage*
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981[1935]. pp. 259-315 of "Discourse in the Novel", in *The Dialogic Imagination*. (Oncourse)
- Sam Anderson, 2005. "Irony Maiden: How Sarah Silverman is raping American comedy." *Slate* online magazine, posted 11/10/05.
- <http://www.sarahsilvermanonline.com/index2.html>

In-class: view clips of Special Drama buffoon comedy

2/9 Tuesday screening:

"*Smoke Signals*" Sherman Alexie (dir. Chris Eyre, 1998, 89 min.)

Class 5, Feb. 11: The importance of context (1): ethnic humor

Application provided by: _____

Reading:

- Keith Basso, 1979. *Portraits of "the Whiteman": linguistic play and cultural symbols among the western Apache*. Cambridge U. Press. Read the whole book, focusing on Chs. 3-5, pp. 35-82.
- Alan Dundes, 1987. Ch. 6, "The Jewish American Princess and the Jewish American Mother in American Jokelore," in *Cracking Jokes: Studies of Sick Humor Cycles and Stereotypes*. Ten Speed Press, pp. 62-81.

Recommended:

- *Maybe: Otto Santa Ana (UCLA) AAA 2008 paper on why Jay Leno's immigrant humor is hateful; tight review of the 3 humor theories in his intro
- Simon Critchley, 2002. Ch. 5, "Foreigners are Funny: The Ethnicity and Ethnicity of Humour", pp. 65-76 in *On Humour*. Routledge.
- Mahadev Apte, 1985. "Humor, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Relations," Ch. 4 in *Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach*, Cornell U Press, pp. 108-148
- James Sterngold, "A Racial Divide Widens on Network T.V.," N.Y. Times article, 12/29/98.

- Donna Goldstein, 2003. Chapters 6-7, pp. 227-274 in *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*. U California Press.

2/16 Tuesday Screening
 “*The Aristocrats*” (dir. Paul Provenza, 2005)

Class 6, Feb. 18: The importance of context (2): sociolinguistic analyses of jokes.

Application provided by: _____

Reading:

- Seizer, Susan. 2005. Ch. 5, “The Buffoon-Dance Duet,” *Stigmas of the Tamil Stage*.
- Sacks, Harvey. 1989. “An Analysis of the Course of a Joke’s Telling in Conversation,” in *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, ed. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer, second ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 337-353.
- English, James F. 1994. “Humor as Social Practice: Rethinking Joke-Work” in *Comic Transactions*, Cornell U. Press, pp. 5-19.
- Kramer, Elise. 2008. “The Playful is Political: Rape Jokes, American Humor Ideologies, and the Negotiation of Civic Responsibility.” Paper delivered at the Semiotics Workshop at University of Chicago, Dec. 2008 (from M.A. thesis, U Chicago, Anthropology).

In-class: view video of domestic violence comedy scene from Special Drama

Recommended:

- Kirshenblatt-Gimblet, Barbara. 1975. “A Parable in Context: A Social Interactional Analysis of Storytelling Performance,” in Ben-Amos and Goldstein, eds., *Folklore: Performance and Communication*. The Hague: Mouton, pp. 105-130.
- Simon Critchley, 2002. Ch. 6, “The Jokes All on Us: Humour as Sensus Communis”, pp. 79-91 in *On Humour*. Routledge.

* Short paper #2, due Tuesday Feb. 23 @ screening.
 Consolidate several of the ideas on humor we’ve encountered in the first half of this course by analysing an event from your own or a classmate’s joke journal. Your analysis should apply at least two of the theories from the first half of the course.

