



Australasian Humour Studies Network



AHSN Digest – August 2024

Message from the AHSN Chair

Dear AHSN-ers,

Hoping this finds you well and considerably warmer than it currently is in Melbourne!

This is a brief message to draw your attention to some important items in this issue, in particular a reminder re the closing date for proposals for the AHSN 2025 conference and the information on accommodation in Adelaide. Other noteworthy items include dates and location of the 2025 ISHS conference, various new publications and some of our AHSN members in the news.

Happy reading!
Kerry

A./Prof. Kerry Mullan, Chair, AHSN Board



AHSN2025 Update and Information on Adelaide

NB: Call for Papers Closing August 2024

The 31st AHSN Conference will take place in-person from **19-21 February 2025 at Flinders University, Adelaide** (in the new CBD campus). The Conference will begin early afternoon on Wednesday 19 February, enabling delegates from Aotearoa/New Zealand and Interstate to travel to Adelaide that morning if they wish.

The conference theme will be **‘The Evolutions of Humour’**. Humour is a dynamic set of practices, capable of adapting to shifting cultural norms and new methods of delivery. AHSN2025 invites presentations on the various evolutions of humour. Where has humour come from and where it is going? What aspects of humour remain stable and what have changed forever?

Presentations addressing any aspect of the changing forms of humour are especially welcomed for this conference. As in previous AHSN conferences, however, papers are welcome on any and all aspects of social laughter and humour, and from diverse disciplinary perspectives including not only humour studies as such, but also literary studies, linguistics, cultural studies, politics, psychology, biology and physiology, philosophy, history, comedy studies, law, creative practices, sociology, communication studies and others.

Please note that next year’s AHSN conference will be preceded on the Monday and Tuesday by an International Round-Table on the Study of Political Cartoons, hosted by the ARC-funded Cartoon Nation project. Conference attendees are welcome to join and further details on this event will be available at a later date via the Digest and AHSN emails. To receive these, please ensure you are subscribed to the [AHSN Digest](#) (free).

Important Dates

Abstract submission opens: 29 April 2024

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 31 August 2024

Proposals should be submitted via email to Dr Alex Cothren at:

alexander.cothren@flinders.edu.au

Proposal guidelines

Abstracts should be around 250-300 words in length. Please add a presentation title above the abstract. Members of the AHSN Review Panel will check and review all submissions. They may recommend changes and revisions to presenters. All accepted conference abstracts will be published on the AHSN website and in the booklet of abstracts for the AHSN2025 conference. An archive of previous conference proceedings and further guidance about the review procedures and guidelines for proposals can be found on the [AHSN website](#).

Student scholarships

Remember that the five AHSN scholarships in the form of conference registration fee-waivers are awarded on the basis of the best and first completed proposals by research students enrolled for study primarily at Australian and Aotearoa/New Zealand universities. Make sure to get your abstracts in early to maximise your chances.



Travel and Accommodation

It is recommended that those planning to attend AHSN 2025 do book travel and accommodation as early as possible. The conference is deliberately designed to occur alongside the opening of Adelaide's Fringe Festival, allowing attendees to experience the city at its cultural best. While there will certainly be plenty of accommodation options available, your preferred location may be harder to book than usual, so early bookings are advised.

For those looking to plan their stay, the location of the new Flinders City Campus can be found [here](#).

What to do and where to stay in Adelaide for AHSN 2025

Adelaide Fringe Festival 2025

The AHSN conference has been nicely timed to correspond with the opening night (Friday 21 February 2025) of the Adelaide Fringe Festival. Australia's biggest arts festival (and the world's second largest fringe festival after Edinburgh), Adelaide Fringe brings 8000+ artists together for a month of shows, with a strong comedy component.

Opening night will feature a parade and free events, before the shows begin proper on the weekend. Use the festival's [official website](#) to plan your extracurricular fringe experience.

