

PAPER TOPICS: COMIC NOVEL

As mentioned previously, there is no set of topics for this assignment; however, there are guidelines which are outlined below.

- this is a research paper, which assumes that you have read beyond the course syllabus and acquainted yourself with and included secondary materials on comedy in your investigation
- length is 12-15 pages and you must follow the MLA guidelines for presenting documentation ("Works Cited" page imperative)
- no matter what approach you take, you must include at least **one** novel not discussed in class
- **Option One:** assuming you discover a writer you especially enjoy or wish to read more of, you can discuss his/her comic vision, techniques, tendencies, etc., in at least two but no more than three novels **other than** the one discussed in class (thus a total of no more than four books)
- **Option Two:** take a critical point of view, drawing from one or a number of the scholars on comedy, and apply their ideas or argue against their ideas by analyzing at least three but no more than four novels, one of which must be one not covered in the course
- keep in mind that whatever option you choose you must ground your ideas in theory and must analyze, argue, and explain your position in relation to research that has been done in the field
 - remember, though, you may endorse and agree with a critic or you may disagree with that person(s). You have the freedom of the approach that you choose but please remember that your job is write a clear, convincing argument of your point of view. You are not to simply summarize another's thinking and then add some glancing commentary. You are another scholar entering the debate; see your task in just that fashion.
- a number of secondary sources have been placed on reserve in the Reserve Book room of the library to help you
- below is a list of some, by no means all or even nearly all, contemporary comic novels by American writers
 - no matter which option you choose, you will discuss no less than three and no more than four novels

FICTION

Cathie Pelletier, *Once Upon a Time on the Banks*; Thomas Berger, *Little Big Man*, *The Houseguest*, *Neighbors*; Joseph Heller, *Good as Gold*; Vladimir Nabokov, *Invitation to a Beheading*, *Pnin*, *Pale Fire*; J. P. Donleavy, *The Ginger Man*; John Barth, *The Sotweed Factor*; Robert Coover, *The Universal Baseball Association, Inc.*; Steven Millhauser, *Edwin Mullhouse*; John Kennedy Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces*; Kurt Vonnegut, *God Bless You Mr. Rosewater*, *Breakfast of Champions*, *Slaughterhouse Five*; Rosalyn Drexler, *The Cosmopolitan Girl*; William Melvin Kelly, *Dem*; Molly Gloss, *Wild Life*; Terry Southern,

The Magic Christian, Blue Movie; James Wilcox, *Modern Baptists, North Gladiola*; Michael Mason, *Handling Sin*; Peter De Vries, *The Blood of the Lamb*; John Seelye, *The True Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; Philip Roth, *The Breast; Our Gang; Protnoy's Complaint*; Walker Percy, *Love in the Ruins*; Don DeLillo, *White Noise*; Alison Lurie, *The War Between the Tates*; Darius James, *Negrophobia*; Al Young, *Sitting Pretty*; John L'Heureux, *The Handmaid of Desire*; Paul Beatty, *The White Boy Shuffle*; Tom Robbins, *Another Roadside Attraction, Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*

THEORY

Maurice Charney, *Comedy High & Low & Comedy, New Perspectives*; Sarah Blacher Cohen, *Comic Relief*; Ronald Wallace, *The Last Laugh*; Paul Grawe, *Comedy in Space, Time and the Imagination*; Patrick O'Neill, *The Comedy of Entropy*; Fred Miller Robinson, *The Comedy of Language: Studeis in Modern Comic Literature*; Joseph W. Meeker, *The Comedy of Survival*; Morton Gurewitch, *Comedy, The Irrational Vision*; Elmer Blistein, *Comedy in Action*; Wylie Sypher, *Comedy*; Harry Levin, *Playboys & Killjoys*; Elaine B. Safer, *The Contemporary American Comic Epic*; Richard Hauck, *Cheerful Nihilism*; Max F. Schulz, *Black Humor Fiction of the Sixties*

Due: November 14

Length: 12-15 pages

Formatting: Papers should be neat and free of extreme typographical errors. Double_space and use 1" margins. If using a computer or word processor, use no less than and no more than a **12 pt font**. Number pages, beginning with second page, in upper right hand corner, and secure pages only with a staple in the upper left hand corner. On a cover page center the title and put in the lower right hand corner your name, the date the assignment is due, the topic number you are addressing, and my name.

Note of Caution. **Back up your work, back up your work, back up your work.** Buy a thumb drive and copy it there. Buy an extra cartridge of ink for your printer. I will not accept as an excuse a lost file or a dry cartridge. Plan ahead!!!!!!!!!!!!!!