

The Humorous Times

Newsletter of the International Society for Humor Studies

Winter/Spring 2019

Volume 32, Issue 1/2

Association News

31st Conference of the International Society for Humor Studies

From Christian Hempelmann, 2019 Conference Convener

The 2019 ISHS Conference will be held from June 24 to June 28, 2019, at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas. The conference is co-organized by Kiki Hempelmann, Texas A&M University–Commerce, Dale Koike, University of Texas at Austin, Elisa Gironzetti, University of Maryland, College Park, and Salvatore Attardo, Texas A&M University–Commerce. As in previous years, participants will present papers in breakout sessions, specially themed panels, and a poster session. Each conference day will be book-ended at its start and end with a plenary presentation by one of eleven notable speakers. Plenary talks will include *The Dark Side of Humor* (Beatrice Priego-Valverde, Aix-Marseille Université), *Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humor in the Art of the Middle Ages* (Renetta Ribold Benton, Pace University), *Stand-up Comedy as Disability Activism?: Audience Perceptions of Comedians with Disabilities* (Sharon Lockyer, Brunel University), *The Social Functions of Disparagement Humor: Advances in Theory and Research* (Tom Ford, Western Carolina University), and *Marginal Wit: What (Non)humor can Tell us about Humor* (Nancy Bell, Washington State University). Registered participants, who RSVPed to the special events invitation, can attend the Opening Reception as well as the Closing Banquet, which will include award ceremonies. The traditional joke telling contest will take place on Wednesday at the Scholz Biergarten (<http://www.scholzgarten.com>). The host city Austin is notable for many interesting and quirky characteristics for you to explore. The city is also surrounded by beautiful nature settings. But be aware that the heat of Texas summers should not be messed with!

For the Conference program, visit <https://bit.ly/2IFY10m>. For additional registration, travel, and accommodations information, visit the Conference website at www.tamuc.edu/ishs2019 or write to the Conference at ishs2019@tamuc.edu.

Upcoming ISHS Conferences

The 32nd ISHS Conference is planned for the Summer of 2020 on the Forli campus of the University of Bologna in Italy. More conference details will be provided in upcoming newsletters. The International Society for Humor Studies is still accepting proposals for the 2021 ISHS Conference in North America. If you are a North America humor scholar and would like to host the 2021 ISHS Conference at your college or university, contact the ISHS Executive Secretary, Martin Lampert, at ishs@hnu.edu for more details on how to craft and submit a proposal to host an ISHS Conference.

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Next Issue

The next *Humorous Times* is due in August 2019. Items for the August issue should be sent to ishs@hnu.edu.

Other Upcoming Events

Nineteenth International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter

Bonn, Germany, July 1-6, 2019

The 19th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter will be held in Bonn, Germany from July 1 to July 6, 2019. Maria Bley, Eckart von Hirschhausen, Lisa Linge-Dahl and Lena Straßburger will be the local organizers. For more information, visit the summer school website at <http://humoursummerschool.org>.

Humour and Satire in British Romanticism Conference

Durham University, United Kingdom, September 13-14, 2019

The Humour and Satire in British Romanticism Conference will be held on September 13 and 14 at the University of Durham. The Conference will explore how Romantic writers navigated the various and often contradictory conceptualizations of humour. Conference topics will include: (1) humour in translation and across cultures, (2) the politics of humour, (3) gender and humor, (4) romantic readings from classical satire, (5) puns and linguistic ambiguity, and (6) scientific understandings of laughter and humor. For more information, write to Daniel Norman, the conference organizer at romantichumourandsatire@gmail.com.

International Conference on Verbal Humor

University of Alicante, Spain, October 23-25, 2019

The GRIALE Research Group invite humor scholars to the *International Conference on Verbal Humor*, from October 23-25, 2019 at the University of Alicante in Spain. This conference is a fantastic opportunity to bring together different approaches to humor, to share knowledge on the latest research on the linguistics of humor and to create new research bonds among the scholars. Invited presenters include Salvatore Attardo (Texas A&M University–Commerce), Tony Veale (University College Dublin), Victor Raskin (Purdue University), Nancy Bell (Washington State University), Jef Verschueren (University of Antwerp), and Neal R. Norrick (Saarland University). For more information, visit the GRIALE website at <http://griale.dfelg.ua.es>.

Book Review

Humor at Work in Teams, Leadership, Negotiations, Learning and Health.

Reviewed by Tracey Platt, University of Sunderland, UK

Tabea Scheel & Christine Gockel (2017). *Humor at Work in Teams, Leadership, Negotiations, Learning and Health*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. XII + 143 pp. E-book: £39.99, ISBN 978-3-319-65691-5. Paperback: £49.99, ISBN 978-3-319-65689-2.

