An Introduction to Satire

Another way to persuade...
Using humor to persuade...

- Beyond arguing, there are other ways to write persuasively. For example...

- Satire: a manner of writing that mixes a critical attitude with wit and humor in an effort to improve mankind and human institutions.
What is a satire?

- A literary work that ridicules its subject through the use of techniques such as exaggeration, reversal, incongruity, and/or parody in order to make a comment or criticism about it.
What is a satire?

• Satire ridicules the shortcomings of people or institutions in an attempt to bring about a change.
• Satire makes a serious point, usually through humor, while attacking some aspect of society.
• Satire often uses irony, sarcasm, and exaggeration to make its point.
• Satire can sometimes use parody to make a point (but not all parodies are satire)
The necessary ingredients…

- **Humor**—Satire is funny!

- **Criticism**, either general criticism of humanity or human nature or specific criticism of an individual or group.

- Some kind of **moral voice**: simply mocking or criticism is not “satire.”
Caricature: An exaggerated portrayal of the weaknesses, frailties, or humorous aspects of an individual or group.
Satire Vocabulary

- **Overstatement**: exaggeration: making to seem more important than it really is.

- **Understatement**: opposite of exaggeration; a statement that expresses a fact too weakly or less emphatically than it should
Satire Vocabulary

- **Sarcasm:** A sharply mocking or contemptuous remark.

- **Irony:** Actual intent is expressed in words which carry the opposite meaning. Lighter and less harsh wording than in sarcasm, but more cutting cause of its indirectness.
Techniques of Satire

Exaggeration/Hyperbole

- To enlarge, increase, or represent something beyond normal bounds so that it becomes ridiculous and its faults can be seen.

- A gross overstatement.
Techniques of Satire

Incongruity

- To present things that are out of place or are absurd in relation to its surroundings. Particular techniques include oxymoron, metaphor, and irony.
Techniques of Satire

Reversal

- To present the opposite of the normal order. Reversal can focus on the order of events, such as serving dessert before the main dish or having breakfast for dinner.

- Additionally, reversal can focus on hierarchical order—for instance, when a young child makes all the decisions for a family or when an administrative assistant dictates what the company president decides and does.
Techniques of Satire

Parody

- To imitate the techniques and/or style of some person, place, or thing in order to ridicule the original. For parody to be successful, the reader must know the original text that is being ridiculed.
MORE ABOUT PARODY

• Parody makes fun of another work by imitating some aspect of it.
• Parody is meant for mocking and does not contain anything serious.
• Parody does NOT intend to bring about change in society.
• Parody is pure entertainment.
• Parody can make fun of literature, film, advertising, popular culture, etc.