Contemporary Comedic Genius Series

*Saturday Night Live: 1975-80*

- Sonoma State University OLLI
  - Mondays, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
  - Sept. 24th – October 29th, 2018
  - Cooperage Hall

- Instructor:
  - Martin J. Marshall
    - martinmarshall@pacbell.net
    - (415) 812-3201
What Is
The Contemporary Comedic Genius Series?

– Designed specifically for OLLI classes
  • Calstate Eastbay, Carnegie Mellon, SF State, Santa Clara U.,
    Dominican U.

– Instructor:
  • Martin J. Marshall

– Class format:
  • Clips
  • Comedic technique analysis
  • Context of the times
  • Great comedians
  • Class interaction
What Comedians Are Covered?

• Woody Allen
• Monty Python
• SNL: The Gilda Age 1975-80
• Robin Williams
• Jonathan Winters
• Jon Stewart
• Stephen Colbert
• Billy Crystal
• Richard Pryor
• Mel Brooks
• Smothers Brothers
• Garry Trudeau
• Lenny Bruce
• George Carlin
• Moms Mabley
• Tom Lehrer
• Firesign Theater
• The Committee
Who needs comedy anyway?

• Comedy = Dopamine, the neural transmitter
• Dopamine in seniors
  • Better sex life
  • Better memory
  • Better sleep
  • Greater enjoyment of life
  • More vigor
  • ---Did we mention better sex life?
Average American
Average American on Comedy
Our 6 Weeks of SNL 1975-80

• Syllabus, formation of SNL, Gilda
• Musical medleys (season 1)
• Belushi and Akroyd
• Medleys Season 2
• Bill Murray
• Medleys Season 3
• Ensemble pieces
• Medleys Season 4
• A quick look at clips of post-SNL films
• Medleys Season 5
Saturday Night Live

• Johnny Carson got tired and wanted to do fewer Tonight shows
• NBC agreed to move re-runs from Saturday night to weeknights only
• Lorne Michaels, who co-wrote Laugh In, hired as producer for new show to fill the spot
• Lorne hires Gilda Radner, whom he knew from Toronto Second City
• Gilda insists upon hiring John Belushi, who was working with National Lampoon
• Dan Akroyd, also from Chicago Second City, drives to NYC on motorcycle to audition
• Chevy Chase is recruited from National Lampoon
• Roone Arledge at ABC owns the title “Saturday Night Live”, but his show folds after one year, so the title becomes available in the second year. Bill Murray comes over from the folded ABC show to join SNL in the second season
• Jane Curtin came from “The Proposition”, a Boston area improv group
• Garret Morris and Lorraine Newman are also hired for the initial cast
Competition to NBC Saturday Night

• ABC had “Saturday Night Live With Howard Cosell”
  – Bill Murray was part of the ABC cast
  – ABC cast was dubbed the “Prime Time Players”
• Herb Sargent dubbed NBC’s cast the
  – “Not Ready For Prime Time Players”
Saturday Night Live (1975-80)

- Producer: Lorne Michaels
- NBC Development: Dick Ebersol
- Writers:
  - Michael O’Donoghue (< National Lampoon)
  - Rosie Shuster (Mrs. Michaels)
  - Tom Schiller
  - Anne Beatts (w O’Donoghue)
  - Marilyn Suzanne Miller (< Mary Tyler Moore)
  - Herb Sargent (< Tonight Show)
  - Alan Zweibel/Gilda Radner
  - John Belushi
  - Dan Akroyd
  - Al Franken
  - Tom Davis
- Films by: Albert Brooks, Tom Schiller
- Format: Comedy/Satire/Variety/Music
Week 1 Featured Actor:

• Gilda Radner
Gilda Radner

• Born in Detroit 1946
• Godspell Toronto cast 1972
• Second City Toronto 1972
• National Lampoon Radio Hour 1974-75
• Saturday Night Live 1975-80
• Gilda Live! 1979
• Lunch Hour on Broadway with Sam Waterston
• Hanky Panky, Woman in Red with Gene Wilder
• Married Gene Wilder 1984
• Died of ovarian cancer 1989
Gilda’s recurring characters on SNL

- Emily Litella
- Roseanne Rosannadanna
- Judy Miller
- Lisa Loopner
- Baba Wawa
- Candy Slice
Malapropism

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
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A malapropism (also called a Dogberryism) is the use of an incorrect word in place of a word with a similar sound, resulting in a nonsensical, often humorous utterance. An example is Yogi Berra's statement: "Texas has a lot of electrical votes,"[1] rather than "electoral votes".

The word malapropism comes ultimately from the French mal à propos meaning "inappropriate" via "Mrs. Malaprop", a character in the Richard Brinsley Sheridan comedy The Rivals (1775) who habitually misused her words. Dogberryism comes from "Officer Dogberry", the name of a character in the William Shakespeare play Much Ado About Nothing. These are the two best-known fictional characters who made this kind of error—there are many other examples. Malapropisms also occur as errors in natural speech. Malapropisms are often the subject of media attention, especially when made by politicians or other prominent individuals.