The book series ‘Springer Briefs in Psychology’ aims to present their readership with concise summaries of the cutting-edge and practical applications of research on a wide range of topics within the field of psychology. The collection showcases emerging theories and empirical research. Psychologists Scheel and Gockel present an ambitiously titled book that aims to summarize humor at work: in teams, leadership, negotiations, learning and health. As we spend many hours within the workplace, investigating humor in this context is very valid. However, it is also potentially challenging given the aims of the book series. Too many brief topics within one volume can only come at the expense of depth to the information being presented.

Apart from the book itself offering the five core chapters, it also includes an introduction giving the reader the context of the book, a chapter on definitions, theories and measurement of humor, as well as a very useful chapter on emerging topics for humor research and practice, namely diversity and virtuality, which will potentially be a catalyst for more research in the area. Also, for anyone interested, an appendix

is included, which lists a selection of humor measures. Scheel and Glockel explain in the introduction that the title actually refers to “core subjects” of humor in teams, leadership, negotiation, learning and health that are all set within the context of work, and is not meant to be “humor at work” in teams, etc., which is how it also could be understood.

Chapter two offers a concise version of the definitions, theories and measurements of humor. For anyone seeking a quick overview, chapter two may be useful. However, I do believe there are better guides for this on the market (e.g. Martin & Ford, 2019; Ruch, 1998). The sub categories are divided into definitions, theories, specific concepts of humor, functions of humor and measuring humor, along with a conclusion.

The third chapter presents humor in teams. This is contextualized as the interpersonal function of humor, which is separated into the “light,” positive, the “dark side,” namely, the negative aspects of team humor, where Glockel relates her own findings from two experiments that showed that the use of humor does not change how the team is perceived, but may change the perception of other individual team members. Somewhat confusingly, albeit organizational psychology has a well-established distinction between teams and groups, the rest of the chapter uses teams and groups interchangeably. The subsection of relevant processes, relies heavily on the work of Cooper (2008) to explain why humor impacts on team relationships. The category on “the past,” delves into the evolution of laughter and humor, whereas the category on “the present” showcases research that has been directly influenced by the evolutionary theories. The sub category “A look at the details” draws on a body of work within linguistics, rather than psychology. The section that awards a note of caution celebrates the potential of evolutionary research to provide a strong theoretical framework to conducting humor research in teams. Humor consultants and those writing humor popular-press books, should, when reading this section, ensure they bring along their sense of humor. As with all the following chapters, future research and recommendation for practice are also specified.

Chapter four explores humor in leadership. The chapter has subsections which identify topics such as: the functions of humor used by leaders, how humorous leaders are perceived, the complexity of effects, the relationship between leaders and subordinate and subordinate reactions to leader humor, leader humor and gender. This chapter expands on the previous by looking at the impact humor of leaders has on subordinates and the relationship between the two. The advice for future research in this area is extensive and logically concluded from the presented materials.

The fifth core chapter elaborates on humor in negotiations and how to persuade others with humor. This chapter seems rather light on relatable psychological content. The subsection on general functions highlights the lack of empirical evidence and the research into specific functions of humor in negotiations (primarily) conducted by linguists. This may be in part due to not enough psychological research in this area. This should mean the potential for future research suggestions would be substantial, unfortunately it is not. As the sub-section on negotiation outcomes relates its success to power, this chapter could easily have been condensed and incorporated into one of the other core chapters and still retained the same amount of relevant information, a statement that is also true for chapter six; humor and learning in the workplace.

Chapter seven, humor in health, is clearly an area Scheel feels comfortable and one where general research into the association between humor and health can also be related to a work context. This was the strongest of the core chapter topics and where the author showed a substantial understanding. However, the most in-depth subsections were not the ones where the information related to a work environment but to the more general findings. The final chapter offers two new and valid paths of research for humor scholars. The first challenges us to bridge the humor gap, with globalization of the workforce, the potential for misunderstandings, based on cultural differences, should be better understood. The second, on a similar theme relates to our use of humor in online platforms and how this translates.

The authors provide, as an appendix, a selection of 21 humor measures, ranging from 1983-2016. Some have an obvious focus on work while others are very general. For some information on reliability (sample items, validity studies) is given, for others not. It is not clear whether these scales are recommended for use in research (or application) or just a compilation of instruments. In sum, the authors do not outline the purpose or their selection criteria for inclusion and as some of these scales are now outdated and others not included, this would be essential, as the perpetuation of outdated information is not helpful to the field.

