

**Spring 2019**  
**PHIL 4450, Section 01**  
**Philosophy of Humor**  
**Second Paper Assignment**  
**Prof. Douglas Ficek**

*Write a paper, six-to-eight pages in length, on one of the following topics – preferably the one that you find the most interesting. Revise your work carefully, and remember to cite your sources correctly using APA, MLA, or Chicago guidelines. Your typed and stapled essay is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, April 17th.*

1. What are jokes, according to Noël Carroll? What are jokes, according to Ted Cohen? Compare and contrast their respective theories, using some of your favorite jokes as examples.
2. What is philosophical about stand-up comedy? Answer thoughtfully, and use three additional sources in addition to the course materials, which, by the way, include The Humor Lab.
3. What does Joanne R. Gilbert say about comedic self-deprecation, and how does it relate to the work of Richard Pryor and Hannah Gadsby? Do you think that self-deprecation is good or bad for socially marginalized comedians?
4. What does Ronald de Sousa argue? What does Aaron Smuts argue? Compare and contrast their respective analyses of the ethics of humor, and develop your own position with reference to theirs.
5. What does Katie Watson argue in “Gallows Humor in Medicine,” and what do you make of it? Use three additional sources in your discussion, and develop your own position with respect to hers.
6. What does Chris A. Kramer argue in “An Existentialist Account of the Role of Humor Against Oppression,” and how does it relate to *The Last Laugh*? Use three additional sources in your discussion.