Goals and Objectives
The Capstone Seminar enables senior Communication Studies majors to draw together various strands of their undergraduate work in the School while learning about an advanced topic on which a COMS faculty member conducts research. The topics therefore vary among faculty while providing a common set of intellectual challenges to our graduating majors. At the end of this course you will be able to:

1. Draw on theoretical readings and case studies in class to explain how humor differs from other modes of communication
2. Use theoretical readings and case studies in class to describe key rhetorical traditions and practices of American humor (written, oral, and graphic)
3. Use theoretical readings and case studies in class to explain how humor has symbolized and continues to symbolize specific American socio-political issues, including race, region, gender, and democracy.
4. Apply course materials and understandings to a case study of your own choosing, and write your insights in a thoroughly argued, well-written, and appropriately documented essay.
5. Apply individual and group communication skills—including critical analysis and development of arguments, collaboration, oral presentation, leadership of and participation in group discussion—to the seminar setting.

Study Materials (Books, Articles, Web Sites, DVD)
Everyone will need to acquire the following materials, available at the Court Street bookstores:

- Cho, Margaret. *I’m the One that I Want*. New York: Fox Lorber, 2000. DVD.

Everyone will also need to acquire ONE of the following, depending on your theoretical presentation & discussion group. These books have been ordered in more limited quantities (as “optional”) at the various Court Street bookstores:


In addition, an electronic course pack of required and supplementary materials is available in the Bibliography section of our Blackboard site at [http://blackboard.ohiou.edu](http://blackboard.ohiou.edu).
Course Requirements

daily understanding checks (16 @ 2% each) 30%
daily contributions to seminar discussions (graded twice) 20%
group presentation on humor theory 10%
group leadership of humor theory discussion 5%
group presentation on humor example 10%
group leadership of humor example discussion 5%
final essay proposal 5%
final paper (10-12 pp.) 25%

Grading

All work will be graded A-F, and numerical equivalents (4=A, 3.33=B+, etc.) will be posted in the online gradebook of our Blackboard site. For some inexplicable reason, the Blackboard gradebook converts all grades to percentages, which are irrelevant to the A-F system, in which 75%=3/4=B. Do not despair!!

Multiply your Weighted Total XX% by 4 to reconver the percentages to the 4.0 scale; then divide by the percent of work included in your grade to date to determine the letter equivalent at any given point: WT% * 4 ÷ ( % to date)=letter equiv.

Grading criteria for assignments are identified on each assignment sheet. Grading for papers, presentations, and discussions follows the general guidelines below. Pluses and minuses express achievement between these categories.

C=2.0 Your written work or presentation is basically accurate and answers the question or follows instructions, but (1) lacks a clearly stated thesis, (2) lacks relevant supporting arguments, (3) is more descriptive than critical or analytical, OR (4) is not well organized.

Your comments and questions in seminar discussions show basic knowledge of the reading assignment OR consist mainly of general or short answers to questions.

B=3.0 Your written work or presentation is mainly accurate, follows instructions, and contains relevant arguments in support of a thesis. However, your analysis (1) is fairly general, (2) contains some errors, OR (3) is more implicit than explicit in its argumentation or linkages to the concerns of this course.

Your comments or questions in discussions show detailed knowledge of the reading assignment OR move the seminar forward by offering some insights into the reading assignment or discussion topic.

A=4.0 In addition to the virtues of a B assignment, your written work or presentation incorporates multiple examples from assigned readings and perhaps other sources to build a thorough, thoughtful, and creative or sophisticated argument tied to the concerns of this course.

Your comments or questions in discussions show deep understanding of the reading assignment advance OR the seminar substantially by offering deep insights into the reading assignment or discussion topic.

D=1.0 Your written work or presentation (1) demonstrates a limited facility with concepts from our reading and classwork, (2) veers from the topic or lacks significant elements of the assignment, OR (3) contains many grammatical, mechanical, or spelling errors.

You participate infrequently in seminar discussions OR your comments and questions show little understanding with the reading. This is the lowest passing grade.

F=0 Your written work or presentation (1) demonstrates little understanding of our reading and classwork, (2) is substantially inaccurate or incomplete, OR (3) contains numerous grammatical, mechanical, or spelling errors.

You do not participate in seminar discussions OR your comments and questions show little familiarity of the reading. This is not a passing grade.
Policies

As a seminar, this course is based on the inquiry model of education, not the transmission model. Our goal is to explore, investigate, and probe ideas rather than simply to dispense or acquire information, though of course inquiry depends on your acquiring substantial amounts of information. However, unlike a lecture-discussion course, a seminar requires students to assume responsibility for their own learning both in and out of the classroom in three ways:
1. by reading and thinking carefully in preparation for each class,
2. by asking and responding to questions every day,
3. by collaborating in the preparation of presentations and discussions, and
4. by periodically assuming leadership of the seminar.

I have set up the syllabus and course activities with these goals in mind, and my role is to keep us on a productive course.

Readings and other study materials should be completed by the dates indicated on the schedule. Late work may be penalized by a lower grade. You are responsible for material covered and assignments given in your absence. For obvious reasons, daily understanding checks, group presentations, and group discussion leadership cannot be made up. If you are absent on the day that an assignment is due, you will receive a 0 for that assignment. Exceptions for emergencies will be determined on an individual basis.

Academic dishonesty is antithetical to the spirit of a university. The most common forms of academic dishonesty are cheating (borrowing from another student’s work on a test or other assignment) and plagiarism (representing ideas from research as your own either intentionally or through inadequate paraphrasing or documentation). Any academic dishonesty in this course will result in an F for the course and referral to University Judiciaries.

You will need to check your Oak email and the Blackboard site between each class meeting for announcements and materials. Please advise me if you have trouble accessing any features of the Blackboard site, which requires your Oak login and password for access; email sent via Blackboard goes to your Oak account. I have been asked by the dean to remind you that email forwarding from Oak to other systems is imperfect, and the university considers you responsible for any messages sent to your Oak account, so you will want to check it regularly. Please note that I give priority to email messages having ohiou.edu addresses. I may need 24 to 48 hours to respond to messages; please telephone if your message is urgent.

I care whether you find this course worthwhile and enjoyable. Questions about course materials and procedures are always welcome during class. Please see or call me during office hours to discuss more personal concerns about our work together.