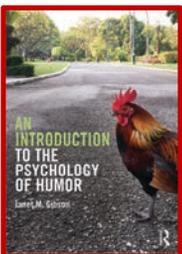
This book review does come with a proviso. The authors are not accurate guides through the literature, especially how humor concepts evolved. Speaking for my own area of specialism it was disheartening to read, for example, how the Duchenne laughter was described and attributed (p. 36). For the record, Ruch in 1993, first theorized about the possibility of Duchene laughter, which occurs when intensity of a Duchenne smile passes a threshold when experiencing the emotion of exhilaration. Bonanno and Keltner, quoting Ruch, added weight to this idea when they explained "... defined as Duchenne smiles accompanied by audible laughter and an open mouth (Keltner, 1995; Ruch, 1993)" (p. 126) in their 1997 paper looking at the facial expressions of emotion and the course of conjugal bereavement. It was not Provine (2000) as reported in chapter three (humor in teams: Interpersonal functions of humor). This is one example of several and the concern is that readers of the book will consume a rewritten history of the field.

If you are searching for a fast track to finding the gaps in the literature, for ideas for a project, or recommendations for practice, you may find this book useful. If you want an accurate and more in-depth representation of the state of the art of humor research, it may be prudent to source the original or acquire the information from leading, well-established humor scholars, with a strong conceptualization of the history of the theories and definitions.

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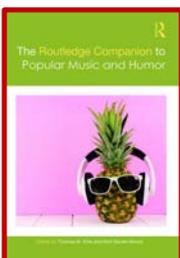
Recent Publications



An Introduction to the Psychology of Humor

Janet E. Gibson (2019). *An Introduction to the Psychology of Humor*. New York: Routledge, 262 pp., Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-367-02904-3, Paperback ISBN: 978-0-367-02908-1.

From the Publisher: Studying the psychology of humor contributes to our understanding of who we are, how we think, how we relate to others, and how situational contexts matter to our everyday behavior. *An Introduction Psychology to the Psychology of Humor* presents research conducted from ten distinct psychological fields on the experience of humor, providing comprehensive coverage of the factors that affect its detection and comprehension, individual degree of amusement or liking, and our ability to produce it. Each chapter includes classroom activities to encourage active learning, discussion of the perspective's approach, suggestions for related psychology topics, and activities for practicing the process of psychological inquiry.



The Routledge Companion to Popular Music and Humor

Thomas M. Kitts & Nick Baxter-Moore, Eds. (2019). *The Routledge Companion to Popular Music and Humor*. New York: Routledge, 434 pp., E-Book ISBN 978-1-351-26664-2; Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-138-57756-5.

From the Publisher: An essential part of human expression, humor plays a role in all forms of art, and humorous and comedic aspects have always been part of popular music. For the first time, *The Routledge Companion to Popular Music and Humor* draws together scholarship exploring how the element of humor interacts with the artistic and social aspects of the musical experience. Discussing humor in popular music across eras from Tin Pan Alley to the present, and examining the role of humor in different musical genres, case studies of artists, and media forms, this volume is a groundbreaking collection that provides a go-to reference for scholars in music, popular culture,

and media studies. While most scholars, when considering humor's place in popular music, tend to focus on more "literate" forms, the contributors in this collection seek to fill in the gaps by surveying all kinds of humor, critical theories, and popular music. *The Routledge Companion to Popular Music and Humor* covers it all, presenting itself as the most comprehensive treatment of the topic to date.

Language, Creativity, and Humour Online



Camilla Vásquez (2019). *Language, Creativity and Humour Online*. New York: Routledge, 202 pp., Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-138-06682-3; Paperback: 978-1-13806-683-0. E-book ISBN: 978-1-315-15902-7.

From the Publisher: *Language, Creativity and Humour Online* offers new insights into the creative linguistic practices found in diverse digital contexts, such as social media platforms. It introduces new digital genres and contexts, expanding existing research on computer mediated communication (CMC) and covering key concepts in research on linguistic creativity. The book presents original linguistic analyses of a variety of digital genres, including: Novelty Twitter accounts and political humour, Tumblr Chats, and Amazon review parodies. This timely book uncovers the linguistic and interactional mechanisms underlying various types of creative, playful, and humorous texts online. It is essential reading for students and researchers working in the areas of language and media, and language and communication.

ISHS Members can receive a 25% discount on all of these Routledge humor studies titles with the ISHS membership discount code from Taylor and Francis.

Recent Articles in Humor Studies

The Humorous Times announces recent articles from *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research* and by researchers who publish elsewhere within humor studies. The following list, compiled by the ISHS Executive Secretary, includes articles published since December 2018. If you have a recent publication, let us know. We will include it in a future newsletter.

- Adler-Nissen, R., & Tsinovoi, A. (2019). International misrecognition: The politics of humour and national identity in Israel's public diplomacy. *European Journal of International Relations*, 25(1), 3–29. doi: 10.1177/1354066117745365
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