What to do in the city

The AHSN conference site is at Festival Plaza, placing it at the heart of the Adelaide's cultural offerings. Take in a show at the [Adelaide Festival Centre](#) or stroll down North Terrace to the [Art Gallery of South Australia](#) and [South Australian Museum](#). We might have also told you about the nearby MOD museum (<https://mod.org.au/>), and its rotating science and technology exhibits, but since the place is affiliated with University of South Australia, we won't.

For culture of a different variety, the conference is across the river from [Adelaide Oval](#), home to an old scoreboard, cricket, one excellent football team that wears light blue, and one terrible one that doesn't. You can climb its roof!

The [SkyCity Casino](#) is also right next door, but if that information leads to a crippling addiction, you absolutely did not hear it from us.

A quick tram ride will take you to the [Adelaide Botanic Gardens](#) and [Adelaide Central Market](#); a much longer tram ride will take you to [the beach](#). There's only one tram line, so God save you if you can't figure that one out.

For those with access to a car, you might consider taking a day trip to one of (smugness alert) *three* excellent wine regions surrounding the city: the [Adelaide Hills](#); [McClaren Vale](#); and the [Barossa Valley](#).

For those with access to a drinking problem, there's a range of close-by options, with the classiest ones on Peel Street and the hipster-ist ones at Gilbert Place.

Robert (sophisticated, probably eats snails) recommends [La Buvette](#).

Alex (rowdy, salt-of-the-earth type) recommends [Memphis Slims](#).

VERY CLOSEST NO-FUSS ALCOHOL ALERT [Maltshovel Taphouse](#)
Meanwhile, the CBD location means there is a [whole range of eating options](#).
And in case you were wondering about us Southern Australiana, no, we don't actually eat crow..... (despite our rude nick-name).



Where to stay

There's no shortage of places to stay in the CBD, although do consider booking nice and early given the swell of visitors during festival season.

Off the top of our heads, the [InterContinental](#), the [Oaks Adelaide Embassy Suites](#), and the [Holiday Inn](#) are close-by options offering different price points.

But if those don't appeal, check out this [pre-filtered list of nearby accommodation](#), with prices ranging from the Mayfair to the 'may I sleep on your couch'.

For any questions about Adelaide or the conference, Alex is happy to help:
alexander.cothren@flinders.edu.au

AHSN2025 Committee

Prof. Robert Phiddian, Flinders University (co-convenor)

Dr Alex Cothren, Flinders University (co-convenor)

HOLD THE DATES for ISHS2025



**35th International Society for Humor Studies Conference, Kraków,
Poland, 7-11 July 2025.**

Website (under construction as of July 2024): ishs2025.pl

Convener: Wladyslaw Chlopicki, Jagiellonian University can be contacted at:
w.chlopicki@uj.edu.pl

Short description:

The conference will be held in a spectacular location, a castle overlooking the Vistula River and the mountain landscape, adjoining the largest wooded area of Kraków, in close vicinity of the historic centre of the thousand-year-old former capital of Poland. The participants will be accommodated in a comfortable Forest Hotel, with all the conference facilities and catering available on the spot. Looking forward to meeting humour scholars from across the globe there in July 2025!

Prof. Wladyslaw Chlopicki
Jagiellonian University

Former ISHS President and Editor, *European Journal of Humour Research*

1st Workshop on Computational Humor

The 1st Workshop on Computational Humor (CHum 2025) will take place virtually on January 19 or 20, 2025 (exact date TBD) as part of the 31st International Conference on Computational Linguistics (COLING 2025).

The impressive recent progress in generative AI has enabled new approaches to complex tasks that can be thought of as essentially human, such as producing or understanding humor. For its part, humor research has become a mature, interdisciplinary field, both in theoretical advances across disciplines such as psychology, linguistics, and sociology, and in a breadth of purview and empirical support. Our workshop aims to foster further work on modeling the processes of humor with current methods in computational linguistics and natural language processing, against the theoretical backdrop of humor research and with reference to relevant corpora of textual, visual, and multimodal materials.

