

THTR 482 Stand Up 2

Spring 2021—Wednesdays (63199)—6pm to 8:50pm

Location: ONLINE

Instructor: Judith Shelton

Office: Online via Zoom

Office Hours: By appointment Wednesdays – Fridays only

Contact Info: You may contact me Tuesday - Friday, 9am-5pm

Slack preferred or email judiths@usc.edu

I teach all day Friday and will not respond until Tuesday

On Fridays, in an emergency only, text 626.390.3678

Course Description and Overview

This course continues where THTR 474 left off, using additional writing tools and techniques, and performing in class over and over to create longer more effective sets. You will also engage in the non-performing, but just as important, work of the comic by actively pitching, producing and promoting your own stand up show. By the end of the course, you will leave with a greater understanding of what other work is available to comics, where to head next in your comedy career, and an additional 5-7 minutes of material.

Learning Objectives

- Revisit and refine the skills learned in Intro to Stand Up
- Develop additional material via pitch sessions and the “Writer’s Room”
- Write for other comics and perform material from other comics
- Execute script “punch up” in collaboration with a USC SCA screenwriter or similar
- Create material for various events and specific themes
- Participate in constant, constructive evaluation of comedic material
- “Try on” other points of view and personae
- Flesh out the characters in your act and bring them to life
- Practice hosting and headlining
- Explore other career opportunities for comics
- Identify a personal care plan, focusing on mental health and longevity in the business
- Produce a standup show in which to showcase your work

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Crying by Carol Leifer (Audiobook recommended)

Comedy Writing for Late-Night TV by Joe Toplyn

Various stand up clips to be viewed and discussed in class, for example:

The Jackie and Laurie Show, Podcast, with Jackie Kashian and Laurie Kilmartin

Two Dope Queens, Podcast, with Phoebe Robinson and Jessica Williams

The History of Stand Up, Podcast, with Wayne Federman and Andrew Steven

Recommended Preparation

STAY HEALTHY. Come to each class, prepared. Be on time. Turn your camera on.

Ideally, find a space where you feel free to express yourself and play.

Come willing to take risks, be silly, honest, inquisitive, and supportive.

Except for water, no food or drinks are allowed during Zoom class at any time.

Absolutely no distractions. No social media, visiting with roommates, family members, or side chats with classmates while in class, especially when a comic is “on stage”.

We will take a 10-minute break midway through the class so you can eat, chat, etc.

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment:

Grades are not dictated by the success of comedy presentations or the instructor's subjective opinion of talent or sense of humor.

Grades are dictated by:

Points. Each aspect of class has a point value: participation, in-class exercises and assignments, Midterm, Show, and Final. I provide options to make up 15 points total per semester. More details listed under "Make-Up Options".

Be advised: auditing students observe but do not participate.

Participation (14% of total grade):

- In-class active student analysis of presented materials such as text and video clips
- Constructive feedback on classmates' comedy presentations
- Willingness to experiment and apply the constructive feedback of instructor and other students to one's own work
- If a student is late or leaves early, they will lose their participation point for that day

Exercises and Assignments (41% of total grade):

- Due to the live performance aspect of standup comedy, exercises and homework assignments will be presented in class, no video submissions accepted
- If you cannot commit to being in this class, on time, please wait for another semester
- Student invests fully, striving to make a connection with the crowd and improve over time
- If a student misses an exercise or assignment, student accepts that they have missed their opportunity to perform (stage time) and will lose points which will impact their grade

Midterm (15% of total grade):

- The Midterm presentation is worth 15 points, presented in class w/no paper component
- No video submission of presentation accepted, except example video requirement
- If you miss the Midterm, you lose 15 points, which will greatly impact your grade
- The policy for tardiness/leaving early (pg. 4) applies to the Midterm, as well

Show (20% of total grade):

- You must perform in the Class Show, it is worth 15 points
- You must contribute to the producing of the show, it is worth 5 points
- You may choose to do less time, but let's talk about it before you decide

Final (10% of total grade):

- The Final is a paper worth 10 points, due at the beginning of the 2-hour Final period, and must be at least 500 words, in Word with word count
- The Final will be submitted electronically, via Blackboard
- Tech problems happen during Finals week, please plan ahead. No late papers accepted
- Not handing in a paper will result in a loss of 10 points, which will impact your grade

Make-up options:

