

# LE300R: Ethics and Psychology of Humor

## Interdisciplinary and Integrative Learning Capstone Seminar

**Spring 2015**

**Professor Adam Potthast**

### **Mission Statement**

Park University provides access to a quality higher education experience that prepares a diverse community of learners to think critically, communicate effectively, demonstrate a global perspective and engage in lifelong learning and service to others.

### **Vision Statement**

Park University, a pioneering institution of higher learning since 1875, will provide leadership in quality, innovative education for a diversity of learners who will excel in their professional and personal service to the global community.

<b>Semester Dates</b>	January 12, 2015 to May 8, 2015
<b>Drop Date</b>	January 19, 2015
<b>Withdrawal Date</b>	March 26, 2015
<b>Class Days</b>	Tuesday/Thursday
<b>Class Time</b>	11:35 to 12:50
<b>Classroom Location</b>	CO 202
<b>Credit Hours</b>	3
<b>Faculty Name</b>	Adam Potthast
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:Adam.Potthast@park.edu">Adam.Potthast@park.edu</a>
<b>Faculty Title</b>	Associate Professor of Philosophy
<b>Earned Degrees/Certification</b>	PhD in Philosophy, University of Connecticut, 2005 MA in Philosophy, University of Connecticut, 2000
<b>Office Information</b>	Copley 229.

My Office Hours this semester are 2:30-4:30  
Tuesdays, 10-12 Wednesdays, and by appointment.

If I'm not there and you think I should have been there, send me an email or give me a call at 8165846853.

### **Course Description**

This course is an interdisciplinary seminar on the nature of humor. We will examine humor from several disciplinary perspectives and attempt to understand it as a whole, as well as how it affects our personal, professional, and academic lives.

LE300R Integrative and Interdisciplinary Learning Capstone: Ethics & Psychology of Humor in Popular Culture - A seminar for the Liberal Education program, LE300 requires students to integrate the Park University Literacies, synthesizing diverse perspectives to achieve interdisciplinary understanding and exploring the relationships among academic knowledge, professional pursuits, and the responsibilities of local and global citizenship. 3:0:3

## Educational Philosophy

My entire educational philosophy is built around the idea that a university education is about learning. I believe there is no use to taking courses unless you are planning on learning and actually learn through courses. All of the assignments in my courses are about demonstrating that this learning happens. This is why I take such a strong line on plagiarism and giving opportunities for further learning.

I believe that philosophy can be a practical and liberating skill for people in their everyday lives, and I teach it with a mind to that end. Of course, it's also good for investigating the deepest issues that humanity has contemplated for thousands of years. I also teach it with that end in mind. I also believe that education is a team sport. I can't teach you anything you don't already want to learn at some level and you'll learn it best if you try to become interested in philosophy for its own sake rather than the grade.

Finally, I believe in prior planning and limiting surprises and bias. You'll always know what's required of you on an exam or a paper ahead of time. Education shouldn't be like the lottery. (Which you shouldn't play, because it's a waste of money.)

## Additional Resources Online

[Online Classroom Technical Support](#)- For technical assistance with the Online classroom, email [helpdesk@parkonline.org](mailto:helpdesk@parkonline.org) or call the helpdesk at **866-301-PARK (7275)**. To see the technical requirements for Online courses, please visit the <http://online.park.edu> website, and click on the "Technical Requirements" link, and click on "BROWSER Test" to see if your system is ready.

If you cannot remember your Park University ID number or have forgotten your password, please visit <https://accounts.park.edu>. If you continue to have problems, please call Enrollment Services at 1-877-505-1059 or the IT Help Desk at 1-800-927-3024.

## Library Resources: McAfee Memorial Library Mission

The [McAfee Memorial Library](http://www.park.edu/library) ([www.park.edu/library](http://www.park.edu/library)) provides access to quality information resources that enables a diverse community of learners to think critically, communicate effectively, demonstrate a global perspective and engage in lifelong learning and service to others.

## Collections

- [Pirate Search](#) - Search all Park University Library Databases, eBooks and Print holdings at once!

- Our collections include more than a quarter million books, [ebooks](#), videos and [periodical and research databases](#). Electronic resources are available 24/7.
- Additional materials can be obtained via [interlibrary loan](#) and/or [reciprocal borrowing agreements](#) with local and regional libraries.