Being more dependent on context and inference than straightforward forms of communication, humor poses particular challenges for probabilistic approaches. In some cases, the required background knowledge may not be available from a single modality, such as a text, and as such may not be machine-learnable in a straightforward manner. With this in mind, a principal goal of this workshop is to unite researchers who can together probe the limits of various meaning representations—symbolic, neural, and hybrid—for humor processing.

Call for Papers

CHum 2025 aims to foster further work on modeling the processes of humor with current methods in computational linguistics and natural language processing, against the theoretical backdrop of humor research and with reference to relevant corpora of textual, visual, and multimodal materials. A principal goal of the workshop is to unite researchers who can together probe the limits of various meaning representations -- symbolic, neural, and hybrid -- for humor processing.

We welcome contributions on any topic relevant to the computational processing of humor, including but not limited to the following:

- LLMs, knowledge representation
- Resources and evaluation
- Human-computer interaction
- Computer-mediated communication
- Assisted content creation
- Machine and computer-assisted translation
- Digital humanities applications
- Formal modeling of humor
- Proof-of-concept humor detection and classification

Particularly encouraged are submissions describing inter- or multi-disciplinary work, whether completed or in progress, and position papers that critically discuss the past, present, and future of computational humor systems.

Submission instructions

Long and short papers should be formatted according to the same guidelines for the main COLING 2025 conference papers. See the guidelines [here](#) and the submission portal [here](#).

Important dates

All deadlines are at 23:59 UTC-12:00 ("anywhere on Earth").

- Initial submission: November 15, 2024
- Notification of acceptance: December 2, 2024
- Camera-ready submission: December 13, 2024
- Workshop: January 19 or 20, 2025

Organizers

- Christian F. Hempelmann, Texas A&M University-Commerce
- Julia Rayz, Purdue University
- Tiansi Dong, Fraunhofer IAIS
- Tristan Miller, University of Manitoba

Further information

- Website: <https://chum2025.github.io/>
 - E-mail: chum@groups.io
-

Symposium

"Visual rhetorics of humour: using and forming an iconography of stereotypes"

October, 10-11th 2024 (Viljandi – Tartu)

Underlying vernacular representations, national and ethnic stereotypes are in the spotlight of different scientific disciplines, such as ethnopsychology, ethnography, cultural anthropology, and literary criticism among others. In this symposium we propose to consider national and ethnic stereotypes as an object of study of folkloristics. Particularly, we will pay attention to how stereotypes are visualised as independent objects in 'classical', post- or Internet folklore. Under the conditions of the iconic turn, the visual image is an elementary unit for the reading and interpreting of the message, through which more complex narratives are constructed. It thus seems important, following Erwin Panofsky, to consider in the stereotype 'the correspondence between form and symbolic meanings'. The iconological method proposed in art history by Aby Warburg and Erwin Panofsky allows us to overcome the dominance of iconography and to give the image a broad cultural context, by which the process of interpretation and reinterpretation of the stereotype is considered as an ongoing process between one's and other cultures ('a mirror in a mirror'). National and ethnic stereotypes are most evident in humorous visualisations. Humour overcomes moral and social limitations, and at the same time, in order to be funny, a humorous message must be extremely concrete and understandable for a wide range of viewers. Therefore, we propose the presenters to analyse the iconography (system of established forms) of stereotype embodiment in humorous works (cartoons, memes, etc.) using the most adequate research methodology.

Keynote speakers:

Dr. Juho Korhonen (University of Turku, Finland)
Dr. Liisi Laineste (Estonian Literary Museum, Estonia)

Organizing Committee:

Guillem Castañar (University of Tallinn), Anastasiya Fiadotava (Estonian Literary Museum), Indrek Grigor (Tartu Art Museum), Eva Laantee Reintamm (Kondas Centre of Naïve and Outsider Art), Sergey Troitskiy (Estonian Literary Museum), Mari Vallikivi (Kondas Centre of Naïve and Outsider Art).

