

Mock the Weak: Comedy and the Politics of Representation

14th-15th September 2016, Teesside University/ARC Stockton

Comedy is an ambivalent medium that ranges from the reactionary and conservative to the radical and subversive. It has both a political role in entrenching or overturning existing hierarchies of power, and a psychological one, in giving voice to taboo topics. At a time when questions related to comedy (regarding the limits of free speech, the power dynamic inherent in joking, and the representation of minority groups frequently othered in mainstream discourse) are increasingly prominent in political debate and news journalism, this conference makes space for academic debate to lead the conversation. This conference aims to bring together delegates from a range of disciplines and covering a spectrum of research interests, united by the common strand of representational techniques employed in comedy in its various guises (as stand-up performance, written or visual text, or joking utterance).

Confirmed Keynotes:

Dr Sharon Lockyer “Reversing Disability Discourses in Live Comic Performance”

Dr Anshuman Mondal “Taking Liberties? Free speech, multiculturalism and the ethics of satire”

Also Included:

- An evening of stand-up comedy by comedian and disability rights campaigner **Laurence Clark**
- Student performance of *NSFW*
- Comedy writing workshop with **Eddie Robson** (writer of BBC Radio 4’s *Welcome to Our Village: Please Invade Carefully*)
- Social media for academia postgraduate workshop with **Dr Nadine Muller**
- Publishing workshop for postgraduates and ECRs with **Dr Rosie White**

We welcome abstracts for **20-minute papers** on comedy and the politics of representation as it appears in any form, and would particularly welcome papers in the following areas:

- comedy and disability
- comedy and ethnicity
- comedy and religion
- comedy and gender
- comedy and sexuality
- comedy and class
- comedy and age/ageing
- comedy and national identity
- satire/freedom of speech debates

Please submit a **250-word abstract** to mocktheweak2016@gmail.com along with a 50-word bio note by **31st March 2016**. Decisions to be communicated by the end of April 2016.

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