

## Assignment #3 (Due October 5<sup>th</sup> @ 4pm)

### Assignment Text:

Over the past few weeks, we've covered a great deal of material on how humor, culture, and society interact. Let's try to condense these many-week ideas into a short essay.

For this assignment, you will write a **3-4 page argumentative essay** on the following two-part question:

How much of humor is cultural, and how much of humor is innate?

You are welcome to use any material – class discussions, group work, readings, new material, credible outside sources – to support your argument. I expect that your essay will:

- have a clear thesis statement outlining your major claim(s). Your statement should be underlined;
- use specific examples to support your argument(s). These examples can come from course material, or from your own exploration;
- incorporate a number of sources (minimally 3), one of which must be a credible source of your own finding. Citations should be in [APA format](#);
- be written in formal academic prose<sup>1</sup>;
- consider alternative claims and their merits, in relation to your own argument(s);
- “dig deep”.

If you're having trouble getting started, you are welcome to think about the following questions:

- What do different genres and styles of humor tell us about how humor manifests itself?
- How does humor vary around the world, both from your personal experiences and from the material we've covered in class?
- How are you defining your terms?
  - How are you interpreting “cultural”? Is it generational? Regional? Fandom? External? Nurture (in a “Nature vs. Nurture” sense)?
  - How are you interpreting “innate”? Personal perception? Something we're born with? An internal mechanism? Nature (in a “Nature vs. Nurture” sense)?
  - Does “how much of humor...” equate to “which parts of humor...”? And why?
- How might the articles we've studied in class answer this question?

Note that these questions are only leaping-off points for you to consider (especially if you're stuck); your essay does not need to explicitly reference these questions.

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<sup>1</sup> By “formal academic prose”, I mean that your essay should be clear, precise, and logical in structure. It also should remove many of the informalities that were permitted in the first two assignments – minimal uses of the first-person (instead, use the “[royal we](#)”), avoiding sentences that begin with conjunctions, etc. Importantly, “formal academic prose” does *not* mean you should fill your essay with unnecessary jargon or overly-complex sentence structures just to sound “more academic”.