2/23 Tuesday screening
 An episode of “*Absolutely Fabulous*,” for mother/daughter relationship
 An episode of “*All in the Family*,” for father-in-law/son-in-law relationship
 An episode of *Burns & Allen*, husband/wife
 An episode of *The Lucy Show*, husband/wife
 An episode of *The Honeymooners*, husband/wife

Class 7, Feb 25: Anthropological “joking relationships” as structured and culturally sanctioned interaction

Application provided by: _____

Reading:

- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1952 [1940]. "On Joking Relationships," and "A Further Note on Joking Relationships," Chs. 4 & 5 in *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, pp. 90-115 (Eres)
- Terry, Charles. 1997. "The Function of Humor for Prison Inmates." Pp 336-347 (ERes)
- Apte, Mahadev. 1985. "Joking Relationships" in *Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 29-81. (Eres)

Reference [on reserve]

- Douglas, Mary. 1975. "Jokes," in *Implicit Meanings*, Routledge, pp. 90-114.
- Bateson, Gregory, 1958 [1936]. *Naven*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-107 [skim]

Semester PART II: FOCUSING ON STAND-UP (and other comedic performance genres of interest to students in the class)

3/2 Tuesday Screening
"Richard Pryor Live in Concert" 1979 (60 min)

Class 8, March 4: Are we ashamed or proud of our shit?

Application provided by: _____

Reading:

- Steve Martin, 2007. *Born Standing Up*. NY: Scribner
- Stebbins, Robert A. 1990. Ch. 1, "An Art is Born," in *The Laugh Makers: Stand-up Comedy as Art, Business, and Life-Style*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's U Press. (on the history of stand-up)
- Woody Allen, 1972. *Without Feathers*. ("The Whore of Mensa," p.35-41)
- Excerpts from Dick Gregory
- Fisher & Fisher, *Pretend the World is Funny and Forever*, Preface & Ch.1

Recommended reading:

- Simon Critchley, 2002. "Why the Super-Ego is Your Amigo" Ch 7, pp. 93-111
- Douglas, Mary. 1975. "Jokes," *Implicit Meanings*, Routledge, p. 90-114.

On discs I will provide to you:

- Listen to 1960s stand-up comedy routines of Woody Allen
- Listen to 1960s stand-up comedy routines of Bill Cosby

3/9 Tuesday screening
"Sleeper" Woody Allen (dir. Woody Allen, 1973; 87 min.)

Class 9, March 11: Let's look from a different perspective: Creating Humor

Application provided by: _____

Reading:

- Arthur Koestler, 1989 [1964]. Part One: The Jester (Chs. I-IV, pp. 27-100), in *The Act of Creation*. Arkana Books.

- Victor Turner, 1982. “Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama: Performative and Reflexive Anthropology” in *From Ritual to Theatre*, pp. 89-101.
- Victor Turner, 1987. “Images and Reflections: Ritual, Drama, Carnival, Film, and Spectacle in Cultural Performance,” in *The Anthropology of Performance*, pp. 21-32.

Recommended reading:

- Victor Turner, 1987. “Performing Ethnography (with Edie Turner)” in *The Anthropology of Performance*, pp. 139-155.

Spring Break (March 13-21)

3/23 Tuesday screening
 “BORAT: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan” (dir. Larry Charles, 2006; 84 min.)

Class 10, March 25: Folly, Clowning, and the Carnavalesque!

Application provided by: _____

Reading:

- A. O. Scott, “Falling Down Funny” review of *Borat* in *The New York Times Magazine*, 11/12/06 (ERes)
- David Essex, review of *Borat* in *Flak Magazine*, 11/13/06
<http://www.flakmag.com/film/borat.html>
- Bakhtin, M.M. 1984 [1965]. Selections from *Rabelais and His World*, Indiana U Press, pp. 1-12, 239-244.
- Willeford, William. 1969. “The Fool and the Woman,” in *The Fool and His Scepter*, Northwestern U Press, pp. 174-191.
- Seizer, Susan. 2005. Ch. 6, “The Atipiti Scene: Laughing at Domestic Violence” in *Stigmas of the Tamil Stage*.
- Davis, Nathalie Zemon. 1975. “Women on Top,” in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, Stanford U Press, pp. 124-151 [and notes, 310-315]

Recommended reading:

- Mitchell, William E. 1992. “Introduction: Mother Folly in the Islands,” in *Clowning as Critical Practice*, University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 3-37.
- Vilsoni Hereniko, 1992. “When She Reigns Supreme: Clowning and Culture in Rotuman Weddings,” in *Clowning as Critical Practice*, University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 167-191.

