

Uncommon Reads: Feel the Bern – Satire in Politics

IDH2930 Class# 29296 (1 credit hour)

Fall Semester 2024

Face-to-face class meetings: Wednesdays 3:00 – 3:50 PM in Honors Village 1, Room 114

Instructor

Dr. Ryan Good (he/him/his)

Office Location: 2049 McCarty Hall D

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00 – 2:30 pm & Wednesdays 4:00 – 5:00 pm or by appointment

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Course Description. Overview and Purpose

Are you a political junkie? Are you a fan (or hater) of Vermont’s most famously cantankerous politician? Do you want to follow this year’s election cycle while also feeling over- or underwhelmed by the current state of national politics? Then Feel the Bern is the class for you!

We will spend the semester following and engaging with the national election that will be held on November 5, 2024, while reading Andrew Shaffer’s political satire *Feel the Bern: A Bernie Sanders Mystery*. Discussions will help us engage with the political process in a healthy and lighthearted way, as we consider the role of satire in American politics, the current state of political discourse and participation, and how Senator Sanders’ unique approach to politics has helped to bring previously fringe topics to the forefront of political discourse, including political party independence and democratic socialism.

Bernie Sanders will be the case study to guide our work, but this class is not an endorsement of him or his policies. Students are welcome regardless of their political views; a diverse range of thought will enhance the depth and quality of our conversations together. Coursework will include weekly Socratic discussions, occasional short reflection essays, and a presentation.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- Identify examples of political satire and evaluate its impact
- Critique the state of political discourse and assess the effectiveness of different rhetorical strategies

Required Textbook

Andrew Shaffer. *Feel the Bern: A Bernie Sanders Mystery*. Ten Speed Press. 2022.

Required Technology

Students need to have access to a personal computer or laptop with a working webcam and microphone in order to access all features of the course Canvas site, and to participate in online office hours. Broadband internet access is required.

Grading Policies

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

Grading scale

The final grade for this course is based on a 1000-point scale and will be weighted as follows:

| Grade | Points | Percent | Grade | Points | Percent |
|-------|------------------|-----------------|-------|------------------|-----------------|
| A: | > 930.0 | > 93.0% | C: | 730.0 to < 770.0 | 73.0 to < 77.0% |
| A-: | 900.0 to < 930.0 | 90.0 to < 93.0% | C-: | 700.0 to < 730.0 | 70.0 to < 73.0% |
| B+: | 870.0 to < 900.0 | 87.0 to < 90.0% | D+: | 670.0 to < 700.0 | 67.0 to < 70.0% |
| B: | 830.0 to < 870.0 | 83.0 to < 87.0% | D: | 630.0 to < 670.0 | 63.0 to < 67.0% |
| B-: | 800.0 to < 830.0 | 80.0 to < 83.0% | D-: | 600.0 to < 630.0 | 60.0 to < 63.0% |
| C+: | 770.0 to < 800.0 | 77.0 to < 80.0% | E: | < 600.0 | < 60.0% |

The final grade for this course is based on a 1000-point scale and will be weighted as follows:

| Grade Component | Points | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Class Attendance and Engagement | 390 | 39.0% |
| Reflection Journals (5 x 90 points) | 450 | 45.0% |
| Case Study Presentation | 160 | 16.0% |
| Total | 1000 | 100% |

Grade cutoffs are exact; you should not expect any rounding of scores at the end of the semester.

Class Attendance and Activities: Students significantly contribute to creating a comfortable and productive learning environment by attending and participating productively in class. I encourage questions and sharing of relevant experiences! Grades are based on attendance and frequency and quality of student contributions to the class. You are allowed one unexcused absence from class; this absence will not impact your attendance and engagement grade.

Reflection Journals: Roughly every other week, you will respond to questions that reinforce the read material. These assignments free response questions are intended to help you organize your thoughts and prepare for a fruitful discussion in class. These assignments are due on Tuesdays @ 11:59pm on weeks they are assigned.

Case Study Presentation: You will work with a group of your classmates to evaluate a case study of political satire, examining the context, argument(s), and efficacy of your chosen example. These presentations will be given in the final weeks of class and should reflect the breadth of material we discuss in the preceding weeks.

Specific grading criteria for each assignment will be provided on Canvas. You are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course until the end of the semester. In case of a grading dispute, you must notify the instructor via e-mail within one week of the date the grade is posted. It is your responsibility to ensure that all assignments are successfully uploaded to Canvas. Missing, corrupt, or incompatible files may result in grade penalties up to a score of zero for the assignment.

Course Policies

Inclusiveness Statement

Diversity is a one of our biggest assets in the classroom. Different perspectives enrich our understanding of the world and are imperative to developing just solutions to complex problems. This classroom is a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities & races, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religions (if any), sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. This does not mean that you are not allowed to disagree with others, but that such differences should be explored without ad hominem judgment.

Attendance Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>. On-time attendance is mandatory. You are permitted one unexcused absence without grade penalty. Additional unexcused absences incur a score of zero for the day's Class Attendance and Engagement. Point deductions may also be incurred for repeated disruptive tardiness.

Excusable reasons include:

- In case of illness, upon receipt of a doctor's note or equivalent, or by following the procedure outlined here: <https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications>.

- In case of religious holidays, by informing me via e-mail ahead of time.
- In case of military duty, jury duty, participation in academic conferences, or participation in official university or UAA events, by providing appropriate evidence ahead of time.
- In case of family emergencies or other extenuating circumstances, by following the procedure outlined here: <https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications>.
- In all other cases, or if you are unsure, please e-mail me as soon as feasible. Absences are generally not excused for non-emergency travel and vehicle problems.