### **Instruction Service**

- Reference and instruction librarians are available to help with research and the use of electronic resources on-site, via phone, [email](#) and [live chat](#).
- Classroom instruction is available in basic research, the use of electronic resources and in support of course assignments.
- Contact one of our [reference and instruction librarians](#) to schedule an instruction session.
- [Instructional videos](#) in the use of electronic resources can also be found on the library website.
- [Library at a Glance](#) (.pdf)

### **Core Assessment**

This Core Assessment will be a paper that covers 100% of the Core Learning Outcomes. The Core Assessment in this course will be a major critical paper of no fewer than 5 pages, which will include research and appropriate documentation. The project will be completed in the final quarter of the term. The paper must address a significant contemporary issue of a global nature relevant to the course, the student's major, and the Liberal Education program. The paper should synthesize multiple disciplinary perspectives and propose critical and creative responses. Individual instructors will specify assignment details.

### **Schedule**

The focus of this class will be producing a capstone project: a significant paper and presentation delving into some interdisciplinary aspect of ethics and humor.

First, we will (re)introduce the notion of an academic discipline.

Second, we will explore the topic of humor, and the ethics of humor, while developing the topics for your project.

Third, you will learn more about interdisciplinarity while producing your project.

We will end the semester with presentations on your projects.

## **Assignments**

### **Preparation Points: 100**

These points show that you are preparing for the course before the class meeting and engaging with the reading. You can achieve them by high quality contributions to the discussion that show an engagement with the reading, or engagement during office hours that show an attempt to grapple with the issues in the course and engage in the reading. Or, if you can think of another way to demonstrate your preparation, I'm always willing to hear about it (though not for the first time in the last three weeks of the course...)

### **Final Project (Core Assessment) Presentation: 100 points**

You'll give a presentation of 5-10 minutes (Powerpoint or a similar slide presentation would be nice but do not just read from your slides) that shows the information you gathered from different disciplines, summarize that information, and give an account of your integrative approach to answering the question. You should also describe how your approach applies to your major/career/professional life, personal life, and our duties as citizens (these three areas might require some creativity). Try to give the class an excellent account of your approach that they can use in the future.

### **Final Project (Core Assessment) Paper: 100 points**

The presentation should be followed by a paper that conveys the same information in written form. It should include research with cited sources and be no fewer than five pages. Your thesis in the paper should be your answer to your question and your paper should attempt to support this thesis using an interdisciplinary approach.

### **Midterm Exam: 50 points**

The Midterm will be an open-note take-home exam. It must be all in your own words.

### **Final Exam: 50 points**

The Midterm will be an open-note take-home exam. It must be all in your own words.

### **Disciplinary Insights Paper: 75 points**

The Disciplinary Insights paper will be something you will work on throughout the course. You will brainstorm ideas for your topic, collect articles from different academic disciplines that pertain to your topic, and reflect critically on the disciplinary insights therein. Then you'll summarize the articles and write up brief insights from them.

### **Psychological Results Paper: 50 points**

In this short paper (1-2 pages), you will reflect critically on the psychological results about humor that you read about from cognitive and social psychology.

### **Philosophical Theories Paper: 50 points**

In this short paper (1-2 pages), you will reflect critically on the philosophical explanations of humor from the Morreall book.

### **Group Reflection Paper: 25 points**

One of the interdisciplinary skills we work on in LE300 is collaboration. In this short paper, 1-2 pages at the most, you will reflect on the activity that your group engaged in.

### **Worst Joke Paper: 50 points**

In this paper, you will analyze an unethical joke and develop a test for analyzing the ethical nature of other jokes.

