

IDH2952 (Un)common Art - Performing Stand-up Comedy

Tuesdays (3:00-3:50) – Hume 0119

Instructor: Dr. Charlie Mitchell
Office Phone: 352-273-0515
Office Hours: Mon/Tues 11:30-1:00 or by appointment
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COURSE OBJECTIVES

This workshop will guide you through the process of writing and performing stand-up comedy. By studying the work of influential comedians and practicing joke-writing, you will be encouraged to find your own unique comic voice. This course will culminate in a public performance where you will present your polished "tight five."

EXPECTATIONS

This class is a space where you respect, support, and encourage your fellow performers/writers while understanding that constructive criticism is more valuable than praise. Rewriting material is just as important as your first attempt. I will not censor work in this class. The only standard is whether the work is funny and chooses targets that are worthy of comic examination. There is only one absolute and unbreakable rule – you do not steal jokes. At certain times during the semester, you may need to make time outside of class to meet with me about your material.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mastering Stand-Up: The Complete Guide to Becoming a Successful Comedian by Stephen Rosenfield. I will also provide handouts.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This is a class *about* participation – attendance is a given. **You are expected to arrive ON TIME and to attend ALL classes.** If you feel you cannot make this commitment, please drop the class. Any absence from class for the following reasons must be supported by official documentation to avoid a grade penalty:

- Serious family emergencies
- Special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)
- Military obligation
- Severe weather conditions
- Participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate
- Court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)

Religious observances do not require documentation. However, you need to let me know by the second week of classes which religious observances will conflict with your attendance.

Students are allowed ONE unexcused absence that does not require documentation and does not conform to the UF “acceptable reasons for absence.” Afterwards, each unexcused

absence will lower your participation grade one letter grade. THREE unexcused absences means a failing grade in the class. Weddings, travel, job interviews, non-UF auditions, and other life events do not count as excused absences. If you have a logistical problem that will prevent you from arriving on time, see me immediately.

*NOTE: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

GRADE BREAKDOWN

In-Class Participation	20%
Joke Writing Assignment	10%
Stand-up presentation	10%
“Tight Five” drafts/rewrites	40%
Final performance	20%

CLASS CONDUCT

During class, there is no eating or cell phone use (especially texting).

HONOR CODE

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: “I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” The Honor Code states that you cannot take photos or videos in class without my permission and the permission of fellow students.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

If you have a disability documented with the Disability Resource Center and wish to discuss accommodations, please email me or see me during my virtual office hours. If you have a learning disability that has not been documented, contact the DRC at <https://disability.ufl.edu/about/contact-us/>

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 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 ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/

AVAILABILITY

If you have something you want to discuss with me, please do not hesitate. Your ongoing enrollment is confirmation that you understand and will comply with the requirements of this course. I reserve the right to alter this syllabus if necessary.

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 10	Introduction to writing jokes
Jan 17	Writer's Table (first assignment due)
Jan 24	Stand-up presentation
Jan 31	Stand-up presentation
Feb 7	Crowd work
Feb 14	Crowd work
Feb 21	Present first draft of standup material
Feb 28	Present first draft of standup material
March 7	Present first draft of standup material
March 14	Spring Break
March 21	Individual meetings
March 28	Individual meetings
April 4	Perform for class
April 11	Perform for class
April 18	TBA
April 25	Last Day

This schedule may change based on the availability of a venue to present our standup show.