- If you miss an exercise, assignment or presentation, you may make up 15 points.
- You must post your make-up work via the specific discussion board on Blackboard by Thursday, April 29th at 11:59pm. Board closes at 11:59pm, no posts accepted.
- You may make up 8 points by doing a NON-USC booked standup show.
- You may make up 6 points by doing a USC booked standup show.
- You may make up 4 points by doing an open mic.
- You must record your set and photograph the space/screen, video will count as both.
- You must post both items AND a hearty paragraph (5 sentences) to the specific discussion board on Blackboard.
- Technical/posting issues will result in a loss of points, leave time to figure it out.
- You may make up 4 points by *observing the speakers* in Wayne's class, Mondays, 6-8:50pm and posting a screenshot and two full paragraphs to the specific discussion board on Blackboard. Date and times of speakers, TBD.
- You may make up 2 points by *observing* Wayne's class, and posting a picture and full paragraph (5 sentences) to the entire class, via the discussion board on Blackboard.
- You may make up 2 points by watching a stand up show or mic and posting a picture and full paragraph (5 sentences) to the discussion board on Blackboard.
- You must email Wayne before you drop into his class. Waynefed@usc.edu
- Make-up points cannot take you over 100 points, 100 points is the maximum.

Points Breakdown:

• Week 1, in-class improvised exercise	1 point
• Week 2, 1 st assignment: First Set	2 points
• Week 3, in-class exercise: Characters	2 points
• Week 4, 2 nd assignment: Late Night Monologue	5 points
• Week 5, in-class exercise: Writer's Room: Pitching	3 points
• Week 6, 3 rd assignment: Second Set	6 points
• Week 7, in-class exercise: Writer's Room: Punch Up	3 points
• MIDTERM: Comedy in The Style Of	15 points
• Week 9, in-class exercise: Writer's Room: Theme Show	3 points
• Week 10, 4 th assignment: Third Set	7 points
• Week 11, 5 th assignment: Writer's Room: Head Writer	8 points
• Week 12, 6 th assignment: Fourth Set	7 points
• Week 13, 7 th assignment: Final Set, Show Rehearsal	8 points
• Week 14, **SHOW** April 28 th **	20 points
• FINAL: Paper Due: Critical Analysis, Self	10 points
TOTAL	100 points

Grading Scale:

Excellent: A (4) = 100-96; **A-** (3.7) = 95-90

Good: B+ (3.3) = 89-86; **B** (3) = 85-84; **B-** (2.7) = 83-80

Average: C+ (2.3) = 79-76; **C** (2) = 75-74; **C-** (1.7) = 73-70

Poor: D (.7-1.3) = 60's

Fail: F (0) = 59 and below

Further Grading Notes:

- If your work in class is unsatisfactory, you will be warned before the deadline for dropping the course with a grade of W, April 9th. I will discuss your work at any time.
- Auditing students attend class strictly as an observer and will not participate.

Assignment Submission Policy

This is a live performance class, no video submissions of presentations or exercises.

ATTENDANCE

Absences:

Developing stand up material and style depends on consistent writing (usually as homework) and “getting up” (performing in class). Each class helps you build and refine material over time. **Be advised: if you miss a class, points awarded that day for performing your stand up material in class and being an active, supportive audience member will be lost.** I provide make-up options should you need to miss a class, or two. Since things happen, save missing class for emergencies.

Tardiness/leaving early:

Everyone gets up each class. Names are picked “lottery” style. When you are late or leave early it is unprofessional, disruptive, and unsupportive. Committing to this class means being here from 6pm to 8:50pm. **If you arrive after 6:05pm you will lose your participation point for the day.** Students arriving late are put at the end of the lottery and may not get up, depending on time. I take the late people last, in the order they arrived. Students choosing to leave early lose their participation point and risk not getting picked before they have to leave. If you do not get up before you leave, you lose all the points for the day. I do, however, try my best to get you all up. I realize things happen and will try my best to make time for you. Be mindful of days that have more points. I end class at 8:40pm to give homework. Everyone who comes to class on time and stays the duration will get up. Anyone who is late/leaving early may or may not get up, depending on time and running order. If you are not in class for the homework refer to this syllabus or contact another student before contacting me. Make the choice to be in class on time and stay.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Text in **bold** indicates **assignment requiring preparation.**

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1	Review of syllabus (our contract) Introduction and discussion of personal goals for the class In-class improvised exercise and stage time	<i>Begin reading/listening to: Leifer</i> Homework: 3-minute set, due class 2	Due week 2 Jan. 27, 2021
Week 2	First assignment* - First Set Students perform first 3-minute set Plus, brainstorming show and creating tasks	<i>Homework: Study character comics for discussion</i>	Discussion and exercise week 3 Feb. 3, 2021