## **Grading Plan**

Preparation Points: 100

Final Project (Core Assessment) Presentation: 100 points

Final Project (Core Assessment) Paper: 100 points

Midterm Exam: 50 points

Final Exam: 50 points

Disciplinary Insights Paper: 75 points

Psychological Insights Paper: 50 points

Philosophical Theories Paper: 50 points

Group Reflection Paper: 25 points

Worst Joke Paper: 50 points

Total: 700 points

## **Course Topic/Dates/Assignments**

Date	Reading (Due on Monday)	Assignments Due
13 January	Introductions and Syllabus	
15 January	Disciplines: Chapter 5 of Repko	

20 January	No Classes – MLK Day	
22 January	Chapter 1 of Martin	
27 January	Chapter 4 of Martin	<b>Best Joke Discussion</b>
29 January		
3 February	Chapters 5 and 8 of Martin	<b>Group Reflection Paper Due</b>
5 February		
10 February	Chapters 1-2 of Morreall	<b>Psychological Results Paper Due</b>
12 February		<b>Topics Due</b>
17 February	Chapters 3-4 of Morreall	
19 February		<b>Poster Presentations</b>
24 February	Chapters 5-6 of Morreall	
26 February		<b>Worst Joke Discussion</b>
3 March		<b>Philosophical Theories Paper Due</b>
5 March	Midterm Exam Assigned	
10 March	Spring Recess	
12 March	Spring Recess	
17 March	Interdisciplinary Processes Repko, pp. 29-43, 77-81, 122-136	<b>Midterm Exam Due</b>
19 March		
24 March	Chapters 8 and 9 in Repko	<b>Worst Joke Paper Due</b>
26 March		
31 March	Work Week Chapters 10-12 Repko	<b>Disciplinary Insights Paper Due</b>
2 April		

7 April	Work Week Chapters 10-12 Repko	
9 April		
14 April	Presentations	
16 April		
21 April	Presentations	
23 April		
28 April	Presentations	
30 April		<b>Final Projects Due</b>
	Final Exam at	

### **Late Submission of Course Material**

Late assignments are penalized a third of a letter grade for every day they are late. So if an assignment is due on the 5th and it would have been an A (95 points), it will be worth an A- on the 6th, a B+ on the 7th, and so on. After two weeks, the grade becomes a zero.

### **Classroom rules of conduct**

I hope that we can all be adults about the topics in the course. Try to be an engaged listener and a frequent contributor to the course. I ask that you treat me as an adult and refrain from texting and using a laptop for anything other than notes and exploration related to the course.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic integrity is the foundation of the academic community. Because each student has the primary responsibility for being academically honest, students are advised to read and understand all sections of this policy relating to standards of conduct and academic life. Park University students and faculty members are encouraged to take advantage of the University resources available for learning about academic honesty at [www.park.edu/current](http://www.park.edu/current) or [www.park.edu/faculty](http://www.park.edu/faculty).

All answers on all exams must be in your own words.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism involves the use of quotations without quotation marks, the use of quotations without indication of the source, the use of another's idea without acknowledging the source, the submission of a paper, laboratory report, project, or class assignment (any portion of such) prepared by another person, or incorrect paraphrasing.

If you are at all in doubt about whether something in an assignment constitutes plagiarism, email me or call the office. You will often have an answer in the next few hours. I am not at all picky about the form of reference you use, but I do expect some form of reference. I expect you to abide by the rules set down in the plagiarism handout I distribute at the beginning of the term: if something is not in your own words, and it is not in quotation marks, it is plagiarized. (And "your own words" does not mean you can substitute synonyms in someone else's sentences.) The penalty for plagiarism in this course is an F in the course. There are no exceptions for what this grade would do to your life. So.... don't plagiarize.

## **Attendance Policy Catalog**

Attendance is automatically generated by activity in the online course. Students must communicate this to the instructor before Sunday of that week. Excused absences can be granted by the instructor for medical reasons, school-sponsored activities and employment-related demands, including temporary duty. Students are responsible for any missed work. Students with absences for two successive weeks, without approved excuse may be administratively withdrawn from the class and notified that an "F" will be recorded, unless the student initiates official withdrawal from the class(es).

## **Disability Guidelines Catalog**

Park University is committed to meeting the needs of all students that meet the criteria for special assistance. These guidelines are designed to supply directions to students concerning the information necessary to accomplish this goal. It is Park University's policy to comply fully with federal and state law, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, regarding students with disabilities. In the case of any inconsistency between these guidelines and federal and/or state law, the provisions of the law will apply. Additional information concerning Park University's policies and procedures related to disability can be found on the Park University web page: <http://www.park.edu/disability>