

PSYO 362:
Psychology of Humour
Course Outline
2019 Winter Term 2

Professor: Dr. Liane Gabora

Location: ART 114

Day & Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2 – 3:30 PM

Professor Contact Information:

Office: FIPKE 235

Phone: (250) 807-9849

Email: liane.gabora@ubc.ca (you must put PSYO362 in subject line or else I may not respond)

Office hours: Mondays 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM and Wednesday 12:30 – 1:30 PM or by appointment

Teaching Assistant Contact Information:

Name: Kirthana Ganesh

Email: kirthana.ganesh@gmail.com

Office hours: On request

Calendar Description: PSYO 362 Psychology of Humour (3)

Cognitive, social, and biological perspectives on humour and comedy. Applications of humour research in educational, business, and clinical settings, as well as in everyday life. [3-0-0].

Prerequisites

Two of PSYO 219, PSYO 220, PSYO 230, PSYO 241, PSYO 252, PSYO 270, PSYO 271, PSYO 298, PSYO 299 or Six credits of 200-level psychology. If you do not have the prerequisites please speak with the professor at your earliest convenience. Students who remain in the course without written consent of the professor will fail the course.

Course Format

Each week (more or less) will focus on a different aspect of or approach to the psychology of humour, loosely following the textbook. There may be the occasional video or guest speaker. Your participation in class is welcome!

Course Description and Objectives

In this course, you will learn about different approaches to the study of humour and the cognitive mechanisms underlying the generation and understanding of humour. We will use examples from cartoons, animation, film, and stand-up comedy, as well as spontaneous, unintentional humour. The course will also cover issues such as what makes something or someone funny, enhancing communication through humour, and appealing to different demographics. It is hoped the course will fuel insight into humour and enhance awareness of the role it can play in the student's own life.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history of scholarly research on humor
- Demonstrate an understanding of the cognitive, social, personality, and biological aspects of humour and comedy
- Demonstrate an understanding of how humor research is applied in educational, business, health, and clinical settings
- Explain what makes particular instances of everyday humour funny, using theories and research on humour discussed in class and in the textbook
- Gain an enhanced awareness of opportunities for humour as they arise in real life contexts, and of the impact of humour on mood, perspective, and social dynamics

Evaluation

The learning outcome of gaining an appreciation and understanding of the history of scholarly research on humor, cognitive, social, and biological perspectives on humour and comedy, and applications of humour research in educational, business, and clinical settings, will be evaluated through performance on a midterm and a final exam. The learning outcome of gaining an appreciation and understanding humour as it arises in everyday life will be evaluated through a humour diary that the student will work on throughout the semester.

Humor Diary: 30% (Due beginning of last day of class)

Midterm: 30%, *Tentative Date: TBA*

Final Exam: 40% (Comprehensive, *i.e.* covers material prior to midterm)

Some years I allow those who want to improve their midterm mark to do a comedy sketch + analysis or presentation of a peer-reviewed article in front of the class, or do a five-minute open mic standup comedy routine at Dakota's Comedy Club (info at end of syllabus). We will decide together when you get the midterm back if you would like to include either or both of these options.

Grading Practices

Faculties, departments, and schools reserve the right to scale grades in order to maintain equity among sections and conformity to University, faculty, department, or school norms. Students should therefore note that an unofficial grade given by an instructor might be changed by the faculty, department, or school. Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record.

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,41,90,1014>

Humour Diary

You are asked to keep a record of humorous events you witness, come across, or participate in, between January 4 and April 8 (first and last days of class). The humorous events can come from

everyday life, social media, movies, TV, etc. The events should be presented in chronological order. For each event you are asked to (1) give the date and location where it occurred, and describe it in sufficient detail so as to convey why it was funny, (2) analyze it as best you can using material covered in this class up to that date, and (3) evaluate how funny you think it was and why. You are invited to include anything that you think is relevant, such as the origin of the humour, whether it was spontaneous or scripted, and how it made you (and/or others) feel. It is hoped that your humour diary will include at least a few entries per week.

Format. Your Humor Diary must be submitted as a typed, printed, bound document (a staple or reliable clip is ok), using 12-point Times New Roman font. It should begin with a title page labeled “PSYO362 Humor Diary” with your name, student number, and date submitted. Your name and student number should be on the top right corner of every page. It is essential to proofread and revise prior to submission to eliminate awkward phrasing and spelling / grammar errors. Failure to follow these instructions could result in a mark of zero.

Evaluation. Your Humor Diary will be evaluated according to three criteria: (1) *Effort and Comprehensiveness* (35%). How many entries are there? Have they been described in sufficient detail to understand what was humorous? (2) *Analysis and Insight* (50%). To what extent have you successfully applied principles learned in this class to humour as it arises in your own life? (3) *Organization and Style* (15%). Is it well-organized and free of awkward phrasing, spelling and grammatical errors?

Further details on the Humour Diary, including an example, are available in an accompanying document.

Required Readings

Martin, R. A. & Ford, T. E. (2018). *The psychology of humor: An integrative approach, 2nd Edition*. New York, NY: Elsevier.

