

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
ENG 181, Special Topic: Satire After Terror
Spring 2016

Instructor: Revathi Krishnaswamy
Office Location: FO 125
Telephone: (408) 924-1384
Email: Revathi.krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: MW 12-1 and by appointment
Class Time/Location: 10:30-11:45 MW, SH 413

Course Description:

How would you respond to a cartoon or a story that depicts President Obama as an ape or the Prophet Mohammed as a dog or the Pope as a goat? Would you think it's brilliant, hilarious, witty, provocative, outrageous, insulting, or blasphemous? In the wake of the Charlie Hebdo terror attacks in Paris in Jan 2015, the role of satire and its relationship to free speech, hate speech, blasphemy, national identity, race, culture, and politics has suddenly become an urgent and hotly debated issue the world over. Although this ancient genre, with roots in different classical traditions, has served as a powerful critical instrument for challenging authority and undermining the status quo in modern times, it is unclear whether and how satire (textual/visual/performance; social/political/religious) will survive in the age of terror. Is global terror radically altering the very site and ground of satire? Is globalization changing and challenging satire's critical terrain? What remain as targets for satire? Are there limits to satire? Does satire travel across the boundaries of language and culture? What makes satire succeed or fail? What is the role of the reader/audience in the determining the success, failure, or limits of satire? We will explore these and other questions by closely examining some of the best modern satire from around the world. Classes will include a combination of lecture, discussions, presentations, and workshops.

Communication:

You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU and CANVAS. Course materials as well as information about assignments and other activities will be made available through CANVAS. Although my official email and phone number

are provided above, CANVAS is the best way to communicate with me on all class related matters.

English Department Program Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature;
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to literature;
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Required Readings

Course books can be easily bought at any bookstore or online. Any edition, including ebooks are fine as long as you have access in class.

Habibi: *The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist*

Wang: *Rose, Rose, I love you*

Hauofa: *Kisses in the Nederends*

Voltaire: *Candide* (pdf online: <http://www.esp.org/books/voltaire/candide.pdf>)

Swift: *Modest Proposal (on Canvas)*

Osondu: “Voice of America”; “Waiting” (on Canvas)

Amiri: “Dog's Life”; “Shopping Spree” (on Canvas)

Rushdie: *The Prophet's Hair, Auction of Ruby Slippers* (Canvas)

Manto: “Toba Tek Singh”; “Mishtake”; “Letters to Uncle Sam” (on Canvas)

Namjoshi: *Feminist Fables* (sjsu King library electronic resource)

(From the Panchatantra, Bird Woman, Female Swan, Whore, Example, Green Slave Women, Room of His Own, Svayamvara.)

Additional material for presentations (see links to online resources on canvas)

French Revolution satirical cartoons (esp of Marie Antoinette)

Twain: *Huck Finn* and black face minstrelsy

Danish and *Charlie Hebdo* Prophet Mohammad cartoons

TV shows: The Daily Show, The Colbert Report, John Oliver, Key & Peele, SNL skits etc.

Assignments and Grading

- 1. Presentations:** You will make **two formal presentations (one individual and one group)** on assigned topics/dates (SLO 1 & 5)
 - Individual presentation: brief analysis of a popular satirical TV show (Daily Show, Colbert Report, SNL skit, Key & Peele's Obama, etc.)
 - Group presentation:
 - French Revolution satirical cartoons (esp of Marie Antoinette)
 - Mark Twain, *Huck Finn* and black face minstrelsy
 - Danish and Charlie Hebdo Prophet Mohammad Cartoons.
 - For each group presentation, the group will jointly prepare a PPT that contains important information, including main ideas and relevant images. Each group member will orally elaborate on these ideas during the presentation. Group members will also answer questions and lead the discussion. After the presentation, the PPT will be uploaded to Canvas and shared with the class.
- 2. Peer Response Reports:** You will complete and submit **five Peer Response Reports** in the template provided. You will complete these in class. You may only respond to presentations dealing with texts/authors/topics not assigned to you. Two of the reports must be on group presentations (the other three may be on individual presentations). Your report on the group presentation will comment on the group as a whole rather on a specific individual.
- 3. Papers:** You will write **two formal papers**, one at midterm and another at the end of the semester. The first will be a critical analysis paper focusing on a major work not covered in the presentation OR a creative writing piece that uses satire to comment on a major work not covered in the presentation. You may be asked to share your paper with the class. The second will be an extended research paper that deals with two or more authors/texts; this may build on your presentations (SLO 3 & 4).

