



‘Writing funny - language, creativity and comedy’: October - December 2013

What makes something funny? Why do jokes work some times and not at other times? How is writing comedy different from performing comedy? What is the role of culture in comedy? This seminar series will look at the language and creativity involved in writing and performing comedy and will seek to explore possible answers to these (and other) questions.

Each event will include two speakers: a comedy ‘practitioner’ and a respondent from an academic approach to comedy and comic writing.

The seminars are free and are on Tuesdays from 17.30 – 19.30 from the end of October to the middle of December 2013. All seminars will be at Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, London - [Venue map for Senate House](#).

- **Seminar 3 – Comedy Live – creativity in stand up** – December 10, 2013 in Senate House, Chancellor’s Hall (1st floor)

Stand-up is a special form of comedy as it involves the audience perhaps more than any other genre. In this session we will explore the nature of stand-up versus other forms of comedy. Questions will also focus on the role of writing in stand-up, how the audience can be accounted for in the writing process, and how the written piece might be different from the performed piece.

Speakers: Sindhu V and Lisa Moore (University of Salford)

Previous Seminars in the series

- Seminar 1 – Situation Comedy – creativity in writing and performance – October 29, 2013 in Senate House, The Senate Room (First Floor)

The sitcom is one of the most established genres of Anglo-Saxon comedy. In this session we will discuss why this might be the case (what is special about writing sitcoms?) and what consequences this might have for the writing and performing of new material (how can you be creative?). We

will also explore the role of language vs. the situation vs. other sources of humour in this setting to ask, 'what comes first, the situation or the comedy?'

Speakers: Dan Berlinka, Brian Dooley and Brett Mills (University of East Anglia)

- Seminar 2 – Lost in Translation? – comedy across cultures – November 19, 2013 in Senate House, Room 349 (3rd floor)

Most people have personal experience of the role of culture in humour. Minimally, cultural differences can be a source of humour, or can influence the translation and understanding of humour. This session will explore questions such as: How does humour translate (or not) and does it matter whether it is written or spoken? Where is the line between humour and stereotyping or racism and is it easier to walk it in performance or writing? Does humour reflect or shape the ideology of the age?

Speakers: Helen Eastman and James Robson (Open University)

For any queries regarding this seminar series, please contact the series convenor, Zsófia Demjén (zsofia.demjen@open.ac.uk), Centre for Language and Communication, The Open University.

This is part of a series of seminars organized by the OU's Contemporary Cultures of Writing Research Group in collaboration with the Institute of English Studies, UL. For more information [click here](#).