Extra Reading #1: Gabora, L. & Kitto, K. (2017). Toward a quantum theory of humor. *Frontiers in Physics* (Section: Interdisciplinary Physics), 4(53). doi: 10.3389/fphy.2016.00053
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphy.2016.00053/full>

Extra Reading #2: Gabora, L., Thomson, S., & Kitto, K. (2018). A layperson introduction to the quantum approach to humor. Chapter 12 in W. Ruch (Ed.) *Humor: Transdisciplinary approaches* (pp. 317-332). Bogotá Colombia: Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia Press. isbn: 978-958-760-085-8; isbn (digital): 978-958-760-086-5; doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.16925/9789587600865>
<https://people.ok.ubc.ca/lgabora/papers/Gabora-Thomson-Kitto-chapter.pdf>

Topics and Weekly Readings

*** NOTE SLIGHT CHANGE IN ORDER FROM TEXTBOOK ***

1. **Chapter 1. Introduction to the Psychology of Humor (Read by Jan. 8)**
2. **Chapter 2. Classic Theories of Humor (Read by Jan. 13)**
3. **Chapter 3. Contemporary Theories of Humor (Read by Jan. 20)**
4. **Chapter 5. The Cognitive Psychology of Humor (Read by Jan. 27)**

5. Extra Readings 1 & 2: Quantum Theory of Humor (Read by Feb. 3)

6. Chapter 8. The Social Psychology of Humor (Read by Feb. 10)

Midterm (Feb. 12)

Family Day + Winter Break (Feb. 17 - 21)

7. Chapter 4. Personality Approaches to Sense of Humor (Read by Feb. 24)

8. Chapter 6. The Physiological Psychology of Humor and Laughter (Read by Mar. 2)

9. Chapter 7. The Developmental Psychology of Humor (Read by Mar. 9)

10. Chapter 9. The Clinical Psychology of Humor and Mental Health (Read by Mar. 16)

11. Chapter 10. The Health Psychology of Humor: Humor and Physical Health (Read by Mar. 23)

12. Chapter 11. Applications of Humor in Education and the Workplace / Review (Read by Mar. 30)

13. Loose Ends & Review (Apr. 6 & 8)

Exam Period: April 14-29

Policy Concerning Late Assignments or Missed Exams

If the date for handing in an assignment is missed, the mark will be reduced by 3% for each calendar day (or part thereof). Exams MUST be written during the designated times. If a student anticipates missing an exam or assignment due to illness or some other reason, I MUST be contacted beforehand, and you will be required to provide a doctor's note before alternative arrangements will be made. If I am not available, leave a message that includes your reason and a phone number where you can be reached. Failure to do so may mean that you will not be allowed to sit the exam or receive a mark for that component. All students who miss or plan to miss a scheduled final examination will be sent to the office of the Associate Dean, Curriculum and Students.

Policy Concerning Computers

Computers are allowed in the classroom on a tentative basis. If I see or hear of anyone using their computer for Facebook, email, or *anything other than taking notes*, the privilege of using a computer in class will be taken away for everyone. Computers are absolutely not allowed during exams.

Disability Services

If you require disability-related accommodations to meet the course objectives, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Resources located in the Student Development and Advising area of the student services building. For more information about Disability Resources or academic accommodations, please visit the website at:

<http://web.ubc.ca/okanagan/students/disres/welcome.html>

Final Examinations

Except in the case of examination clashes and hardships (three or more formal examinations scheduled within a 24-hour period) or unforeseen events, students will be permitted to apply for out-of-time final examinations only if they are representing the University, the province, or the country in a competition or performance; serving in the Canadian military; observing a religious rite; working to support themselves or their family; or caring for a family member. Unforeseen events include (but may not be limited to) the following: ill health or other personal challenges that arise during a term and changes in the requirements of an ongoing job. Further information on Academic Concession can be found under Policies and Regulation in the *Okanagan Academic Calendar*

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>

Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the policies and procedures, may be found at

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>. If you have any questions about how academic integrity applies to this course, please consult with your professor.

UBC Okanagan Disability Resource Centre

The Disability Resource Centre ensures educational equity for students with disabilities and chronic medical conditions. If you are disabled, have an injury or illness and require academic accommodations to meet the course objectives, please contact Earllene Roberts, the Diversity Advisor for the Disability Resource Centre located in the University Centre building (UNC 214).

Contact: UNC 214

Phone: 250.807.9263

Email earllene.roberts@ubc.ca

Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/drc

Ombuds Office

The Ombuds Office offers independent, impartial, and confidential support to students in navigating UBC policies, processes, and resources, as well as guidance in resolving concerns related to fairness.

UBC Vancouver Ombuds Office email: ombuds.office@ubc.ca

Web: www.ombudsoffice.ubc.ca

UBC Okanagan Equity and Inclusion Office

UBC Okanagan is a place where every student, staff and faculty member should be able to study and work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. UBC prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of the following grounds: age, ancestry, colour, family status, marital status, physical or mental disability, place of origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or unrelated criminal conviction. If you require assistance related to an issue of equity, discrimination or harassment, or to get involved in human rights work on campus, please contact the Equity and Inclusion Office.

Contact: UNC 216

Phone: 250.807.9291

Email: equity.ubco@ubc.ca

Web: www.equity.ok.ubc.ca

Health & Wellness

At UBC Okanagan health services to students are provided by Health and Wellness. Nurses, physicians and counsellors provide health care and counselling related to physical health, emotional/mental health and sexual/reproductive health concerns. As well, health promotion, education and research activities are provided to the campus community. If you require assistance with your health, please contact Health and Wellness for more information or to book an appointment.

Contact: UNC 337

Web: www.students.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellness

SAFEWALK

Don't want to walk alone at night? Not too sure how to get somewhere on campus? Call Safewalk at 250-807-8076. For more information, see: www.security.ok.ubc.ca

Dakoda's Comedy Club

Address: 1574 Harvey Ave, Kelowna, BC V1Y 6G2

Phone: (250) 860-9500

Email: dakodasbeer@gmail.com

Web: <http://dakodas.com/>