The philosopher Donald Davidson has noted that malapropisms show how complex the process is by which the brain translates thoughts into language.
A mondegreen is the mishearing or misinterpretation of a phrase as a result of near-homophony, in a way that gives it a new meaning. It most commonly is applied to a line in a poem or a lyric in a song.\[1\] American writer Sylvia Wright coined the term in her essay "The Death of Lady Mondegreen," published in Harper's Magazine in November 1954.\[3\] "Mondegreen" was included in the 2000 edition of the Random House Webster's College Dictionary. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary added the word in 2008.\[4\]\[5\] The phenomenon is not limited to English, with examples cited by Fyodor Dostoyevsky,\[6\] in the Hebrew song Háva Nagila ("Let's Be Happy"),\[7\] and in Bollywood movies.\[8\]
Emily Litella Editorials

- Deaf penalty
- Shave the Whales
- Firing the handicapped
- Soviet Jewelry
- Endangered Feces
- Violins on TV
- Busting Schoolchildren
- Presidential Erections
- Eagle Rights Amendment

- Conserving Natural Race Horses
- Youth in Asia
- Sax on television
- Making Puerto Rico a Steak
- Five Crustaceans Hijack A Plane
- Unisex (UNICEF)
- Flea Erections
- Canker Research
- Nothing
Emily Litella scenes
Roseanne Roseannadanna formula

- Aggressive and tactless
- Letter from Richard Feder of Ft. Lee, NJ
  
  *(Richard Feder was brother-in-law of SNL writer Alan Zweibel, who co-wrote with Gilda)*
- Lots of Q’s for a guy from NJ
- Digression into something irrelevant
- Graphic details
- Jane interrupts
- **Note:** *Rose Ann Scamardella* was an anchorwoman on the local WABC-TV New York station. Her name inspired Gilda’s character name.
Roseanne Roseannadanna Scenes
Judy Miller Scenes
Lisa Loopner scenes
Baba Wawa scenes
Candy Slice scenes

(Character Modeled after Punk Rocker Patti Smith)
One-off Scenes
Filmography Of Others After SNL

- Chevy Chase
- Dan Akroyd
- John Belushi
- Bill Murray
- Lorraine Newman
- Garrett Morris
Chevy Chase

- National Lampoon Radio Hour 1973,
- Off-Broadway Lampoon show *Lemmings* 1973
- Left SNL in 2nd season; Replaced by Bill Murray
- Tunnel Vision, *Foul Play*, Oh Heavenly Dog
- Seems Like Old Times
- **Caddyshack** 1980
- Modern Problems 1980
- **National Lampoon’s Vacation series**
  - Vacation 1983, European 1985, Christmas 1989
- **Fletch** 1985
- 1986 admitted to Betty Ford for painkiller drugs
- **Three Amigos** (with Martin Short and Steve Martin) 1986
- Man of the House 1995
Dan Akroyd

• **Second City**, Chicago and Toronto 1973
• **Saturday Night Live** 1975-79
• **Films:**
  • *Blues* Brothers (1980)
  • *1941* (with Belushi, 1979), *Neighbors* (1981),
  • *Trading Places* (1983) with Eddie Murphy,
  • *Twilight Zone the Movie* (1983)
  • *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984)
  • *Chaplin* (as Mack Sennett, 1992)
  • *Coneheads* (1993)
  • *Canadian Bacon* (1995)
• 30 other films...
John Belushi

• *Second City*, Chicago 1971
• *National Lampoon* *Lemmings* (1972) and *Radio Hour* (1973)
• *SNL* 1975-79
• *Films:*
  – *Going South* 1978 (with Jack Nicholson)
  – *Animal House* 1978
  – *The Rutles: All You Need Is Cash* 1978
  – *Blues Brothers* 1980
• Died 1982 of drug overdose
Bill Murray

- Second City Chicago 1974
- ABC Saturday Night Live 1975
- **NBC SNL 1977-80**
- Rutles: All You Need Is Cash 1978, Meatballs 1979
- **Where The Buffalo Roam, Caddyshack, Stripes, Tootsie**
- The Razor’s Edge
- **Ghostbusters** I and II (role written for Belushi)
- Little Shop of Horrors 1986
- **Scrooged** 1988, What About Bob? 1991
- **Groundhog Day** 1993, Rushmore 1996
- Garfield voice in Garfield The Movie 2004
- Broken Flowers 2004
- **Lost in Translation** 1996, **Zombieland** 2008
Laraine Newman

• *The Groundlings* L.A. improvisation group, Founding member

• **SNL 1975-80** Best-Known Characters:
  – Sheri The Valley Girl
  – Connie Conehead

• Developed eating disorders and used heroin toward the end of SNL contract

• Films:
  – Perfect, American Hot Wax, Wholly Moses, Stardust Memories
  – Did appear in Coneheads, but not as Connie

• *We’re All Devo* music video

• Now: Occasional contributor to The Huffington Post
Garrett Morris

• 1970s Broadway musicals, including Hallelujah, Baby!
• Cooley High 1975
• **SNL 1975-80**
• Car Wash 1976
• The Census Taker 1986
• “Sporty James” on NBC’s Hunter 1986
• 1994 shot as victim in a robbery attempt
• TV roles on Different Strokes, The Jeffersons, Hill Street Blues, Martin, Roc, and the Jamie Foxx Show
• Host of The *Downtown Comedy Club* in LA
• Cab driver cameo in *Ant Man* (2015)
• Currently: TV show *Two Broke Girls*