

Chuckle, Giggle, Groan!

Humor and satire in drama and literature through the ages to modern times.

Course #	20SCH
Format:	Seminar
Moderator(s):	Linda Honan
Date and Time:	Monday, 10:00- Noon 10 weeks, starting Feb. 24, 2020
Location:	Loomis Retirement Community, So. Hadley
Maximum number of participants:	15
Auditors accepted:	Yes, up to 2

Purpose: We will explore humorous/satirical drama, literature, and movies from Europe and North America, such as works by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Moliere, Swift, Voltaire, Charles Lamb, Twain, Gilbert and Sullivan, P.G. Wodehouse, the Marx Brothers, James Thurber, Woody Allen and Monty Python.

Description: Funny, amusing, entertaining characters and scenes from books, movies and plays stay with us for a long time, brightening our days when times are hard. In this seminar we will revisit our individual favorites, sharing them with others who may not be familiar with them. Distinguishing between humorous and satirical approaches, we will consider the historical context of our chosen characters, noting the changing of attitudes even within our own lifetimes. For example, some things that were once unremarkable are now perceived as morally objectionable, as in using blackface characters by white actors for humorous effect. Even more surprising may be the amount of old material that still amuses us, despite the huge upheavals in manners and morals through the years.

Role of participants: Participants will give a 20-30-minute presentation on a single humorist, reporting on his/her life and work. The presenter will then lead a group discussion.

Resources: The moderator will provide a list of authors, playwrights, TV and movie writers, from which seminar participants may select. As with such modern humorists as Woody Allen, Sid Caesar and the Marx Brothers, writer and character(s) are often the same. Participants may choose a topic outside the list provided, after consultation with the moderator.

About the Moderator: Linda Honan is a retired museum educator and UMass program coordinator. She has moderated a number of seminars.