

FINAL TAKEHOME EXAM

AMS 243 -- American Humor, Fall 2009, Professor Lavender

For the final exam, you will be asked to write about three sources for American humor: Surprise/Subversion, Imitation/Appropriation, and Assimilation/Inclusion. For information about that, refer to: <http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/243/Surprise-Imitation-Voice.pdf>

1. Guidelines for the Final Exam:

- a. All papers will be typed, double-spaced, and following the Chicago Manual of Style format for footnotes or endnotes. (See <http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/footnote.html>)
- b. Papers will be submitted via www.turnitin.com under the course AMS 243 - American Humor - Spring 2009; The course ID is 3000142 and the password for the course is "lavender"
- c. Each answer will be approximately 200-200 words; be succinct, but refer to the texts we have used to support your argument.
- d. Due Date: 11:59:00 pm 12-16-2009; there is also a LATE drop box if you do not make that deadline, but papers will be marked down. Please do not put your paper in the LATE box unless the on-time box is closed.
- e. You will receive a receipt for your paper; retain this until you receive your final course grade in case here is any problem.

2. Questions: You will answer EACH of these three questions.

a. SURPRISE/SUBVERSION:

How do the texts that we have addressed throughout the semester, but especially in the second half of the course, represent the use of surprise and subversion on American humor? Be sure to address Thurber's memoirs and Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions* in your answer.

b. IMITATION/APPROPRIATION:

Discuss the role that drag and minstrelsy have played in American humor, using examples drawn from the texts we have addressed this semester, but especially those we have used in the second half of the course (and *Some Like It Hot*). What are the reason(s) that different groups have used both imitation and appropriation, and how does this address the challenge of American society?

c. ASSIMILATION/INCLUSION:

Discuss the various kinds of "identity" humor -- such as Women's humor, Queer humor, Jewish humor, and other ethnic humors -- and why/how they have developed in twentieth-century America. How have these humors been an attempt to gain a "voice" in American culture? Support your argument using examples drawn from the texts we have addressed this semester, but especially those we have used in the second half of the course (and *Blazing Saddles* and *The Producers*).