

American Studies 430  
American Humor  
M - Th: 3:30 - 4:50  
GHH 108  
Roger Williams University  
Fall Semester, 2010

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Take-Home Final Examination

**Due:** Last day of Finals, December 21, via Blackboard.

**Length:** c. 5 pp should be plenty. I'll read more if you get inspired.

**Instructions:** You'll remember Stephanie Kozinski (The Standup Comic as Anthropologist: Intentional Culture Critic) pp. 86 - 114 of Boskin, and her assertion that Standup Comics "pattern their comic material close to everyday reality, making obvious behavioral patterns, explicit and tacit operating knowledge and other insights about American Society objects of conscious reflection....The standup comedian can elevate his audience to a new cultural focus." In other words, he or she holds a mirror up to our society and lets us see things about ourselves of which we remain largely ignorant otherwise.

I'd like to have you choose at least three standup comedians—either the ones she cites or one from the lists I've provided you, and illustrate her assertion by analyzing the behavior patterns which form the butt of their humor. Use examples from either the video routines or the materials in Baker or Watkins.

Try for variety, if you can, black, white, male, female, edgy, traditional, but go for the ones you enjoy the most.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** If you would like to try your hand at analyzing some of the joke types, go ahead and take a stab at it. Why was the particular joke prominent when it joined the joke cycle, and what does it tell us about the culture of that period.