

Sur le journalisme – About Journalism – Sobre jornalismo

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Call for Papers

Laughter and Journalism

Deadline for submissions: August, 31 2026

Editors of the special issue:

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This call for papers invites submissions that examine laughter through, thanks to, or in spite of journalism. Drawing inspiration from recent research on laughter (Flandrin, 2021; Letourneaux & Vaillant, 2021), it aims to explore various expressions of laughter and humour in journalism across its many forms (irony, sarcasm, derision, caustic, satirical or devastating laughter, pleasant emotion): in short, how journalism attempts to make people laugh, but also what laughter does to journalism. This dual presence of laughter in the media world raises questions about the ways in which we laugh at others, mock or ridicule individuals, groups and situations (Vaillant, 2021; Toulhoat, 2019; Mercier, 2001; Guimarães & Caetano, 2009; Peifer & Lee, 2019), and seek to make people laugh for fun (Kim & Vishak, 2008; Lichtenstein et al., 2021) – whether for political or non-political reasons, whether joyfully or cruelly, liberatingly or conservatively (Flandrin, 2021). It is also reflected in the fact that one can laugh at journalists and journalism, mock it, parody it, and transform its meaning, forms and formats (Leroux, 2001; Jost, 2008; Chambat-Houillon & Giordano, 2008; Merminod, 2013).

The relationship between journalism and laughter gives rise to a wealth of questions, choices of subject matter, time periods and forms of humour. Among all these, four themes can serve as points for reflection.

1. ***Journalism that mocks.*** Be it school-boyish, creative, insolent, sarcastic, or sometimes malicious, laughter can seek to challenge social norms just as much as it can reinforce stigmas. It is satirical, confrontational, firmly rooted in its role as a counter-power. This humour is often political. Proposals may analyse specific formats (satirical press, cartoons, columns, audiovisual or digital formats), their production conditions, their social and political effects, and their reception. Studies situated within specific historical, national or professional contexts are particularly welcome.
2. ***Journalism that aims to make people laugh.*** Playful, funny, or designed to be entertaining. Laughter is also a way of connecting with the public, provoking reactions, and offering an alternative perspective of the world. This laughter can be liberating; it can also be commercial. It aims to attract audiences and set itself apart from

competitors. This theme explores laughter as an editorial and professional strategy, through which humour can be used to capture attention, build audience loyalty or stand out from the crowd. Proposals may examine the professional justifications for using humour, tensions with journalistic standards and values, as well as forms of hybridisation between news and entertainment.

3. ***Journalism that is mocked.*** It may be ridiculed, subverted, or become the subject of satire or sarcasm. This laughter mocks the media, journalism and journalists. Parodies, fake newspapers, subversions on social media (memes, tweets, etc.) and staged scenarios contribute to a humorous critique of the media and its practices. This theme proposes to analyse these practices and productions to examine changes in the relationship of trust with journalism and the struggles surrounding its legitimacy. We welcome studies focusing on producers, audiences, and the modes of dissemination and circulation of these forms.
4. ***Journalism that brings joy.*** It is a space for laughter and for experiencing emotions, but also for maintaining a distance from them. Laughter is embedded in professional relationships; it shapes them just as much as it can undermine them: it can serve to bring people together or to expose wrongdoing, to contribute to well-being, highlight workplace violence, but also to offer resistance. Proposals may draw on empirical research (observations, interviews) to explore laughter as a practice within newsrooms or journalistic collectives, as a dimension of professional emotions. They may also examine how journalistic output itself can provoke joy, or even laughter, in those who produce it.

These few avenues obviously do not exhaust the many ways in which journalism engages with laughter, nor those through which laughter, in turn, engages with journalism. They constitute possible entry points, among others, for reflecting on this ambivalent, sometimes conflictual, often complicit relationship. Proposals may thus draw on historical, literary, sociological, political, communicational, linguistic or aesthetic approaches, and cover a variety of fields, periods and formats. All contributions that shed light on the uses, effects and meanings of laughter in a journalistic context are welcome.

Submission guidelines:

The deadline for submitting complete manuscripts (between 30,000 and 50,000 characters, including footnotes and bibliographical references) is August, 31 2026 via slj@ulb.be or directly on the website: <https://revue.surlejournalisme.com/slj/about/submissions>. Please indicate the title of the issue in question (Laughter and Journalism) in the subject line of your message. Manuscripts may be written in English, French, Portuguese or Spanish. Articles are evaluated using a double-blind review process.

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Sciences (ERIH PLUS). *Sur le journalisme* is classified as a qualifying journal in France (according to the HCERES index). Brazilian Qualis-CAPES evaluation for 2021-2024: A3. A3.

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