

Sophia University Institute of Comparative Culture Lecture Series 2015

Regulating Funny: Humor and the Law

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April 15th, 2015 (Wed), 18:30-20:00

Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University Yotsuya Campus

Lecture in English / No RSVP required

Philosophers, literary theorists, natural scientists, and social scientists have created a rich literature explaining how humor operates and affects human well-being. Through the lens of that literature, this lecture explores how the law regulates humor in four areas: contract, trademark, employment discrimination, and defamation. The lecture will posit that all four legal areas regulate certain types of humor with particular vigor, while privileging humor based on incongruity. Comparison between United States and Australian defamation cases yield particularly interesting results, with the United States courts relying more heavily on a constitutional doctrine of protected opinion.

Documenting these patterns in humor regulation should provide important guidance for courts, academics in many disciplines, and humorists seeking to understand and predict legal regulation.

Professor Laura E. Little specializes in federal courts, conflict of laws, and constitutional law. She teaches, lectures, and consults internationally on these subjects and is routinely engaged for training judges as well as for speeches at academic and judicial conferences. She is the author of numerous books and articles, including a sole-authored casebook, *Conflict of Laws* (Aspen Wolters Kluwer 2013), a treatise, *Federal Courts*, currently in its Third Edition in Aspen Publishing's Examples and Explanations series.

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