



Cairo Institute of
Liberal Arts and Sciences

On the culture of Irony

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Course flow

Week 1: Introduction and everyday understanding(s) of irony

Content: course outline; why irony is interesting; *sukhriya*; irony, sarcasm, satire; irony as philosophy; what is philosophy.

Study materials:

- Dictionaries
- Alanis Morissette – Ironic <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jne9t8sHpUc>
- Rasha Hilwe article
- Bassem Yousef

Assignment: Bring an example of irony you've encountered to next week's class.

Week 2: Irony's myriad forms

Content: verbal, situational, cosmic and dramatic irony; the difficulty or impossibility of defining irony; objective and subjective irony.

Study materials:

- The story of Solomon and the Angel of Death
- Spongebob – Hide and then what happens
<https://www.megacartoons.net/hide-and-then-what-happens/>

Week 3: Socrates

Content: the Socratic problem; Socratic/complex irony; the art of living; irony as a pose.

Study materials:

- Plato – Apology
- Gregory Vlastos – Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher
- Seinfeld – The Chinese Restaurant

Week 4: Romantic irony I

Content: romanticism; paradox of consciousness; the finite and the infinite.

Study materials:

- Al-Ma'arri poem Angel of Death
- Friedrich Schlegel – On Incomprehensibility and Fragments 42, 108.

Week 5: Romantic irony II

Content: irony as negativity; sincerity.

Study materials:

- Søren Kierkegaard – On the Concept of Irony
- Robert J. McGill jr. – Chic Ironic Bitterness

Week 6: Irony and the Internet

Content: Poe's law; irony punctuation; alternating caps.

Study materials:

- Lucie Chateau – “Damn I Didn't Know Y'all Was Sad? I Thought It Was Just Memes”: Irony, Memes and Risk in Internet Depression Culture
- Finding Ola

Week 7: Cynicism and false consciousness

Content: irony and cynicism; indifference; escape from irony.

Study materials:

- Peter Sloterdijk – Critique of Cynical Reason
- Rick and Morty, excerpts from S03E09 and S03E10.

Assignment: 2000 word essay.

Week 8: Reflection

Content: the future of irony; post-irony.

Study materials:

- Richard J. Bernstein – Ironic Life
- David Foster Wallace on irony.