The symposium will be held at the Estonian Literary Museum (Tartu, Estonia). Travel and accommodation costs must be covered by the participants. More details about transport and accommodation will be announced. The preferred mode of participation is on site in person, but also online and/or hybrid formats are allowed.

The working language of the conference is English, Estonian, Russian.

Please send your submission no later than August 10, 2024. Please send us the title and abstract of your presentation, a short bio-info, and your affiliation via e-mail: sergei.troitskii@folklore.ee

Please do not hesitate to contact us if further information is required.

New Access and Website for a Comprehensive International Humour Research Journal

Dr Ephraim Nissan is pleased to announce that the journal *International Studies in Humour* is now permanently based at its new www.academia.edu website, something that ensures that every article becomes quite visible through automated notifications to scholars interested in any of the keywords.

Recent articles range from the reception of humour in films by blind people aided by an audio description, to never laughing or exceptional laughter ascribed to characters from sacred history in various religious traditions, to satirical rather than devotional literary visits to the hereafter in medieval and modern Arabic literature, to the genre of jokes (told among devout people) about the type of the "pious fool" (pious, but foolish), e.g. in an 18th-century collection that circulated among the Sicilian clergy, to satire within the occupational culture of archaeologists. One article published considers cartoons in a magazine catering to the Australian police, thus reflecting cop culture and day to life experience. Clearly, this forum makes space for a panoply of disciplinary contexts for humour studies.

The journal's new address is: <http://independent.academia.edu/inthumour>

While the most recent volumes may still remain to be uploaded, the volume of 2021 and all prior years are already available and the process should be completed by close of July. Please have a look.

The Editor, who is an independent academic based in London, can be contacted at ephraim.nissan@hotmail.co.uk and welcomes paper submissions.

Dr. Ephraim Nissan
Editor-in-Chief, John Benjamins book series, "Research Topics in Humor"
Editor, *International Studies in Humour* (open access via Academia.edu)
London, June 2024

AHSN Member's Video Lecture on Humour in Chinese Culture

Dr Jocelyn Chey recently delivered a well-received video lecture entitled "A Serious Look at Chinese Humour". The host, University of Western Sydney's Institute for Chinese Arts and Culture, has made it available [at this link](#).



Humour is a universal human attribute, but is there something special or unique about humour in Chinese life or literature? Two books, *Humour in Chinese Life and Letters* and *Humour in Chinese Life and Culture* (HKUP 2013 and 2014), are an attempt to answer this question. Humour Studies are a relatively recent field of scholarship, including insights from psychology, sociology, linguistics, education and literature. The main theories about social applications of humour apply to all cultures but there are clearly marked differences in practice and regulation. The reception, understanding and sharing of humour also depend on shared cultural knowledge.

Chinese culture has many important rules about the use of humour that are frequently at variance with practice in Australia. As recorded in literary works over the centuries, some of these rules can be traced back at least two thousand years. The world's oldest collection of jokes, the *Xiao Lin* (Forest of Laughter) dates from the 3rd century BC. Humour has featured in dramas, novels and short stories over the centuries. It has some unique qualities that relate to the characteristics of the written and spoken Chinese language, and some universal features that are shared with Australians and others around the world.

The Chinese word for humour *yomo* is a neologism, coined from the English word. In the 1930s, its inventor Lin Yutang believed that humour should be used to moderate oppression and bureaucratic obfuscation. Counterintuitively, humour flourishes in repressive societies. It is the subversive tool of the underdog. In this century, the Internet has allowed humour to circulate faster and wider than ever before. In the present digital age, when the world is more divided and threats of conflicts abound, humour is needed more than ever.

