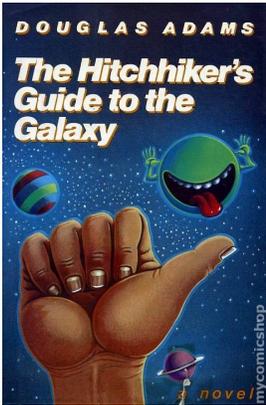


Comedy and Satire Summer Reading Assignment

"The human race has only one really effective weapon and that is laughter."
--Mark Twain



Welcome to Comedy and Satire! Our first text, which you will read over the summer, is *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams. It is a lively interplanetary adventure that features a wide range of both human and nonhuman characters and ultimately asks the most fundamental question in the universe: why do we exist? It is also a satire--a piece of fiction that is meant to expose and criticize the foolishness and corruption of an individual, an idea, or a society by using humor, irony, exaggeration or ridicule.

Fasten your seatbelts and enjoy the journey!

Please complete two assignments for the first day of class:

1) a google document that you will share with me containing:

- 6 moments you find truly amusing and an attempt to explain why they seem humorous
- a few recurring images, motifs, or items that seem to carry special significance
- a few noteworthy characteristics of Arthur Dent, Ford Prefect, Trillian, and Zaphod Beeblebrox
- thoughts on people, ideas, or behaviors that are satirized

2) Create a postcard from a place you "visit" either with the narrator or the characters that you find intriguing:



* you may either draw or use digital images to design your postcard--use the descriptions in the novel to guide your imagination of the features of the location

* on the back of the postcard, write a message that you feel the character you choose would write from that destination

In addition: as you read and annotate, consider the following questions:

1. What does Adams seem to suggest is valuable in life? What should we be living for?
2. Why do so many highly improbable events occur? What role does coincidence play in the workings of the universe?
3. Are the major characters in the novel friends? What do their relationships suggest about human's connection?
4. Some events in the novel could be looked upon as tragic. Why do they instead seem funny? What does this seem to suggest about the nature of humor?

***NOTE: After a few days of class discussions, we will write about the way Adams uses humor in this novel to create meaning, so you may wish to think about or annotate for that as you read.