In-class viewing:

[open to student suggestions: The Simpsons? Beavis & Butthead?]

*2-3 page proposal for final project due at Tuesday night screening March 23

3/30 Tuesday screening
 Johnny Carson Show (30 min.)
 Dick Cavett Show (30 min.)
 Bill Maher, “I’m Swiss” (dir. Michael Drumm, 2005; 98 min.)

Class 11, April 1: Performances commenting on modernity: distance, detachment, alienation, and reassurance (what kind of impact does a performance have, and how is this impact created?)

Application provided by: _____

Reading:

- Ron Jenkins, 1994. "Preface" pp ix-xii, "Urban Slapstick and Survival" Ch. 1, and "America's Comedy of Detachment" Ch. 7 in *Subversive Laughter*.
- Brecht, Bertolt. 1964. "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting," in *Brecht on Theatre*, trans. John Willett. NY: Hill and Wang, pp. 91-99.
- Mark Crispin Miller, 1986. "Deride and Conquer," in *Watching Television*, ed. Todd Gitlin.

Recommended:

- Zijderveld, Anton. 1968. "Jokes and their Relation to Social Reality." *Social Research* V35 N2 Summer 1968

In-class:

- Jon Stewart, The Daily Show (current episode)
- Stephen Colbert, The Colbert Report (current episode)

4/6 Tuesday Screening Rosanne Barr, "Domestic Goddess" stand-up routine "A Question of Silence" (dir. Marleen Gorris, 1983)

Class 12, April 8: Can feminists be funny? the female grotesque

Application provided by: _____

Reading:

- John Lahr, 1995. "Dealing with Roseanne," *The New Yorker*, 7/17, pp. 42-61
- Philip Auslander, 1993. "Brought to You by Fem-Rage: Stand-up comedy and the Politics of Gender." In *Acting Out: Feminist Performances*, ed. Lynda Hart and Peggy Phelan. U of Michigan Press, pp. 315-336.
- Kathleen Rowe, 1995. *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*. Introduction, Chs 1-2, Afterword (pp. 1-91, 213-219).
- Frances Gray, 1994. "Born in the USA," Ch. 2 in *Women and Laughter*, pp. 41-79

Each student presents on one of the following readings:

- Mary Russo, 1995. "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory," in *The Female Grotesque: risk, excess and modernity*. Routledge. pp. 53-73 (+196-200, endnotes)
- Helene Cixous, 1980. "The Laugh of the Medusa" in *New French Feminisms*, ed. Marks & de Courtivron, U of Massachusetts Press, pp. 245-264
- Sian Mile, 1992. "Roseanne Barr: Canned Laughter -- Containing the Subject," in *New Perspectives on Women and Comedy*, ed. Regina Barreca. Gordon & Breach, pp. 39-46
- Caliskan, Sevda. 1995. "Is There Such a Thing as Women's Humor?" *American Studies International*, Oct. 1995, Vol. XXXIII, No.2
- Mahadev Apte, 1985. "Sexual Inequality in Humor," Ch. 2 in *Humor and*

- Laughter: An Anthropological Approach*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 67-81.
- Mary Klages, 1992. "What to do with Helen Keller jokes: a feminist act" in *New Perspectives on Women and Comedy*, ed. Regina Barreca. Gordon & Breach: 13-22
 - Judy Elsley, 1992. "Laughter as Feminine Power in 'The Color Purple' and 'A Question of Silence'" in *New Perspectives on Women and Comedy*, ed. Regina Barreca. Gordon & Breach, pp.193-199
 - Riviere, Joan. 1929. "Womanliness as a Masquerade." Reprinted in *Psychoanalysis and Female Sexuality*, ed. H.M. Ruitenbeek. New Haven CT: College & University Press 1966: 35-61.
 - Modleski, Tania. 1988. "Rape vs. Mans/laughter: Blackmail" in *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*. NY: Methuen. Ch. 1, pp. 17-30.

