ENGLISH 208D* Modern Satire

Winter Term, 1978

Syllabus

I. Summary

An examination of the mode of satire in the fiction, drama, poetry, and discourse of the 20th century. Particular attention will be paid to the literary works of Synge, Waugh, Huxley, Parker, Orwell, and Heller, but also notice will be taken of shorter works and of some examples of oral satire.

II. Texts

1. Kiley & Shuttleworth, eds., Satire from Aesop to Buchwald (Bobbs-Merrill)
2. Synge, Playboy of the Western World (Crofts Classics)
3. Waugh, Scoop (Penguin)
4. Huxley, Brave New World (Penguin)
5. Parker, The Portable Dorothy Parker (Viking)
6. Orwell, Animal Farm (Penguin)
7. Heller, Catch-22 (Dell)

III. Order of topics

A. Introduction

1. Preliminary comments and a record cut
2. Don Hall, "The Perfect Church?" (to be distributed)

B. Satire of fashionable ideas

3. Four short pieces from Kiley and Shuttleworth, Satire from Aesop to Buchwald (hereafter cited as K & S);
   (a) Bierce, from The Devil's Dictionary (pp. 310-12)
(b) Clough, "The Latest Decalogue" (p. 292)
(c) Frost, three poems (pp. 341-43)
(d) Roberts, "If the Spirit of Rebellion Runs Its Course" (pp. 456-59)

4. Record cuts

5. Huxley, Brave New World

6. Record cut

7. Dorothy Parker, selected stories and poems from The Portable Dorothy Parker (sheet to be distributed)

8. Record cut

9. Synge, Playboy of the Western World

C. Satire of tyranny and revolution

10. Waugh, Scoop

11. Orwell, Animal Farm

12. Record cut

D. Satire of war and bureaucracy

13. Four short pieces from K & S:
   (a) Betjeman, "In Westminster Abbey" (pp. 367-68)
   (b) Hoppe, "Man's Black Magic" (pp. 467-68)
   (c) Clemens, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" (pp. 247-63)
   (d) Auden, "The Unknown Citizen" (pp. 369-70)

14. Heller, Catch-22

15. Record cut

E. A lighter touch


IV. Work required

In addition to reading the texts and contributing, when appropriate, to the classroom discussion, students will be expected to write four in-class tests and an essay of 2-3,000 words.