

My Name Is _____

1. Can you speak or read fluently in any language other than English? If so, which one(s)?
2. What college level writing courses have you previously taken at UCI or elsewhere? For UCI courses please indicate the names of instructors.
3. What is your major? Feel free to list minors, double majors, or courses outside your major that have been particularly influential in your development as a student.
4. What is your greatest strength as a writer? What is your greatest weakness?
5. What grade are you seeking in Writing 139? What other goals do you have for this course?
6. What else would you like me to know about you? Any interesting skills, hobbies, projects, or personal trivia?
7. Which of the following do you think is funny?

<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit A (yellow robot)
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit B (clinton)
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit C (christmas)
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit D (neti pot)
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit E (mccain)

<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit F (yoga)
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit G (cruise)
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit H (dunk contest)
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit I (food fight)
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit J (hamilton vs. burr)

8. Why or why not? Choose at least one example to focus on, but you could also compare two or three. **Write your answer on the back of the sheet**

Discussion Questions for Class #2, Wednesday, April 2 (from Critchley 1-19)

► You should always try to answer all of the discussion questions **in writing** before the start of class. They'll help you understand the books we're reading, but they'll also help us have a better class discussion and give you a head start on your papers, which come fast.

► Discussion questions won't be graded for grammar or content, but I may check to see if you're completing them and you'll turn them in with your paper drafts.

► I will specially assign each question to one person, which will rotate through the entire class. This doesn't mean that the rest of you shouldn't be prepared to answer the question, just that this one person should be **more** prepared to answer the question.

► I doubt you'll get many handouts like this; you can usually expect the questions to be emailed sometime in the afternoon after class. They'll also be posted to the course website.

► There are no right answers to these discussion questions. They're for discussion, meaning they're complex and debatable. Of course there are wrong answers; "Kobe Bryant should be the MVP this year" would not be a good answer to question #2.

1) "A joke explained is a joke misunderstood" (Critchley 2). Agree or disagree? Why?

2) Which of the three traditional philosophical theories of laughter (Critchley 2-3) do you find most convincing? Give an example that would demonstrate it.

3) Identify at least one tic or tendency of Critchley's writing style, giving an example from the text. It might help you to think of how Critchley's writing differs from ordinary newspaper/ magazine/web writing or from the writing that you study in your academic major. It might also help to start with ones you find annoying, as you might notice them more easily.

4) Critchley makes a number of distinctions between humor he likes and humor he doesn't like. For instance he distinguishes "true" humor from "reactionary humor" (11), humor as a "management tool" from humor as "a tool against the management" (14), and "laughing at oneself" from "laughing at others" (14). Why might such distinctions be problematic?

5) Identify at least one sentence or short passage from the reading assignment that you found particularly interesting or that you had difficulty understanding. Give your impression of it here and then we can talk about it more in class. Our goal isn't to memorize every idea Critchley presents, just to understand (and later imitate) the way he thinks.