In class:

- Cartoons: "Sylvia"; "Cathy"; "Dykes to Watch Out For"; "Hothead Paisan"
- Magazines: Ms. "No Comment" back covers; Playboy and Esquire cartoons

4/13 Tuesday Screening
 "Shouting Fire" (Liz Garbus, 2008, 114 min.)
 "Road Comics: Big Work on Small Stages" (Seizer, 2010; 60 min)

Class 13, April 15: Free speech, bad words, and humor: what's the connection?

Read:

- Seizer, Susan. 2009. "On the Non-Referential Use of Obscenity in Live Stand-Up Comedy." *Anthropological Quarterly* (forthcoming, 2010).
- Christopher Hitchens, "Eschew the Taboo" (article about "the n-word") in *Slate*, 12/4/06
- Michael "Kramer" Richards' "n-word" racist rant @ The Laugh Factory 2006 on youtube
- Richard Pryor, Langston Hughes, Paul Mooney, Dick Gregory: Excerpts from *African American Humor*, ed. Mel Watkins, 2002
- Irvine, Judith T. "Insult and Responsibility: Verbal Abuse in a Wolof Village." *Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse*. Ed. Judith T Irvine & Jane H Hill. Cambridge: Cambridge U Press, 1993. 105-134.

Listen to:

- Carlin, George. *Parental Advisory: Explicit Lyrics*. U.S.: Atlantic, 1990. 27 Oct 2008 <http://www.iceboxman.com/carlin/pael.php#track4>, and the "Filthy Words" 1978 broadcast that sparked the FCC v. Pacifica ruling.
- Richard Pryor, *That Nigger's Crazy* (1974) and *Bicentennial Nigger* (1976) (Oncourse)

In-class: South Park episode on The N-Word

Class 14, April 22: Student writers' workshop (5 students)

Class 15, April 29: Student writers' workshop (4 students)

Tues., May 4 @ 7:15 p.m.: Final class meeting = final papers due for those

writing papers, and **final performance presentations!**

Omitted Classes:

SCREENING

“*The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*” (1994)

: Camp as a survival strategy: the normative performative, or gender as meta-text

Reading:

- Newton, Esther. 1972. *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*.
- Sontag, Susan. 1966. “Notes on Camp,” in *Against Interpretation*. Dell, pp. 275-292.
- Dyer, Richard. 1992. “It’s being so camp as keeps us going,” in *Only Entertainment*. Routledge, pp. 135-147.
- Dyer, Richard. 1993. “Straight Acting,” *The Matter of Images*. Routledge, pp. 133-136.

Recommended reading [on against-the-grain theatricality, and female reappropriations of camp and cross-dressing]

- Case, Sue-Ellen. 1993. “Towards a Butch-Femme Aesthetic,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, pp. 294-306.
- Davy, Kate. 1992. “Fe/male Impersonation: The Discourse of Camp,” in *Critical Theory and Performance*. Reinelt and Roach, eds., U of Michigan Press, pp. 231-247.

SCREENING

“*Blackmail*” (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1929)
“*The Incredible Shrinking Woman*” Lily Tomlin

: “Getting it” and the female spectator

Reading:

- Doane, Mary Ann. 1982. “Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator,” in *Screen* 23.3-4, Sept-Oct 1982, pp. 74-87.
- Modleski, Tania. 1988. “Rape vs. Mans/laughter: Blackmail” in *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*. NY: Methuen. Ch. 1, pp. 17-30.
- Doane, Mary Ann. 1989. “Masquerade Reconsidered: Further Thoughts on the Female Spectator,” in *Discourse* 11.1, Fall-Winter 1988-89, pp. 42-54.

Recommended reading [for clarification on the Lacanian theory of masquerade]:

- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble*, pp. 49-54