

### Satire Assignment

Some people may think that political science is dry and boring. In this assignment, you get to prove to me that political science can be hilarious and you get to show off your critical thinking skills at the same time.

For the satire assignment, you will have to:

1. Find a piece of political satire that is applicable to either current events or the topics we are discussing in class (or both).
2. Share your satire with the class. You do this by emailing me a picture of or link to your satire by the night before your assigned date to present in class. I will put it into our slides for the day and you will take 2-3 minutes at the start of class to tell us about your satire.
3. Turn in a one-page critical analysis of the satire through Safe Assign.

Every student has been assigned a date to present their satire to the class and hand in their one-page critical analysis. **The assigned satire schedule is posted in the Assignments folder.** You are responsible for reading the schedule and turning in your assignment on the listed date.

Once you have a date, you need to find some satire. Satire uses humor to communicate a political message—usually through critiquing powerful political figures. If you are uncertain if something is satire, check out the short document called “An Introduction to Satire” in the Readings folder on Blackboard. You can also email your satire to me and we can talk about it.

Where can you find satire? There are plenty of good places to look. For political cartoons, one great and very current site is: <http://cagle.com/>. You can also check out editorial cartoons organized by cartoonist at: <http://www.gocomics.com/explore/editorials>. If you are looking for a satirical news article, there is no better source than The Onion at <http://www.theonion.com>. A similar publication from the UK, The Daily Mash, can be found at <http://www.thedailymash.co.uk/>. Although it has a lot of UK-specific news, try the international news tab for items that may be more applicable to our class. Finally, there is also the video political satire option. The Onion has some videos on its website and you can also get video clips from <http://thedailyshow.com>, Full Frontal with Samantha Bee (<http://samanthabee.com>) or even throwbacks like the Nightly Show with Larry Wilmore (<http://www.cc.com/shows/the-nightly-show>) or the Colbert Report <http://colbertnation.com>. John Oliver’s HBO show *Last Week Tonight* has its own YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LastWeekTonight>. I leave the rest of the online satire search up to you, generation of digital natives. If you choose the video clip option, try to keep the clips under 5 minutes.

You are likely to find a lot of funny things while searching for political satire, but remember that you are limited to only one piece of satire for your presentation, and remember that it has to be relevant to the course. Thus, if we are talking about democracy, you may want to bring in a cartoon about democratic transitions in the Middle East, or a satirical news article about elections in the US, or a video clip about the erosion of democracy in Russia, or something else along those lines. Remember that current political events are always relevant, so if you keep it topical and political, you should be fine. If you have a question about whether your satire meets this standard, please ask.

Finding your satire is the easy part. The harder part is the one-page critical analysis.

**Your one-page critical analysis of the satire is the most important part of this assignment.**

You need to write one page about the satire you found, keeping the following questions in mind: Who is portrayed in the satire? What is the context? Why is it funny? How are the major players represented and what does this say about the satirist's thoughts on them? What point do you think the satirist is trying to convey? Does he or she do a good job of conveying this point? How does this satire relate to the concepts we are talking about in class? Satire usually has all kinds of hidden (and not-so-hidden) political critiques that are there for you to find if you look closely. Show me that you can look closely and think critically.

Your one-page critical assessment should be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than one page. Please include the cartoon or link in the document; it won't count towards your one-page limit. You should turn your critical analysis in through Safe Assign by the due date. Please email me if you have any questions at all!