

# THE SHAME OF SATIRE

with David Misch



Comedy has been mocking society's foibles since the poets of ancient Rome but right now may be the Golden Age of satire, with "The Daily Show," Bill Maher, John Oliver, Stephen Colbert and The Onion shaming the shameless by taking pungent, potent pokes at society's hypocrisies.

But does shaming have any effect? Even many satirists don't think so, yet push-back's been harsh, from the "Charlie Hebdo" massacre in Paris to imprisonment of Chinese bloggers to a comedian on trial in Germany.

Satirists are always being accused of being offensive; generally, they don't care. George Carlin said "It's the duty of a comedian to find out where the line is... then step over it."

One thing is sure; wherever you draw it, your line will be different than mine. So how do we decide when satire goes too far?

This multimedia talk explores how satire challenges society's taboos from forbidden farts in Afghanistan to the silencing of a South African puppet, along with Groucho Marx, Richard Pryor, Monty Python, "South Park," Key & Peele, the Russian Orthodox Church, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, Janet Jackson's right breast, and two outrageous "Saturday Night Live" sketches written by former U.S. Senator Al Franken.

And Mel Brooks' "The Producers," a touchstone for controversy from the moment it appeared. To some a hilarious put-down of Hitler, to others a horrifying diminution of the Holocaust, the nature of "The Producers" is still hotly debated.

Most of all, we'll see how satire gets people to examine their assumptions. Because, ultimately, satire is less about changing your mind than getting you to think.

**Note: Contains mature content.**

"Misch is a true satire scholar" – The Houston Chronicle

"Brilliant, funny, insightful, and the talk sparked a terrific dialogue."  
Ken Lazebnik, Pepperdine University

*Among David Misch's TV and movie credits are "Mork and Mindy," "Saturday Night Live" and "The Muppets Take Manhattan." He's the author of "A Beginner's Guide To Corruption" and "Funny: The Book," and has spoken at Yale, Columbia, Oxford, the Smithsonian, Disney, Sony, DreamWorks, Lucasfilm, Midwest Popular Culture Association, Willamette Writers Conference, University of Sydney, Raindance Film Festival (London), CineStudio Paris and the VIEW Cinema Conference (Torino, Italy). Too much more at [davidmisch.com](http://davidmisch.com).*