You are still responsible for turning assignments in on time unless an extension has been requested via e-mail and approved by the instructor prior to the deadline. In case of true documented emergencies, the instructor may waive this requirement.

Late Work

You are responsible for turning assignments in on time unless an extension has been requested via e-mail prior to the deadline. In case of true documented emergencies, I may waive this requirement. Technical difficulties are not generally an excuse for missing an assessment or assignment; you should have contingency plans in case any such issues arise. Try not to wait until the last minute to submit assignments!

Late submissions will incur a penalty of 20% per day. A day is defined as 24 hours from the due date and time. Submissions more than three days late will receive a grade of zero.

I highly recommend starting work on assignments early to preclude unexpected emergencies or late-semester stress from compromising your grade. Deadline extensions may be available on certain assignments if requested ahead of time via e-mail, but must be justified. If extended deadlines are not met, late penalties will be assessed based on the original, not the revised due date!

Finally, please do not wait until the end of the semester to discuss problems with the course material or performance in class. Your performance and success are important to the instructor, the Honors Program, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and University of Florida, so please contact the instructor to discuss your concerns as soon as they arise.

Course Communications and Technology

The preferred way to get ahold of me of class and office hours is via Canvas message or UF e-mail. Emails from outside providers, like Gmail, are not considered secure and will be ignored to protect student privacy. University policy dictates that grades cannot be discussed via email, so if you have a grade-specific question, you should ask it in person or via Canvas message. For all communications, you can expect a response within 24 hours on weekdays. All students are expected to check the course web site on Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu>) on a daily basis. In addition, I may send specific communications directly to your UF, which you should check daily as well. You should enable Canvas notifications for this class, so that you are notified immediately about grading, assignment feedback, due date changes, announcements, etc.

Canvas Display Name Change

Canvas uses the "Display Name" as set in myUFL. The Display Name is what you want people to see in the UF Directory, such as "Ally" instead of "Allison." To update your display name, go to one.ufl.edu, click on the dropdown at the top right, and select "Directory Profile." Click "Edit" on the right of the name panel, uncheck "Use my legal name" under "Display Name," update how you wish your name to be displayed, and click "Submit" at the bottom. This change may take up to 24 hours to appear in Canvas. This does not change your legal name for official UF records.

University of Florida Policies

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."* You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."* It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

The instructor emphasizes that **PLAGIARISM, WHETHER INTENTIONAL OR UNINTENTIONAL, IS A SERIOUS AND POTENTIALLY CAREER-ENDING FORM OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT. Copying and pasting is never okay in academia.**

Grades and Grade Points

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Zoom Conference Privacy

Should it become necessary or convenient to hold classes virtually using zoom, those class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. Unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded

to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Services for Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. The DRC may be contacted by visiting 001 Reid Hall, calling 352-392-8565, or visiting their web site at <https://disability.ufl.edu>.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Student Complaints

Residential Course: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Online Course: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>

Campus Helping Resources

Your wellbeing is important to me and the University of Florida community. Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

- *U Matter We Care.* 352-292-2273. UF's umbrella program for UF's caring culture. Provides students in distress with support and coordination of the wide variety of appropriate resources. <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>

- *University Counseling & Wellness Center*, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575. Counseling Services, Groups and Workshops, Outreach and Consultation, Self-Help Library & Wellness Coaching. <https://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>
- *Gatorwell Health Promotion Services*, multiple locations on campus, 352-273-4450. GatorWell uses health promotion strategies to educate UF students about health and wellness topics relevant to the college experience. <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/>
- *Career Connections Center*, First floor Reitz Union, 352-392-1601, <https://career.ufl.edu/>
- Student Success Initiative, <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/>
- *Dean of Students Office*, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261. Among other services, the DSO assists students who are experiencing situations that compromises their ability to attend classes. This includes family emergencies and medical issues (including mental health crises). <https://care.dso.ufl.edu/>
- *CLAS Academic Resources*, Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420. General study skills, tutoring, and supplemental instruction for select classes. <https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu/>
- *Writing Studio*, 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- *Field and Fork Pantry*. Food and toiletries for students experiencing food insecurity. <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>
- *UF Help Desk*. 352-392-4357. Technical support for computer issues and UF web services. <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>
- *University Police Department*, 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). <https://www.police.ufl.edu/>
- *Library Support*. Various ways to receive assistance with using the libraries or finding resources. <https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/>

Course Outline (subject to change – please check the Canvas calendar for the latest information)

| Date | Chapter/Topic & Reading Assignment |
|--------------|---|
| August 28 | Introduction to Course – no reading |
| September 4 | Chapters 1-6 (pp 1-44) Reflection #1 Due |
| September 11 | Discussion – no reading Reflection #2 Due |
| September 18 | Chapters 7-12 (pp 45-96) |
| September 25 | Discussion – no reading Reflection #3 Due |
| October 2 | Chapters 13-18 (pp 97-132) |
| October 9 | Discussion – no reading Reflection #4 Due |
| October 16 | No class – Dr. Good @ IMCC Meeting |
| October 23 | Chapters 19-24 (pp 133-174) |
| October 30 | Chapters 25 -Epilogue (pp 175-210) Presentation Sign-Up Deadline |
| November 5 | Election Day! – Vote if you are eligible |
| November 6 | Discussion – no reading |
| November 13 | Discussion – no reading Reflection #5 Due |
| November 20 | Presentations – no reading |
| December 4 | Presentations – no reading |

Course Alterations

Unforeseen circumstances may make it necessary to alter the information given in this syllabus during the semester. Such changes are not unusual and should be expected. All changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and posted to Canvas. It is your responsibility to keep up with any syllabus changes.