

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HUMANITIES AND BIOETHICS GRAND ROUNDS

JANUARY 2026



Reclaimed Hysteria in Contemporary Standup Comedy



Sarah Hagaman, PhD

Assistant Professor

University of Rochester

Thursday, January 15, 2026

12:00 - 1:00 PM ET

In-person: 2-6424 SMD Large Auditorium & Zoom

Contemporary standup revises perspectives on mental illness and laughter, recalling how hysteria historically pathologized women's laughter as a form of madness. My argument draws upon Jean-Martin Charcot's displays of hysterical women in his "Tuesday Lessons" during the nineteenth century to reclaim the hysterical, feminine body through laughter in contemporary standup comedy. Specifically, the audience's laughter reembodies the symptoms of hysteria, and I identify how comedians such as Taylor Tomlinson, Aminah Imani, Rebecca O'Neal, and Cristela Alonzo use these postconfessional strategies to create collective catharsis.



<https://urmc.zoom.us/j/96878868372?pwd=0EtVZVdNLzZiallVY2pIS2xnSVF6dz09>
Passcode: 807980

ACCREDITATION

The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

CERTIFICATION

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