

## UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON -- NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

Electronically submit this completed form with attachments in one file to the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee.

<b>COLLEGE (check one):</b>	<b>Arts and Sciences</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Business</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Education</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposal Submitted By: Gary Richards			Date Prepared: 12 September 2017			
Course Title:	Special Studies in Literature and Culture					
Department/discipline and course number*:	ENGL 394					
Prerequisites:	none					

*\*This course number must be approved by the Office of the Registrar before the proposal is submitted.*

Number of credits:	3	Will this course meet for at least 700 contact minutes for each credit hour proposed? <i>If no, provide a credit hour justification.</i>	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will this be a <i>new, repeatable</i> "special topics" course? (Do you want students to be able to take this new course more than once if the topic changes?)			NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Date of first offering of this <i>new</i> course: <b>FALL SEMESTER, year</b>		Fall 2018	
Proposed frequency of offering of the course:		Once each semester or every other semester	
List the faculty who will likely teach the course:		All fifteen members of ELC who teach literature	
Are <b>ANY new resources</b> required?	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES
<i>Document in attached impact statement</i>			

<b>This new course will be (check all that apply):</b>			
Required in the major	<input type="checkbox"/>	Required in the minor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elective in the major	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Elective in the minor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		General Elective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		General Education**	<input type="checkbox"/>

*\*\*AFTER the new course is approved, a separate proposal must be sent to the General Education Committee.*

<b>Catalog Description</b> (suggested length – less than 50 words):	
Studies in significant literary figures, movements, and topics in literature and culture. Consult <i>Schedule of Courses</i> for specific topics.	

<b>COURSE HISTORY:</b>	Was this course taught previously as a topics or experimental course?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Course Number and Title of Previous Course</b>		<b>Semester Offered</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>		
<p><b>CHECK HERE</b> if the proposed course is to be <i>equated</i> with the earlier topics or experimental offerings. If equated, students who took the earlier "topics" course will only be able to take the new course as a repeat (C- grade or lower).</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> If the proposed course has not been previously offered as a topics or experimental course, explain in the attached rationale statement why the course should be adopted even though it has not been tried out.</p>					

### REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:

1. **Rationale Statement** – Why is this course needed? What purposes will it serve?
2. **Credit Hour Justification** (if required) – explain how this course will comply with the UMW Credit Hours Policy (D.5.3)
3. **Impact Statement** – Provide details about the Library, space, staffing, budget, and technology impacts created by adding this new course. Include supporting statements from the Library, IT Department, etc. *Any change that impacts another Department must have a written statement (such as a copy of an email) from the Chair(s) agreeing to the change.*
4. **Sample Syllabus**

Department Chair Approval:

*Gary Richards*

Date:

*Oct. 31, 2017*

CCC Chair Approval:

*Don M. Baker*

Date:

11/09/2017

UCC Chair Approval:

*Paul Hartney*

Date:

11/16/17

### I. Rationale

This course is one of five new special topics courses that are being created to be keyed to the new period and literature of historically marginalized groups distributions in the major in English and the major in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing. This special topics system replaces the current special topics system of ENGL 375/376 and will allow special topics courses to be accurately read in degree audits of the newly revised majors. This particular course number will house all special topics courses that do not fit into the four other categories (pre-1800 literature, pre-1900 literature, post-1900 literature, or literature of historically marginalized groups), such as courses that span several historical periods and/or focus on broad issues, such as cultural studies.

The Department has generated a list of all special topics courses offered for the last eight years under the ENGL 375/376 system, and, if a new ENGL 394 duplicates one of those earlier courses, we will work with the Registrar on an individual course basis to equate those two courses so students cannot receive credit for the new offering.

### III. Impact Statement

No new resources are needed for this course.

### IV. Sample Syllabus:

Below is an example of a special topics course that spans several historical periods and focuses on the broad issue of humor and that was submitted under the current system. In the new system, the course would be renumbered ENGL 394A: American Humor.

