

“Who’s laughing now?” – Humor as Resistance and Oppression in US-American Culture

Humor is just another defense against the universe. (Mel Brooks)

Taking up Mel Brook's view of humor, this year's students and graduate conference will regard humor as a discursive strategy which can be used to communicate, reify, transgress, and negotiate political, cultural, and social differences. The focus of this conference will be on U.S. American traditions and forms of humor that can be found in media as diverse as literature, film, television, radio, newspapers, and the Web.

Given the omnipresence of comedy shows, sitcoms or political satires as well as the popularity of comedy as a literary and filmic genre, we hope to attract a variety of original contributions to humor in its multiple manifestations.

Humor can be used to exert power over others by turning them into laughingstocks, making them appear ridiculous, and thereby silencing them. In contrast, humor can also be a potent strategy to expose power, to question and subvert it. Humor can be a brutal weapon that masks its violence under the guise of 'just being funny,' but it can also destabilize existing power relations and hierarchies.

In this conference, we hope to explore how, why, and to what effect humor is employed in U.S. American culture. What is humor? Why are certain things funny while others are not? What can humor accomplish and what are its limits? Who is supposed to laugh about whom? Who is not laughing? Who has the last laugh?

The Annual Students & Graduate Conferences Series

The conference series sets out to support and foster the students' interest in academic exchange and discussions. It provides students of all levels (undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate) with a space for the discussion of academic topics in the absence of the usual hierarchy often found in university seminars.

More information about this and previous conferences can be found here:

<http://www2.hu-berlin.de/amerika/asc/index.html>

We thank our sponsors and supporters

American Studies Program, HU Berlin
IES Abroad Berlin

Organizers

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Information

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All panels will take place in room 3119
Unter den Linden 6

All times s.t.

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For possible changes to the program, please consult the web site of the conference at <http://www2.hu-berlin.de/amerika/asc/theory2010/index.html>

Institut für Anglistik und
Amerikanistik
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

10th Annual Students and
Graduate Conference

**“Who’s laughing now?” –
Humor as Resistance and
Oppression in US-American
Culture**

November 10 – 12, 2011

Unter den Linden 6, 10099 Berlin,
Room 3119

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



Thursday, 10 November 2011

until 15:00 Arrival; Registration

15:00 Welcome!

Thomas Wagenknecht, HU Berlin
Alexandra Wagner, HU Berlin

15:30-17:00 PANEL 1: Post-9/11 Humor*

Karolina Golimowska, HU Berlin

Funny and Illuminating or Offensive, Tasteless and Anti-American? Post-9/11 Editorial Cartooning in the U.S.

Julia Lange, Hamburg

The Function of Humor in the Representation of 9/11

Seth Thomas Hulse, Siegen

The Shifting Continuum of Journalism Ethics

Moderation: Ulrike Schneeberg, HU Berlin

17:00 – 17:30 Coffee break

17:30-19:00 PANEL 2: Gendered Humor in US-American TV Shows

Katja Linke, HU Berlin

Queering the Mainstream or Mainstreaming the Queer in the Sitcom *Ellen*

Katrin Horn, Erlangen-Nürnberg

Can (Post)Feminism be fun? Women and Humor in *30 Rock*

Anika Biermann, HU Berlin

Stereotyping the Laugh Track: The Depiction of Gender in US Sitcom

Moderation: Michael Duszat, HU Berlin

20:00 Conference Dinner (Restaurant Nolle)

Friday, 11 November 2011

10:00-11:30 PANEL 3: Affective Impact of Humor

Eva Brunner, HU Berlin

Laughing at Oneself. Exploring Anne Sexton's Use of Humor

Benjamin Betka, Frankfurt/M.

Screening Humor, Mediating Affect, and New Face Values – A Jagged (Punch) Line from Bob Hope towards Sarah Silverman

Silvia Chirila, HU Berlin

Humor and Paradox in the Novels of Toni Morrison

Moderation: Amina Grunewald, HU Berlin

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee break

12:00-13:30 PANEL 4: Queer Politics and Humor

Sandra Beyer, Frankfurt/M.

Play Gay: Stereotyping and Defiance in Post-Stonewall Comedies

Stefanie Krüger, HU Berlin

Hahaha, that's disgusting! – Depictions of Non-Normative Sexual Relations in Contemporary U.S. Serial Drama

Edward Barry, HU Berlin

Humor, Transgression and the Queer

Moderation: Alexandra Wagner, HU Berlin

13:30 – 15:30 Lunch Break (Mensa, HU Berlin)

15:30-17:00 Panel 5: Horror and Violence

Marlon Lieber, Frankfurt/M.

Humor between Symbolic Violence and Subversion in Ralph Ellison and Colson Whitehead

Daniel S. Mayfield, FU Berlin

Beyond Laughter? Cynicism in Palahniuk's *Fight Club* and Ellis' *American Psycho*

Anda Dimitriu, Bucharest

When Horror turns to Humor in Jim Sharman's *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*

Moderation: David Rose, HU Berlin

17:00 – 17:30 Coffee break

17:30-19:00 Panel 6: The Creaking of the Social Machine

Ulrike Schneeberg, HU Berlin

Humour and Changing Constructions of Parenthood in Picturebooks

Katrin Frisch, HU Berlin

Laughter as a Critique of a System in Crisis in *Calvin and Hobbes*

Diana Jahn, HU Berlin

Laughter as a Critique of a System in Crisis in *The Simpsons*

Moderation: Katja Linke, HU Berlin

Evening Dinner/Get Together (Café/Bar "Aufsturz")

Saturday, 12 November 2011

10:00-12:00 Panel 7: Parody, Satire and Irony

Luvenga Kopp, Frankfurt/M.

Satirizing Satire: Symbolic Violence and Subversion in Spike Lee's *Bamboozled*

Kathleen Ayn Russell, HU Berlin

The cause and effect of the „Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear“

Lukas Etter, Bern

“Our Story Thus Far” .- Elements of Parody in Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan – The Smartest Kid on Earth*

Roxana Ghita, Timisoara

Kvetch, Counterresistance and Transgression in Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*

Moderation: Hannes Schaser; FU Berlin

12:00 – 12:30 Coffee break

12:30-13:30 Panel 8: Humor in Immigrant Cultures

Dietlind Falk, Düsseldorf

Humor in Immigration Narratives of 21st Century America

Maria D. Blaim, Rostock

Laughing With an Accent: Humor in Iranian-American Writing as Self-Inscription into American Culture

Moderation: Karolina Golimowska, HU Berlin

13:30 - 14:00 Conclusion and Goodbye!

* All panels will take place in room 3119, Unter den Linden 6

(all times s.t.)