

Essays and Presentations

Essays should be typed, properly presented, and provide proper references. Your essay will form the foundation of your presentation in weeks 13-15 of the course

Length: 1,100-1,250 words.

Essay deadline Week 11

Presentation deadline: Week 12/13 (depending on class size)

Guidelines: Essay and presentation

- A. Choose your essay topic and title below, and then within the essay discuss a comedian or comedians or a comedy series covered during the course, from weeks 1-12.
- B. By the time you have submitted your essay, in Week 11 (don't be late), you should have started writing your presentation. Your presentation can be in PowerPoint or similar, and this gives you an opportunity to:
 - (a) Show some clips to illustrate your points about the comics in the course material
 - (b) To show some clips and discuss and introduce a comedian or some comedy or aspect of comedy that has not been covered in the seminar.
- C. To conclude: Your essay covers basic questions discussed in the seminar material and may introduce new questions and points which you will expand on in your presentation. Your presentation uses PowerPoint to expand on the essay and introduce even more new material and ideas.

ESSAY TITLES [choose one]

1. Giving examples from the class material, which comedians and comic situations did you find funny and which failed to amuse you? Why?
2. Do you find that you laugh at some things which your friends do not find amusing? If so, explain your sense of humour and try to say why you think you have a different sense of humour. In this context, of finding things funny that others are

not amused by, give examples from the course as well as your own experience.

3. Are there comedians or TV comedy shows or similar in your country which you think people in other countries would really enjoy? Please give examples and explain why you enjoy them so much.

4. What is 'British comedy'? How is it different from American comedy and the comedy of your country? Give examples of all three types of humour.

5. Is it difficult to be a comedian? Is some comedy more difficult than other comedy? Explain the art of making people laugh and say what you think drives a person to become a comedian.

6. Who was the worst comedian that we have seen on this course? Why was he or she so bad?

7. Why are there so few women comedians on this course? Aren't women funny? Do women have to follow different rules to men to be funny?

8. Is comedy true to life? Give some examples from your own experience of situations that you found really amusing. It doesn't matter if they now seem stupid or childish – just tell us about them, and explain why they were funny.

9. Does life sometimes seem to enter a rather grim period when there's not much to laugh about and nothing is funny? Are there golden periods for comedy, and times when comedy just doesn't seem to be around anymore?

10. There is a dark side to comedy and comedians. Lenny Bruce and Tony Hancock committed suicide. Peter Cook drank himself to death. Chaplin lived to a ripe old age, but he could be very maudlin, and he had a vicious temper. Discuss the tragic side of comedy and explain why some of the best comedians seem to be the saddest.

Presentation Guidelines

1. Write a script to accompany an imaginative, well-researched and interesting PowerPoint Presentation with video or audio clips to highlight your Presentation.

Presentation time = maximum 10 minutes.

2. Base your script about 50% on your essay but use the presentation as a chance to expand on your essay and say things about your comedian and his/her life and times that you haven't said in your essay. As in your essay, the focus is on a comedian or some comedian(s) and their work, but the approach and dynamic are different.

3. This is a spoken presentation. Written language doesn't always work when it's spoken or read out, so please don't just recite your essay. Write and illustrate a thought-provoking script that works as a sort of voice-over to the life in and around your chosen comedians and their work.

4. Maximum video time in your Presentation: 1/3rd. We need your thoughts and ideas and explanations. Your video / YouTube and other media clips are there to support your argument. Don't let them take over.

5. Have a structure: make sure you have an Introduction and a Conclusion and an argument in between. Don't leave us wondering what your point is or how well you understand the comedians whose work you have studied for 3 months. You have had lots of time to think about this. Organize and deliver a strong argument.

6. Your Presentation can take a different approach to the approach you have taken in your essay. If you have thoroughly studied your comedy and made it the focus of your essay, then you may have less to say about your comedian in your presentation and feel freer to take a new approach to someone else. Above all, in your Presentation, tell us something we don't know.

7. All of you will work hard to make this presentation. You deserve attention and good questions. Please join the Q&A after each Presentation.

8. When you've finished your presentation, please email the ppt. document to oconnor [at] emobile.ne.jp