#### *English 375XX: American Humor*

MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m. • Combs 139 • Spring 2012

Blog: <http://americanhumor.umwblogs.org/>

*Dr. Gary Richards*

*Office:* Combs 337

*Office Phone:* (540) 654-2365

*E-mail:* grichard@umw.edu

*Office Hours:* MWF 10-11:15 a.m. and by appointment

**Course Objectives:** This course seeks broadly to accomplish three goals: to introduce students to the basic tenants of the theories of humor and thus to allow students to understand how humor is structured, what it may reveal, and what social ends it works to achieve; to survey significant expressions of U.S. literary humor from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first century and thus to provide students with, among other things, a selective understanding of the sweep of U.S. literary history and culture; and to allow students to explore other expressions of humor within U.S. culture.

This course is geared to allow the student—and the English major in particular—to develop familiarity with:

- literary history, including an understanding of historical context and its impact on literary periods (with a focus on U.S. literary history from the eighteenth century to the present)
- literatures in English
- the major genres of literature (with attention given to novels, short stories, plays, poems, musical theater, and nonfiction essays)
- how issues of culture, race, gender, class, and historical period influence the development and interpretation of literary works (again with a focus specifically on U.S. literature from the eighteenth century to the present).

Assignments are designed so that the student—and the English major in particular—can adapt writing to a variety of purposes, contexts, and audiences and apply literary methods as a means for analyzing oral and written discourse.

**Required Texts:**

Critchley, *On Humour* (Routledge) ISBN: 978-0415251211  
Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (Norton) ISBN: 978-0393001457  
Parker, *The Portable Dorothy Parker* (Penguin): 978-0143039532  
Reed, *Flight to Canada* (Scribner) ISBN: 978-0684847504  
Richards, ed., *Early American Drama* (Penguin) ISBN: 978-0140435887  
Sondheim, Shevelove, and Gelbart, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*  
(Applause) ISBN: 978-1557830647  
Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces* (Grove Weidenfeld) ISBN: 978-0802130204  
Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (Signet) ISBN: 978-0451529589  
various texts posted to the blog

**Course Requirements:**

**Participation:** You should do all assigned reading on time, marking the text's margins with your insights. Especially because the class will not be exclusively lecture, you should consistently be prepared to enter into discussion, whether to raise an issue, question an assertion, ask for explanation, or disagree respectfully. I encourage you to carry these exchanges outside the classroom, whether to discuss something with me or to continue a debate with a classmate.

All students begin the semester with a C assigned to them for participation. During the semester, if you participate in discussion, ask relevant, provoking questions, and show a genuine enthusiasm for the class, that grade will rise. If you only occasionally participate in discussion and/or ask somewhat irrelevant questions, that grade will remain the same. If you are silent on more days than you talk or do not talk at all, attack other students, and/or consistently make irrelevant comments, that grade will drop, perhaps even dramatically.

You should attend all classes regularly and promptly. A roll sheet will be distributed each day. If you come to the class late, it is your responsibility to sign the sheet before you leave. If conditions force you to be absent, notify me ahead of time if possible; otherwise, see me immediately when you return so that we can discuss what you missed. Please note that any work done within the actual missed class session, such as an in-class quiz, cannot be made up. Also note that there is no differentiation between excused or unexcused absences except in the following cases: you are a University athlete whose participation in a sport demands that you miss class; you are otherwise involved in an official University-sponsored activity that causes you to miss class; and/or you have encountered a long-term crisis that you are negotiating with the Division of Student Affairs. In each of these cases, you should provide me written documentation of the scenario so that the absences can be accommodated. After five absences, your grade for class participation will be penalized a letter grade for each absence. If, at the end of the semester, for example, you have seven absences and your

grade for class participation is a B+, that grade will automatically drop to a D+. You can therefore seriously hurt your final grade in the class strictly on the basis of absences.

You should maintain professional behavior while in the classroom. All cell phones should be turned off, and laptops should be used only for the taking of notes. If you are otherwise detected using an electronic device during class, such as texting or emailing, I will assume that you have chosen not to participate in an engaged fashion in the day's class and therefore will consider you absent and mark you as such. Note that this also applies if your phone rings during a class session. Please see me before an individual class session begins if special circumstances demand an exception to this policy.

You should also be aware of and adhere to the specifics of the Honor System of the University of Mary Washington.

**Conferences and Office Hours:** I require you to meet with me in posted office hours or by appointment at least once during the semester. This should be in the first two weeks of class so that I can begin to recognize you and get a sense of who you are, why you are taking the class, and so forth. Moreover, it is during this meeting that you will sign up for your joke. A suggested second conference might take place in early April while you are determining the focus of popular culture analysis (See below). You are welcome to see me at other times as well. Remember that email is also a convenient way to reach me.

