

Political Humor in American Society

Teacher Seminar, 23. September 2011

Speaker: Dr. Markus Hünemörder, LMU

Organizer: Amerika-Haus-Bibliothek, B.A.Z. Amerika-Haus
Registration fee: € 10

This seminar will explore political humor in US society from the American Revolution to the present day. It will mostly focus on political cartoons, e.g. those of Thomas Nast (who invented the modern political cartoon in the 1870s), Gary Trudeau (whose daily strip "Doonesbury" helped define American politics in the 1970s), and Tom Toles (the Washington Post's present lead cartoonist). The course will also look at the political dimensions of modern animated TV programs like "The Simpsons", as well as satirical newscasts such as "The Colbert Report". In all cases, we will look at the historical and political context of the cartoons and also ask what role political humor can play in the realm of politics itself. There will be lots of graphic material for possible classroom use.

Program

09.00: introduction: the importance of free speech

09.15: early political humor from the American Revolution to Thomas Nast

09.45: political cartoons in the age of World War II and the Cold War: Dr. Seuss, Bill Mauldin, Herblock, and others

10.45: coffee break

11.15: current political cartoonists: Doonesbury, Tom Toles, and others

11.45: political humor on TV and online: The Simpsons, The Colbert Report, JibJab, and others

13.00: end