Grading:	Points
Individual Presentation	150
Group Presentation	200
Critical Analysis/Creative Writing Paper	250
Research Paper	300
Peer Response Reports	100 (20x5)
Total	1000

Grading Policy:

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas conveyed. In other words, your grade will depend not

only on what you say but also on how (well) you say it. All student writing should therefore be distinguished by logical and critical thinking, rigorous textual analysis, correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

The “**A**” essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The “**B**” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “**A**” essay. The chief difference is that the “**B**” essay will show some descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The “**C**” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “**B**” essay.

The “**D**” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “**F**” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern.

Classroom Protocol & Policy

Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions are extremely important. Please arrive on time and stay for the entire class. You are responsible for all materials assigned, presented and discussed. You are encouraged to take notes in class, but you should have studied the materials before class begins. Poor attendance/participation will have negative effects on your final grade.

Since most classes will be based on group discussions, presentations and workshops it is crucial for you to keep up with the readings and take an active as well as thoughtful role in all classroom activities. Your questions, comments, insights, and interpretations are valuable no matter how outlandish they may seem. So do speak up!

Conferencing: I encourage you to visit me in my office whenever you need to discuss something, whether it is an assignment or any other difficulty you may be having with the structure and format of the class. I am completely open to criticism and suggestions because the only way I can fix things is if I know what is wrong.

Submitting work: All out of class written work will be submitted on canvas; please do not email assignments to me unless I ask you to do so. Unless you have received prior permission from me, assignments will be graded one letter grade lower for each late day. No work will be accepted beyond one week late. In-class work including presentations cannot be made up.

University Policies

Academic integrity

Students should know that the University's [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for [Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html). Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html) . [Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/) . Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material. Where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well. Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course including exam questions, PPTs, or lecture notes without instructor consent.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. [The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/).

Peer Mentor Center

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop –in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/about_us/

Tentative Schedule

2/01	M	Intro
2/03	W	Swift: "A Modest Proposal" (Canvas)
2/08	M	Satire around the world (lecture/discussion)
2/10	W	Manto: Toba Tek Singh, Mishtake/Mishtake Removed, Letters to Uncle Sam
2/15	M	Osondu: Voice of America, Waiting; Individual Prez
2/17	W	Political Satire (lecture/discussion); Individual Prez
2/22	M	Voltaire: <i>Candide</i> ; Individual Prez
2/24	W	Voltaire: <i>Candide</i> ; Individual Prez
2/29	M	French Revolution Cartoons: Group Prez
3/02	W	French Revolution Cartoons: Discussion
3/07	M	Namjoshi: <i>Feminist Fables</i> From the Panchatantra, Bird Woman, Female Swan, Whore, The Example, Green Slave Women, Room of His Own, Svayamvara.
3/09	W	Scatological Humor: Rabelais, Carnival, & Bhaktin (lecture/discussion)
3/14	M	Hauofa: <i>Kisses</i> ; Conference on Paper #1
3/16	W	Hauofa: <i>Kisses</i> ; Conference on Paper #1
3/21	M	Hauofa: <i>Kisses</i> ; Conference on Paper #1
3/23	W	Writing workshop: peer editing Paper #1 Paper #1 Due on CANVAS Fri 3/25 by 11:59 pm
3/28	M	Spring Break
3/30	W	Spring Break
4/04	M	Sharing Paper # 1
4/06	W	Mark Twain: Group Prez
4/11	M	Mark Twain: Discussion
4/13	W	Wang: <i>Rose, Rose</i>
4/18	M	Wang: <i>Rose, Rose</i>
4/20	W	Rushdie: The Prophet's Hair, Auction of Ruby Slippers (Canvas)
4/25	M	Amiri: Shopping Spree; A Dog's Life (Canvas)

4/27 W Habibi: *Secret Life*

5/02 M Habibi: *Secret Life*

5/04 W Habibi: *Secret Life*

5/09 M Prophet Mohammed Cartoons: Group Prez

5/11 W Prophet Mohammed Cartoons: Discussion

5/16 M Review; Writing Workshop: peer editing research paper
Research Paper due on CANVAS 5/18 W by 11:59 pm