**Quizzes:** There will be oral quizzes every other Wednesday covering those texts since the last quiz, including those assigned for that day. Each quiz will be fifteen questions answerable with short written replies. Without exception, a quiz cannot be made up or taken early, and a missed quiz receives a zero.

**Joke:** On an assigned day, you will tell a well-rehearsed joke of your own choosing to the class. Four other persons will do the same, and the class will assess the humor of those jokes as a whole. (These sessions are designated on the syllabus as Joke Panels and will take place during the last twenty minutes of class.) This component will be considered within your grade for class participation.

**Individualized Options:** By the end of the first week of class, you should commit to one of six options that best suits your personality, talents, and learning styles.

**Option 1: Blogging.** Although all persons are free to blog as often as they wish, active blogging is not required, and some persons may use the blog simply as a resource site. You may, though, elect to be a designated active blogger, meaning that you will do at least three analytic posts where you provide a quotation from a text read in class and then offer a paragraph of close reading, at least three substantive responses to other persons' analytic posts, and at least four free posts of any sort. The last day you may blog is **Friday, May 4.**

**Option 2: Extra-curricular Events.** You may elect to attend at least four pre-approved campus and/or community lectures, readings, or events that are pertinent to humor and U.S. culture and then write two-page reviews of each of these events within one week of attendance.

**Option 3: Biographical Presentations.** You may be part of a group responsible for offering brief (no more than five-minute) biographical presentations on the humorists. The group is free to divide the presentations as it prefers, but they should be interesting, carefully documented, and able to be posted on the blog after their oral delivery in class.

**Option 4: Bulletin Board.** You may be part of a group responsible for maintaining the bulletin board outside my office door with articles and images pertinent to humor and U.S. culture. Each time you post something to the bulletin board, send me an email informing what you have done. Persons in this group

will also write individual informal four-page assessments of the trends in popular culture's discussions of humor that they have identified over the course of the semester. This assessment is due **Friday, April 27**.

**Option 5: Performance.** I have reserved one session of the Department's Thursday Poems for this class to read humorous poetry. You may be a part of this presentation and then write an informal four-page assessment of the session. This assessment is due the Monday after the presentation.

**Option 6: Creative Project.** Working either alone or in a group, you may devise a creative project that either addresses at least one of the texts read in the class or draws directly upon our discussions of humor throughout the semester. You will showcase that project to the class in an 8-minute presentation during the last week of class. This may be a work of creative writing, a dramatic reading, a video, a parody, or some other mode of interaction. Again, the project should be able to be posted on the blog after its class delivery. Please consult with me about your ideas by **Monday, April 16**.

**Joke Analysis:** You will choose a joke not previously mentioned in class to recount and then write a one-page analysis of it that draws upon the assignments read in class by Sigmund Freud and Simon Critchley. (Each author should be quoted with appropriate parenthetical documentation at least twice, but there is no need for a Works Cited page.) Please follow the model posted on the blog and, when the assignment is due on **Monday, February 6**, turn in a hard copy and email an electronic copy that will be posted on the blog.

**Humor in Literature Analysis:** You will write one three-page typed literary analysis. It may address any issue—thematic, formalistic, historical, intertextual—that strikes you as significant in a primary text assigned for a particular day; the responses should, however, be rooted in textual specifics and draw at least once each on Freud and Critchley. Please follow the model posted on the blog. Responses are due at the beginning of class and must address the reading that is assigned for that day rather than that which has already been discussed in class. The last day that you can submit this analysis is **Monday, April 2**.

**Humor in Popular Culture Analysis:** You will write one three-page analysis of humor in popular culture. Your options here are almost limitless, as topics include: humor in film (Judd Apatow's films, Woody Allen's films, Charlie Chaplin's films, parodies such as *Scary Movie* and *Another Gay Movie*), humor on television (sitcoms through the decades, commercials, cartoons such as *South Park* and *Family Guy*, parodies such as *The Daily Show* and *Saturday Night Live*), stand-up comedians, humor in the classroom, humor in politics, sexual humor, ethnic humor, visual humor, and so on. You should, however, narrow your topic to, say, one scene of a movie or a particular segment of *The Daily Show* that you can post to the blog. Then, as you did with the joke and the literary joke, analyze the humor, detailing how it is structured and what it accomplishes. Again, draw at least once each on Freud and Critchley. The last day that you can submit this analysis is **Wednesday, April 25**. Again, turn in a hard copy and email an electronic copy that will be posted on the blog.