Bio-note

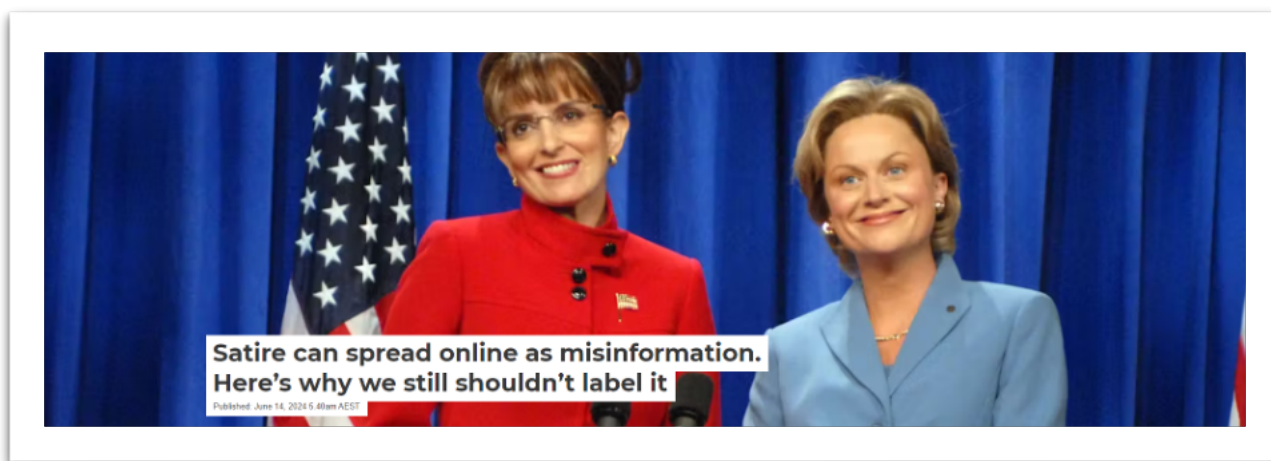
Professor Jocelyn Chey is Adjunct Professor at the Institute for Chinese Arts and Culture, Western Sydney University of which she was the Founding Director from 2015-17. She is also Adjunct Professor at the Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, and Visiting Professor at the University of Sydney. For more than 20 years she was a senior figure within the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, where she was instrumental in helping lay the foundations for trade and cultural relations between China and Australia.

Professor Chey began her career as lecturer in Chinese studies at the University of Sydney. She then moved to Canberra in 1973, when Australia first established diplomatic relations with China. Holding numerous roles within the Departments of Trade and Foreign Affairs, she worked to further Australia-China relations. Her many distinguished diplomatic appointments include Cultural Counsellor in the Australia Embassy in Beijing (1975–1978); Senior Trade Commissioner in the Australian Embassy in Beijing (1985–1988); and Consul-General for Australia in Hong Kong (1992–1995).

Professor Chey was also the key administrative officer in the Australia-China Council at the time it was founded in 1979. From 1988–1992 she was Director of the China Branch of the International Wool Secretariat. She is a frequent speaker and lecturer on Chinese affairs and history and speaks fluent Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese. In November 2008 she was awarded the Australia-China Council Medal for contributions to the development of relations between Australia and China, in January 2009 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) and in November 2009 a Fellow of the Institute of International Affairs.

Professor Chey's current research fields include cultural diplomacy with relevance to China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and the cultural aspects of Chinese humour. She has co-authored and co-edited two books on the latter subject with Dr Jessica Milner Davis, and published widely on cultural diplomacy and Chinese international relations.

