

Call for Papers: A Special Issue for *Studies in American Humor*

“Participation and Humor in North America”

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We seek submissions for a special issue of *Studies in American Humor* that will investigate the ways in which humor and comedy relate to forms of participation. It takes as its point of departure the assumption that comedic performances—whether in stand-up (Champion and Kunze 2021), (late-night) television talk shows, satiric documentary, sitcoms, “ironic activism” (Day 2011: 2), satirical newspapers, digital trends, or other formats—represent moments of engagement that are centered on the notion of “participation.” In a narrower sense, this participation describes the relationship between audiences and the comic performer(s) in particular settings: audiences have to follow the humor event and engage by providing reactions, whether at a venue, at home, or online. In this vein, the special issue is particularly interested in the strategies comedians use to engage and excite audiences, such as, for example, cringe humor, insult comedy, “charged humor” (Krefting 2014: 2), or parodic humor.

Aside from the relationship between performers and audiences, we are also interested in institutional frames and hurdles that regulate who can(not) participate in comedic settings, and how. Since late-night comedy as well as the stand-up scene were for the longest time predominantly white and male, for example, we want to think about fundamental concerns of participation in democratic systems. What instruments of exclusion and discouragement from participation are used in comedic performances? How do comedic performances encourage, enable, or hinder political participation? These concerns include, for instance, who is invited to comedy clubs and similar venues, what level of knowledge and education are required to follow the performance, and how other structural, financial, or political mechanisms work to exclude both comics and audiences.

Given the unique immersive and immediate setting of stand-up comedy, as well as the double-edged frame of late-night talk shows as *infotainment*, we welcome contributions that consider the participatory mechanisms of these formats, especially. Since (political, social) participation affects gender, class, ethnic, and racial identities in the United States, we particularly welcome work that highlights the nexus of such groups.

We ask for full manuscripts (5,000-8,000 words) to be submitted by **September 16, 2022** to the Editorial Manager portal of *Studies in American Humor* <https://www.editorialmanager.com/sah>. Expected release of the special issue is Fall 2023.