**Final Examination:** You will take a cumulative final in-class on **Wednesday, May 2**, at 8:30 a.m. I will offer details closer to the time of the exam.

**Grading:** Through the semester, I will use a system of letter grades and pluses and minuses that correspond to the following percentages: A/95 A-/92 B+/88 B/85 B-/82 C+/78 C/75 C-/72 D+/68 D/65 F/50. An A denotes work that is truly exceptional; a B denotes work that is a strong completion of the assignment; a C denotes work that is an adequate completion of the assignment; a D denotes work that is a poor completion of the assignment; and an F denotes work that fundamentally fails to complete the project in meaningful ways. (Note that an F is different from a zero. If you do not turn in an assignment, it will receive a zero rather than an F.) If I assign a slash grade, such as a B-/C+, it is the average of the two. Thus, in this case, it would be 80%. Final grades will be assigned with the following correspondences: 93.3-100 = A; 89.5-93.2 = A-; 86.5-89.4 = B+; 83.3-86.4 = B; 79.5-83.2 = B-; 76.5-79.4 = C+; 73.3-76.4 = C; 69.5-73.2 = C-; 66.5-69.4 = D+; 63.3-66.4 = D; 0-63.2 = F. I will round up to the nearest tenth of a point, but I will not

add any point or fraction of a point to any grade other than via this rounding. Note also that at midterm I will report as “unsatisfactory” any grade that is below a C.

I will calculate final grades based on the following percentages: Participation: 10%; Quizzes: 10%; Individualized Option: 20%; Joke Analysis: 10%; Humor in Literature Analysis: 15%; Humor in Popular Culture Analysis 15%; Final Examination: 20%.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability that will impact your performance in this class, see me during the first week so that the proper documentation and accommodations may be received and made through the Office of Disability Services. You may also contact that office directly at (540) 654-1266.

## Syllabus

*Parentheses denote years; brackets denote page numbers.*

January 18: **Introduction**  
January 20: **Introduction** (continued)

### Unit One: Theorizing Humor

January 23: • Peter Gay, “Sigmund Freud: A Brief Life” in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (ix-xxiii) [optional]  
• Sigmund Freud (1856-1949), *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905) [1-45]  
January 25: Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* [45-105]  
January 27: Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* [105-139]  
  
January 30: • Simon Critchley, *On Humour* (2002) [1-52]  
February 1: **Quiz #1**  
• Critchley, *On Humour* [54-91]  
February 3: • Critchley, *On Humour* [93-111]  
**Joke Panel #1**

### Unit Two: Historicizing Humor

February 6: **Biography:** Ebenezer Cooke and Royall Tyler  
• Ebenezer Cooke (c. 1667-c. 1732), “The Sot-Weed Factor; or, A Voyage to Maryland” (1708) [see blog for posting or link]  
**Joke Analysis**  
February 8: • Royall Tyler (1757-1826), *The Contrast* (1787, 1790) in *Early American Drama* [1-41]  
February 10: • Tyler, *The Contrast* in *Early American Drama* [41-57]  
**Joke Panel #2**  
  
February 13: **Biography:** Johnson Jones Hooper and Henry Clay Lewis  
• Johnson Jones Hooper (1815-1862), “The Captain Attends a Camp-meeting” from *Some Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs, Late of the Tallapoosa Volunteers* (1845) [see blog for posting or link]  
February 15: **Quiz #2**  
• Henry Clay Lewis (1825-1850), “The Indefatigable Bear Hunter” from *Odd Leaves in the Life of a Louisiana Swamp Doctor* (1850) [see blog for posting or link]  
February 17: • Lewis, “Stealing a Baby” from *Odd Leaves* [see blog for posting or link]  
**Joke Panel #3**  
  
