

Register Number:

Date:

**ST. JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY, BANGALORE – 27**

**I SEMESTER - OPEN ELECTIVE**

**END SEMESTER EXAMINATION: DECEMBER 2023**

**CE OE 01: COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH OPEN ELECTIVE: UNDERSTANDING STAND-UP COMEDY**

**Time- 2 hrs Max Marks- 60**

**Instructions:**

1. **This paper is for students who chose the Communicative English Open Elective: Investigating Stand-up**
2. **This paper has TWO SECTIONS and TWO printed pages.**
3. **Please provide word counts following every response that you make.**
4. **You are allowed to use a dictionary.**
5. **Read this excerpt from an article by Sarah Eve Rosen, and answer the questions below.**

“A little over a year ago, during the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic, I attended a live stand-up comedy show in West Palm Beach, Florida. The comedian, Ricky Velez, started his performance with the line: “I am not into politics, I don’t know about that stuff.” Among some of his sillier jokes, he also joked about growing up in a poor, predominantly Puerto Rican community, and the cultural shock he experienced when he began to date his affluent, white Jewish girlfriend. He made jokes such as: “her family is so rich, they live to be so old—it’s wild,” as the predominantly white, non-social distanced, and mask-less crowd burst into laughter. I wondered if, among their big belly laughs, his jokes stirred their consciousness between the connection of his girlfriend’s race and class with her family’s higher life expectancy? Also, did he truly believe that his jokes were not political, or did he preface his bit to make the crowd more comfortable and open to such types of jokes? Indeed, many living in the U.S. continue to feel frustrated by our politicians and the hyper-partisanship in our country, so some choose to opt out and/or identify as apolitical. In this instance, whether intentional or not, he claimed this title while simultaneously discussing an issue that, while on its face may not appear outwardly political, is a result of our government’s inability to ensure healthcare access to low-income communities. Our political and legal institutions, which are often invisible, impact virtually all facets of our everyday lives and wellbeing—whether we choose to identify with them or not.

In this period of hyper-political polarization in the United States, there is one thing with which most of us can agree: we love to laugh. Comedy has been, and continues to be, one of many tools we can wield to approach discussions around social issues with our families, friends, and communities. But, while laughter can bring communities together, its broad reach can also be used as a tool for humiliation and alienation. When used as positive force, however, comedy’s ability to influence behavior and conventions may facilitate the cultural shift that our country needs.”

(From: <https://nulronlineforum.wordpress.com/2022/03/25/comedy-and-its-social-influence-maybe-it-is-more-than-just-a-joke/> )

**I.A. Answer the following questions in about five sentences each (3x5=15)**

1. The writer asks, “did he truly believe that his jokes were not political, or did he preface his bit to make the crowd more comfortable and open to such types of jokes?” What is your answer to this question?
2. The comedian, according to the excerpt above, is from a Puerto Rican background, and his girlfriend is white Jewish. What do you think would be a similar situation in India?
3. “her family is so rich, they live to be so old—it’s wild”, is a joke the comedian makes. What would a great follow up joke be for this one?
4. **Answer the following questions in about 150-200 words each (3x15=45)**

4. Have you ever come across something hilarious in what you thought was a ‘very serious’ book? Would you say that it was intentionally funny or just something you found so?

5. Imagine that Trevor Noah asked you to perform a 5 minute sketch as an introduction to his own show. One condition: You cannot mention his name, you cannot speak more than 200 words. What would you do?

6. Look at the objects around you right now, observe at least two of them carefully. If these two objects could talk to each other and perform a comedy sketch, what would they talk about?