Week 3	Characters in Comedy Fleshing out the people in your act In-class discussion, exercise and stage time Discussion of monologue joke writing	Homework: <i>Bring in 4-minute topical monologue, Read ch. 5 Toplyn</i>	Due week 4 Feb. 10, 2021
Week 4	Second assignment* - Monologue Please bring in a 4-minute monologue inspired by news headlines, cultural events and pop culture within the last 7 days .	Homework: <i>Bring in 3-5 jokes that could use some help</i>	Due week 5 Feb. 17, 2021
Week 5	Writer's Room: Pitching Students break into smaller groups and pitch on each other's jokes Writing session followed by stage time	Homework: <i>Work on second set</i>	Due week 6 Feb. 24, 2021
Week 6	Third assignment* - Second Set Students bring in 4 minutes of best "bits" from weeks 1-5, creating a "set"	Homework: <i>Bring in material of any kind that needs better jokes Read ch. 6 Toplyn</i>	Due week 7 Mar. 3, 2021
Week 7	Writer's Room: Punch Up In-class exercise, break into smaller groups Writing session followed by stage time	Homework: <i>Receive comic and prepare Midterm presentation</i>	Due week 8 Mar. 10, 2021
Week 8 MIDTERM	Midterm* - Comedy in the Style of In class 7, you isolated an area in your own work that needs improvement. In class 8, students present a 3 to 4-minute comedy set inspired by the point of view and persona of a comic that embodies that strength. You are not writing for them, but using their style to lead you into new territory, previously uncharted as an artist, creating new and fearless, deeper material	No homework! <i>Please relax after an awesome Midterm <3</i>	
Week 9	Writer's Room: Theme Show The class will choose a theme, break into groups of two and write clean comedy pieces (We will read Toplyn pages together)	Homework: <i>Work on third set</i>	Due week 10 Mar. 24, 2021
Week 10	Fourth assignment* - Third Set Students present third set, 5 minutes of best jokes from weeks 1-9.	Homework: <i>Receive your comic and get them 3-minutes of new material, by Sunday</i>	Due week 11 Mar. 31, 2021

Week 11	Fifth assignment* - Writer's Room: Head Writer Students "tailor" and perform material written for them, 5 minutes max.	Homework: Bring in Fourth Set	Due week 12 April 14, 2021
Week 12	Sixth assignment* - Fourth Set Students perform a 5-minute comedy set of best material presented in classes 1-11 May include new material.	Homework: Continue adjusting and improving set for final rehearsal during class time Finalize and promote show	Due week 13 April 21, 2021
Week 13	Seventh assignment* "Final" Set, Rehearsal with Hosts The act returns in an advanced, playful form, receiving feedback and notes Emphasis on beginning and ending, handling "mistakes", nerves, boredom, etc. Finish last-minute show tasks and tidbits	Homework: Prep for show, promote, arrange call time, etc.	Due week 14 April 28, 2021 (**Last day to submit make-up work is April 29th**)
Week 14	Eighth assignment* YOUR SUPER-DUPER SUPERSHOW!	Homework: Write self-assessment Final paper	Due at the beginning of your Final period May 5, 2021 6:59pm
FINAL	Final* Critical Analysis, Self – Paper Due Written paper due, self-assessing the student's overall progress through the class; including personal challenges, strengths, weaknesses, and victories 500 words, min. No late papers accepted; I am firm on this		

Class Show, (tentatively) Wednesday, April 28th

Together, you will conceive, find and secure the location, produce, promote, and perform a class show during our regular class period. Where? How? Comics devote a good portion of their time finding ways to perform. Being a good "hustler" will get you far in comedy, get creative! BE ADVISED: Covid restrictions may still be in place, you all will adjust accordingly.

PLEASE NOTE: Spring Wellness Days are: 3/12, 3/23, 4/7, 4/22, 4/30.

A Wellness Day is a day on which there will be no classes and no classwork expected of students. Students are encouraged to use this time to rest, exercise, and connect with friends and family.

KEY DATES:

Friday, Jan. 15: Spring semester classes begin

Friday, Feb. 5: Last day to add this class or drop this class without a “W” and receive a refund

Friday, March 5: Last day to drop this class without a “W” on transcript

Last day to change “P/NP” to letter grade

Friday, April 9: Last day to drop this class with a mark of “W”

Friday, April 30: Spring semester classes end

Saturday – Monday, May 1-4: Study days

Wednesday – Wednesday, May 5-12: Final exams

Thursday, May 13: Spring semester ends

Friday, May 14: Commencement

**Welcome back, dear students, and thank you for working with me once again!
Together you’ll take the next step in your journey, get better as comics, try new things,
and feel more confident about your career and where to go next.**

Judith Shelton (Jude)

EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS

Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.