February 20: **Biography:** Fanny Fern

- February 22:
  - Fanny Fern (1811-1872), “Aunt Hetty on Matrimony,” “Hints to Young Wives,” “Hungry Husbands,” “Mrs. Stowe’s *Uncle Tom*,” “Apollo Hyacinth,” and “Peeps from under a Parasol” [see blog for postings or links]
  - Fern, “Male Criticism of Ladies’ Books,” “Fresh Leaves,” “A Law More Nice than Just,” “A Law More Nice than Just: Number II” [see blog for postings or links]
- February 24:
  - Fern, “Bogus Intellect” and “Fashionable Invalidism” [see blog for posting or link]**Joke Panel #4**
- February 27:
  - Biography:** Mark Twain
  - Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) (1835-1910), *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (1889) [1-101]
- February 29:
  - Quiz #3**
  - Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* [102-201]
- March 2:
  - Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* [201-238]**Joke Panel #5**
- March 5-9 Spring Break**
- March 12:
  - Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee* [239-343]
- March 14:
  - Biography:** Dorothy Parker
  - Dorothy Parker (1893-1967), from *Enough Rope* (1926): “Unfortunate Coincidence” [96], “Comment” [96], “Inventory” [96-97], “De Profundis” [99], “Résumé” [99], “They Part” [99-100], “Social Note” [104], “One Perfect Rose” [104-5], “Men” [109], “News Item” [109], “Observation” [112], “Fighting Words” [114]; from *Sunset Gun* (1928): “Fable” [219], “Oscar Wilde” [220], “Harriet Beecher Stowe” [220], “Alfred, Lord Tennyson” [221], “Bohemia” [223], “Frustration” [231], “Rhyme against Living” [239]
- March 16:
  - Parker, from *Death and Taxes* (1931): “The Flaw in Paganism” [298], “Cherry White” [299], “Sweet Violets” [310], “Ballade of a Talked-off Ear” [314-15], “Autumn Valentine” [317]**Joke Panel #6**
- March 19:
  - Parker, “Arrangement in Black and White” [19-23], “The Wonderful Old Gentleman” [52-64], “A Telephone Call” [119-24], and “You Were Perfectly Fine” [151-54]
- March 21:
  - Quiz #4**
  - Parker, “Just a Little One” [241-45] and “From the Diary of a New York Lady” [327-31]
- March 23:
  - Biography:** John Kennedy Toole
  - John Kennedy Toole (1937-1969), *A Confederacy of Dunces* (1980) [1-39 or Chapter 1]**Joke Panel #7**
- March 26:
  - Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces* [40-140 or Chapters 2-5]
- March 28:
  - Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces* [141-246 or Chapters 6-9]
- March 30:
  - No Class (I will be presenting at the Society for the Study of Southern Literature)**
- April 2:
  - Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces* [247-404 or Chapters 10-14]**Last Possible Submission for Humor in Literature Analysis**
- April 4:
  - Quiz #5**
  - Biography:** Ishmael Reed
  - Ishmael Reed (b. 1938), *Flight to Canada* (1976) [1-41 or Chapters 1-5]
- April 6:
  - Reed, *Flight to Canada* [43-70 or Chapters 6-10]**Joke Panel #8**

- April 9: • Reed, *Flight to Canada* [71-179 or Chapters 11-29]
- April 11: **Biography:** Stephen Sondheim, Burt Shevelove, and Larry Gelbart  
 • Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930), Burt Shevelove (1915-1982), and Larry Gelbart (1928-2009),  
*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962) [11-84]
- April 13: **Joke Panel #9**  
 • Sondheim, Shevelove, and Gelbart, *A Funny Thing Happened ...* [101-134]
- April 16: • Sondheim, Shevelove, and Gelbart, *A Funny Thing Happened ...* (continued)  
**Conferences on Creative Projects Option**

### Unit Three: Personalizing Humor

- April 18: **Quiz #6**  
 [Texts for discussion to be determined by the class]
- April 20: **Joke Panel #10**  
 [Texts for discussion to be determined by the class]
- April 23: **Presentations of Creative Projects**
- April 25: **Presentations of Creative Projects**  
**Last Possible Submission for Humor in Popular Culture Analysis**
- April 27: **Presentations of Creative Projects (Kemp Symposium)**
- May 2: **Final Examination (8:30-11:00 a.m.)**