AHSN Member's New Publication

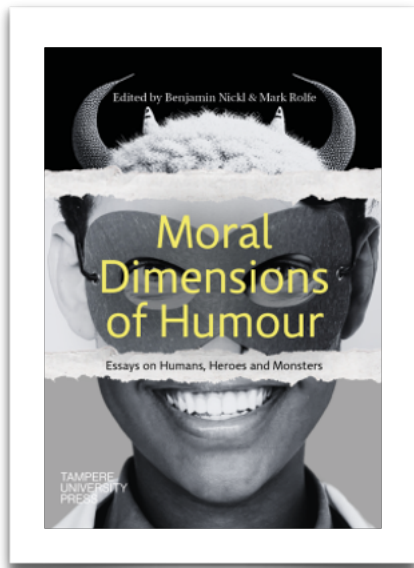


Robert Phiddian. 2024. [Satire can spread online as misinformation. Here's why we still shouldn't label it.](#) *The Conversation*, June 14, 2024.

AHSN Members in the News

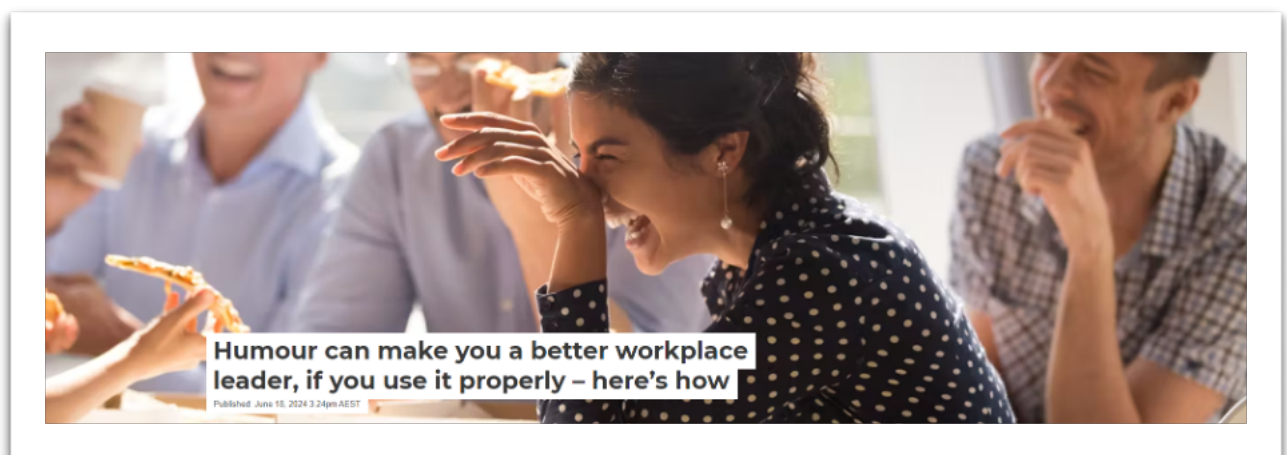
Mark Rolfe was interviewed on Sunday 16 June 2024 on ABC News, [How a comedy contest is shaping political debates and elections](#) to discuss political humour and the new book, [Moral Dimensions of Humour: Essays on Humans, Heroes and Monsters](#) edited by AHSN members Mark Rolfe and Ben Nickl (Tampere University Press, 2024*).

In a related item, Ben Nickl and Mark Rolfe discuss the politicisation of comedy in their above-mentioned new book. [The new power and politics of comedy](#), 13 June 2024.



*This new publication was announced in the AHSN June Digest. It is freely available [here](#) under a Creative Commons Open Access licence and contains chapters by several AHSN members.

New Article on Humour and Leadership



[“Humour can make you a better workplace leader, if you use it properly – here’s how.”](#)
The Conversation, June 18, 2024.

Nilupama Wijewardena, RMIT University
Charmine Hartel, Monash University
Ramanie Samaratunge, Monash University

The Humour Studies Digest

The Australasian Humour Studies Network (AHSN)

‘We put the “U” back into “HUMOUR”!’

Send your Digest Submissions to our veteran Co-Editor Jessica at Jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au

To Subscribe or unsubscribe, visit the AHSN Web site at <http://ahsnhumourstudies.org/>



Follow us on our social media sites.

© 2019-2022 AHSN: Australasian Humour Studies Network | [Privacy Policy](#)