

THTR 474 Introduction to Stand Up Comedy

Section 631777R

Units: 2

Spring 2025

Fridays

2:00pm-3:50pm

Location: MCC 111

Instructor: Camirin Farmer

Office: virtual, as needed

Office Hours: by appointment, please email to schedule

Contact Info: cjfarmer@usc.edu

Course Description

In this performance, and discussion based course, we will examine, and discover our comedic tastes & styles, with the intent to present a set during a final show. We will be examining specific application of the skills we hone & discuss by dissecting the stylings, and careers of established comedians. We will focus on both recorded & live performance throughout the semester. We will end the semester with an understanding of the requirements of the preparation & adaptability that comes with building and performing a stand up comedy set.

Learning Objectives

In class, we will aim to:

- Discover and play in our observations of comedy
- Evaluate the approaches of Comedians, and let those evaluations inform our writing
- Identify various comedy forms
- Recognize the elements of each specific form
- Understand the Interaction/Relationship between Performer and Audience

Prerequisite(s): NON

Course Notes

This class is a participation and performance based class — attendance to all classes, and commitment to performances is crucial for your success in this class. Your participation in class includes providing feedback to fellow students/performers, and is therefore paramount to the success of each member of the class.

Pre-planned absences may be discussed, however absences, tardies, and early departures will affect your final grade. Open mic attendance can go towards grade, if the student also completes a 2 page paper describing the open mic, their observations, and their experience. Specific instructions on presentations will be given by the instructor with appropriate lead time.

You will keep a Comedy Notebook throughout the semester. This will be your personal notebook in which you will record observations, reviews, ideas, and jokes, and will be reviewed periodically to confirm participation. It will be needed in every class.

COVID Protocol: If you are absent for an extended period of time because you are quarantining or another serious illness, we will assure a way to best support your educational experience.

Supplementary Materials

Will be provided by the instructor and the class as discovered

Description and Assessment of Assignments

- Class notebook will be checked twice – after spring recess and at the final rehearsal.
- Class participation and discussion of materials are integral to the performance aspects of the class.
- Comedic Special papers will be turned in on Brightspace; prepare to informally discuss what you have watched, and written.
- Presentations of chosen comics will include history, style, point of view, legacy, and influence. These will be powerpoint presentations, and must be uploaded to Brightspace on due date. They must not exceed 10 minutes.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Class Participation – Attendance, focus, willingness	30	30%
Discussion of Materials	10	10%
Comedy Notebook	10	10%
Comedic Special Paper	5	5%
Comedian Presentation	10	10%
Final Show	20	20%
Final Paper	15	15%
TOTAL	100	100%

Grading Scale (Example)

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82

C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy

Varies.

Additional Policies

When in class, you must be focused, and mentally, physically and emotionally present. Cell phones and other electronic devices often impede this. Devices should be put away completely unless you are called upon to use it (e.g. watching videos for reference). You should never have devices out during any performance -- no exceptions. Unauthorized device attention may affect your participation points.

Food or drink is not allowed in SDA classrooms, water excepted. Please help restore classroom to neutral at the end of each class, if applicable.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Please note: due to the fluid and creative nature of this course, weekly structure may change to accommodate the needs of individuals and the group. You will be informed of any changes as much as possible.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 1/17	Welcome, Show Notebook, Syllabus Review, Expectations, Sharing Comedians, Discussion of Stand up "basics", Getting on Feet	Watch Maria Bamford <i>Old Baby</i> special	
Week 2 1/24	Discussion of special, Discussion of point of view, discussion of How to approach joke writing	Choose a special, Write a 2 page summary on subject matter, and technique (prepare to discuss in next class)	Due Week 3
Week 3 1/31	Review of chosen specials, continued discussion of point of view, review of Joke writing & In class write, possible exercise	Write 10 jokes (randomly assigned)	Due Weeks 4 & 5
Week 4 2/7	Performing 10 jokes	Write 10 jokes (randomly assigned)	Due Week 5
Week 5 2/14	Performing 10 jokes (cont)	Write 2 minute sets	Due Week 6
Week 6 2/21	Perform 2 minute Sets with feedback	Incorporate Notes into sets, and rewrite	Due Week 7
Week 7 2/28	Perform 2 minute sets	Researching Comedian for Presentation	Due Week 9

Week 8 3/7	WEEK OFF	Cont. Preparing Comedian Presentations	Due Week 9
Week 9 3/14	MIDTERM - Comic Presentations	Write, write, write	
Week 10 3/28	Crowd Work & Improvising - Clips & Exercises	Work on 3.5 minute set	Due Week 12
Week 11 4/4	Heckling & Discernment - Clips & Exercises	Work on 3.5 minute set	Due Week 12
Week 12 4/11	Performing 3.5 minute sets	Implement final notes, get ready for rehearsals	Due Week 13
Week 13 4/18	Rehearsal w/ hosts	Memorize sets, get ready for final rehearsal	Due Week 14
Week 14 4/25	Final Rehearsal w/ hosts - <i>*memorized*</i>		Due for FINAL SHOW 5/2
Week 15 5/2	SHOW DAY		
FINAL TBD	Final Paper Due		

USE OF AI

Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct. Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

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, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theatre Consent Culture Statement

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations

for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for undergraduate- and graduate-level SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

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

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086

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) 740-2500

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

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411

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

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.