

## Call for Papers

# Critical Humor Studies in Times of Crisis: Aesthetics, Approaches, and Applications

Pomona College – Claremont, CA – April 25-26, 2025

**Proposal Deadline:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Critical humor studies is a framework for critically analyzing how humor shapes and structures society; it roots humor in a broader social context, social relations, and social issues, and examines the impact of humor beyond the field of entertainment and western cultures. As an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field of inquiry, critical humor studies aims to examine the various ways humor functions within and against overlapping and intersecting structures of power and inequality. It is a framework for interrogating how jokes, comedy, satire, and everyday forms of humor can reinforce existing hierarchies, create them anew, and/or try to contest or subvert them.

As we take a more critical approach to the study of humor, our belief is that critical humor studies is an intervention that fosters social justice and cultural transformation, employing critical theory, antiracist frameworks, class analysis, storytelling, decolonial perspectives, and feminist theory and praxis to challenge institutional and structural inequalities where it is possible, all the while amplifying the voices of those most marginalized.

We know that our commitment to critical studies of humor and structures of power requires that we remain engaged, and one way of remaining engaged is attending to the seemingly mundane; those practices which are typically seen as innocuous like laughter and pleasure, to understand the deep connections between humor and power, and how that connection resonates all over the world.

This two-day conference will serve as the inaugural meeting of the Critical Humor Studies Association. “Critical Humor Studies in Times of Crisis: Aesthetics, Approaches, and Applications” will be held at Pomona College and as a hybrid in-person and live streamed event, from April 25-26, 2025.

We will be joined for **keynote discussions** by four renowned critical humor scholars:

- **Bambi Haggins** (Department of Film and Media Studies, UC Irvine)
- **Cynthia Willett** (Department of Philosophy, Emory University)
- **Danielle Fuentes Morgan** (Department of English, Santa Clara)
- **Luvell Anderson** (Department of Philosophy, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana)

## SUBMISSIONS

The hybrid conference welcomes proposals for roundtables, panels, or 15-20 minute individual presentations that engage with critical humor studies, broadly defined. We invite submissions from across the humanities and social sciences that take critical approaches to studying humor or comedy. Presenters may offer traditional papers, creative presentations and/or performances, or other genres that enable robust discussions of humor from a critical perspective.

## POTENTIAL THEMES (not limited to):

- Humor, Inequality, and Social Justice

- Dark Humor/Humor and Taboo
- Comedy and Political Debate
- Dehumanizing Humor and Genocide
- Feminist Humor and Feminist Killjoy Comedy
- The Politics of Humor in a Global Context
- Comedy Industry Politics
- Humor and Activism
- Comedy and the Politics of Pleasure
- The Politics of Race and Racist Ridicule
- Humor, Identity, and Power
- Comedy and Taste Cultures
- Humor and Mental Health
- Satire and its Limits

Attendees will be able to present and/or attend either in person at Pomona College or online via Zoom. Registration for the conference is free of charge, but presenters must become members of the Critical Humor Studies Association, which you can do through our website (<https://criticalhumorstudies.org/>) as of January 1, 2025.

Please submit **proposals of 250-500 words** [HERE](#) by January 15, 2025. In your submission, please clearly indicate the format of your presentation (talk, performance, panel, roundtable, etc.) and if you would like to present in person or virtually. There will be *no* preference for virtual or in person presentation, we simply need this information to plan the event! If you would like to present virtually, please indicate your time zone so that we can be as inclusive as possible when we're planning the panels.

**Notifications of acceptance will be made by February 7, 2025** and a tentative schedule will be posted soon after.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

A [hotel block](#) has been reserved at the **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Claremont** from April 24 - April 27, 2025; the nightly conference rate is \$174.00 + taxes. Please use the **booking code CHP**. This rate will be available until April 5, 2025.

This conference is sponsored by the *Critical Humor Studies Association* and The Intercollegiate Department of Africana Studies at Pomona and Pitzer Colleges. It has been generously funded by the Academic Planning Committee at Pitzer College, the Office of the President at Pomona College, and the English, Philosophy, and Media Studies Departments at Pomona College.

Questions may be directed to the conference chair, Professor J Finley, at [j.finley@pomona.edu](mailto:j.finley@pomona.edu).