

Basil Fawlty, John Cleese's comic creation in "Fawlty Towers", once said, "Still, you've got to laugh haven't you?". I have enjoyed the A Level Comedy Studies course so much because I believe that laughter is fundamental to human experience. We do have to laugh because, far from being a distraction or mere entertainment, comedy represents our attempt to reconcile ourselves to some of the deepest human truths, like death and love. Also, Comedy Studies has been important to me because of the potential of comedy to create social change: the political satire we studied, "Bremner, Bird and Fortune", opened my eyes to politics and the hypocrisies of government in a way conventional news never could. I want to study this course to further my understanding both of the history and evolution of comedy, and to improve my critical skills so that I can unravel the whole meaning of each joke and scene.

Although I am interested in stand-up and sketch shows, my real passion lies in situation comedy. Having studied "The Office" in class, I became interested in the idea that the conventional sitcom is dead, and documentary realism is the future of televised comedy.

To follow up on this comic style in my own time, I watched "People Like Us" and "Human Remains". These two series chart the development of this comic genre which, unlike the older cheerful sitcoms, deliberately confronts the depths of human despair and failure. To obtain an alternative point of view I also went to see Channel 4's new comedy, "The IT Crowd", being filmed in London. The experience showed me how, far from being a dead format, a sitcom can have a vital and performative quality when filmed in front of a live studio audience, and the actors can interact with the spectators in a manner akin to stand-up. To discuss these issues and many other aspects of televised comedy I founded a comedy club at school, with weekly meetings to watch and discuss programmes.

At college I have been a regular television reviewer for the college magazine, "The Pieshop". Writing reviews has helped me to hone my critical style and to appraise programmes in a lively and concise way. I also took on the challenge of playing Caliban in the Tempest, an experience which helped me to gain an insight into comedy from the performer's point of view as well as develop my confidence and communication skills immensely!

Comedy is something I have come back to, inside and outside of the classroom, throughout my life. I think I have the intellectual curiosity, the ability and, more importantly, the sense of humour, to gain a much deeper understanding of this subject at university, and would love the opportunity to do so.