



ENG 697: Language and Humor, Spring 2019
01W-22521: online
01B-22518: R 4:30 – 7:00pm, EDS103



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Office Hours:

online daily 10am–10pm

office W 2–4pm

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Note: This syllabus will be revised during the semester as deemed necessary.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

All materials will be made available online via myLeoOnline.

Course Description

This advanced graduate course will let us read about, discuss, research, and write about the linguistics of humor. We will read original research papers, some by the instructors, others by further leading scholars in the field. While humor studies is a multidisciplinary undertaking, this course will focus on linguistic approaches to humor from all relevant subdisciplines, in particular semantics and pragmatics, but also cognitive linguistics, phonology, sociolinguistics, literary and translation studies, and computational linguistics.

This course is not an entertainment event; humor is an object of serious study. While it has no inherent positive or negative function, the language and themes of humor are often of a nature that is objectionable to some people. Students need to be aware that some of the material we'll investigate might appear offensive to them, but are reminded that in this course we're studying humor scientifically and not telling jokes for effect (see statement in the appendix.)

The main assessment item for this class is a research project on language and humor that you will work on throughout the semester in various stages, closely coached by one or both of the instructors. There will be a mini-conference in March 2019 at TAMUC, where you will present an earlier stage of your project. After you proceed to the advanced stages, the ideal ultimate outcome for your project will be a presentation at the 2019 Conference of the International Society for Humor Studies at the University of Texas at Austin in late June 2019: www.tamuc.edu/ishs2019. This Conference is co-organized by the two instructors of this course.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will become familiar with various linguistic theories of, methodologies for, and applications to humor research.
2. Students will demonstrate the skills required to research a linguistic topic related to humor and document these skills in a research project.
3. Students will become active participants in the course, not only in staying current with readings and other assignments, but also in sharing their understanding of the material as assessed by reading responses and contributions to in-class discussions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods, Activities, and Assessment

Readings

The syllabus is based on a selection of readings made available electronically. A close reading of the expected material and preparation of questions are expected and necessary for the comprehension of the course material.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments must be submitted electronically in MS Word format (.doc, .docx) by their deadlines, usually into an assignment item on myLeoOnline. No make-ups are given. Assigned homework may or may not be graded, at our discretion. You should not submit homework by email. The main project will go through several phases, all of which have to be completed for a final grade.

Research Project

One larger research project will go through several stages, including a proposal, several drafts and revisions, and individual conferencing with the instructors. Depending on where your interests lie and where you are in your graduate career, the paper documenting the research project can take on several formats. Ideally, it is intended to result in a conference presentation (see above) and an original publishable paper, but a detailed report of a piece of software you write or an in-depth review paper are acceptable too. Further formats can be discussed on an individual basis.

Grading Policy

If you have completed all assignments by their due dates, in particular the larger project, and satisfied the attendance requirements, and all other requirements stated in this specific or the departmental syllabus, your grade for this course will be determined as follows:

A	≥ 90%	research project	80%
B	89-80%	participation	20%
C	79-70%		
D	69-60%		
F	< 59%		

Attendance Policy

For the face-to-face section, students are responsible for attending class and keeping a log of their attendance. Please note that this means that no excuse will be accepted for failure to comply with the class requirements. Students needing particular attention should notify the instructors during the first week. If you miss a class you are responsible to receive the information you missed or be prepared for surprises.

Tentative Calendar

week 1	course introduction
week 2	humor competence vs. performance
week 3	theories of humor
week 4	incongruity and resolution
week 5	semiotics of humor
week 6	semantics of humor
week 7	pragmatics of humor
week 8	puns
week 9	discourse analysis
week 10	sociolinguistics
week 11	literary humor
week 12	translation and humor
week 13	computational humor
week 14	humor performance
week 15	wrap-up

Note that this schedule is purely tentative and provided as a rough idea of how we will distribute class time. Changes can and will be made in relation to our progress and research interests.

TECHNOLOGY, COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Browser support

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

Desktop Support

Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)	Maintenance Browser Version(s)
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A
Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

Tablet and Mobile Support

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest
Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version. Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
 - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
 - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
 - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- You must have a:
 - Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
 - Speakers or headphones.

- *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
<http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.

Pop-ups are allowed.

JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
 - [Adobe Reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader/) <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - [Adobe Flash Player](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (version 17 or later) <https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
 - [Adobe Shockwave Player](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/) <https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>
 - [Apple Quick Time](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Brightspace Support

Need Help?

Student Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words “[click here](#)” to submit an issue via email.



System Maintenance

D2L runs monthly updates during the last week of the month, usually on Wednesday. The system should remain up during this time unless otherwise specified in an announcement. You may experience minimal impacts to performance and/or look and feel of the environment.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

I aim to respond to emails within 48h and grade assignments within one week. The best way to reach me is with a professional email that includes “ENG 205” in the subject.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Students are responsible for attending class and keeping a log of their attendance. Please note that this means that no excuse will be accepted for failure to comply with the class requirements. No make-up quizzes will be given or late assignments accepted. Students needing particular attention should notify the instructor during the first week. If you miss a class you are responsible to receive the information you missed or you have to be prepared for surprises.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html)
<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).
<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Appendix

I hereby attest that I have received, read and understood the complete syllabus for ENG 697 *Language and Humor*. I have been offered a chance to ask questions about it to my satisfaction.

I have been made aware that this class, because of its subject matter, will at times deal with topics that are or may be considered offensive, obscene, sexually explicit, disparaging of minorities, politically incorrect, and/or otherwise inappropriate for exposure other than to adults. While the instructor will avoid any unnecessary exposure to such materials, students should be aware that the class may examine such materials. Two important points should be kept in mind: a) metalinguistic distance: there is a difference between saying "let us examine the claim that Mr X is crazy" and saying "Mr X is crazy." In the latter case the speaker is responsible for the truth and accuracy of his/her claim, while in the former he/she is not. b) critical distance: there is a difference between telling an obscene joke for the enjoyment of its obscenity and using an obscene joke as a topic of discussion of the role of obscenity in the humorous effect. In any case, students who feel that a given subject is not acceptable for examination will be given other topics. Students should also be aware that the materials that will be viewed may contain nudity and sexual situations, which may be considered offensive.

By signing the present syllabus and staying in class beyond this point I acknowledge that I have been warned as to the presence of controversial material in the course and that I have freely and deliberately chosen to view, read, and otherwise examine said material.

Name

Signature

Date