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.

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading (Due on Monday)</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>13 January</td>
<td>Introductions and Syllabus</td>
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<td>15 January</td>
<td>Disciplines: Chapter 5 of Repko</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>20 January</td>
<td>No Classes – MLK Day</td>
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<td>22 January</td>
<td>Chapter 1 of Martin</td>
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<td>27 January</td>
<td>Chapter 4 of Martin</td>
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<td>Best Joke Discussion</td>
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<td>29 January</td>
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<td>3 February</td>
<td>Chapters 5 and 8 of Martin</td>
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<td>Group Reflection Paper Due</td>
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<td>5 February</td>
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<td>10 February</td>
<td>Chapters 1-2 of Morreall</td>
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<td>Psychological Results Paper Due</td>
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<td>17 February</td>
<td>Chapters 3-4 of Morreall</td>
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<td>24 February</td>
<td>Chapters 5-6 of Morreall</td>
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<td>26 February</td>
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<td>5 March</td>
<td>Midterm Exam Assigned</td>
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<td>10 March</td>
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<td>12 March</td>
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<td>17 March</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Processes</td>
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<td>Repko, pp. 29-43, 77-81, 122-136</td>
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<td>19 March</td>
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<td>24 March</td>
<td>Chapters 8 and 9 in Repko</td>
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<td>31 March</td>
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<td>Chapters 10-12 Repko</td>
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<td>2 April</td>
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<td>Disciplinary Insights Paper Due</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>21 April</td>
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<td>30 April</td>
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**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 atwww.park.edu/current or 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