

Humor in America

a joint conference of the
American Humor Studies Association
and
The Mark Twain Circle of America

July 12-14
Chicago, IL



I know it's fashionable to describe hotels, and tell how much they cost, but I reckon it aint necessary for me to do so--specially as don't know nothin about that hotel, only--they charge enuff. Chicago's a great place, but I ain't going to say nothin about it, only jest this, that when you feel like tellin a feller to go to the devil--tell him to go to Chicago--it'll anser every purpose, and is perhaps, a leetle more expensive.

--Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass, 1856

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Judith Yaross Lee
Jeffrey Melton
Linda Morris
Brian O'Sullivan
Teresa Prados-Torreira
Tracy Wuster**

This conference is not a function of Roosevelt University

	Thursday (Wabash 1016)	Thursday (Wabash 1017)	Friday (Wabash 1016)	Friday (Wabash1017)	Saturday (Wabash1016)	Saturday (Wabash1017)
8:00-9:00	Coffee, Tea, &	Pastries →	Coffee, etc.		Coffee, etc.	
9:00-10:15	Session #1 1. Mark Twain & Politics Baker Maressa Zehr	2. Challenging Humor Padilla Douglass VanDevere	Session #6 10. Private Mark Twain Helwig Skwere Bates	11. Sustainable Laughter Click O'Sullivan McRae	Session #12 18. Breaking Boundaries Fuchs Abrams Krefting Gilbert	19. Irreverent Twain Robison Kindig Morris
10:30-12:00	Session #2 3. Political Laughter & Its Consequences Hennefeld Glick Stevens Day	4. Television Humor Brown Friesen Chesters Kelsey	Session #7 12. American Humor & Technological Change Amernick Scepanski Kupfer Kunze	13. Humor and Genre Gaber Parker Cantrell Pasahow	Session #13 20. Laughing at Difficult Topics Cohen Ozier Tanny Jones	21. Conflict, Violence, and Comedy Prados-Torreira Hama Moss Seybold
Lunch			AHSA Lunch and Business Meeting			
1:15-2:30	Session #3 5. On the Internet Blackburn Dorkin Oravec	6. Mark Twain & Religion Hellman Kramer Howe	Session #8 14. Plenary: Publishing in Humor Studies and Mark Twain		Session #14 22. Standing Up Brandman Champion Forthun	23. "Waiting for Susy" A Short Play
2:45-4:00	Session #4 7. Humor on Page and Stage Chirico Barnes Lowe	8. Comedic Performances Baird Shouse Gillota	Session #9 15. Performing Mark Twain Bird Henzel Effgen	16. Humor in American Periodicals Hennon Dawley	Session #15 24. Writing Humor/ Writing Gender Kornasky Burrell Melton	25. Social Contexts of 19th Century Humor Piggush Thompson
4:15-5:30	Session #5 9. Plenary Talk: "Satire as the Comic Public Sphere" James Caron		Session #10 17. Plenary Roundtable: The futures of humor/comedy studies Wuster, Michelson, Krefting, Hennefeld		Session #16 26. Plenary Talk: "American Humor and Matters of Empire: An Immodest Proposal" Judith Yaross Lee	
5:30-6:30			Session #11 Performance: Democracy Burlesque			

Thursday, July 12, 2018

8:00 – 9:00am Coffee, Tea, and Pastries

Session #1 -- 9:00 – 10:15am

Panel #1— Mark Twain and Politics (Wabash 1016)

Session Chair: Martin Zehr

Gadflies Through the Ages:

Socratic Principles of Irony in Mark Twain and Contemporary Political Satire

John Phillip Baker, Harding University

Posing as Ignorant, Passing as Colorblind: Stephen Colbert's Debt to Mark Twain

Virginia Maresca, St. John's University

Mark Twain's "The Treaty With China": Politicization of his Humor, or "Humorization"
of his Politics?

Martin Zehr, Kansas City, Missouri

Panel #2—Challenging Humor (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: Pete Kunze

Anything But Universal: John Waters' American Comedies

Elisa Padilla, University of Sussex

What Do We Do with Daniel Tosh?: Shock Comedy and Defensive Meta-Comedic Rhetoric

Allison Douglass, The Graduate Center, CUNY

The Shades of Chappelle: A Comparative Analysis of His Early and Later Stand-up

Mariann J. VanDevere, Vanderbilt University

Session #2 -- 10:30am – 12:00pm

Panel #3— Political Laughter and Its Consequences (Wabash 1016)

Session Chair: Maggie Hennefeld

"Fake News": from Satirical Laughter to Alternative Facts

Maggie Hennefeld, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Mockumentary and the Critique of the Fourth Estate

Joshua Glick, Hendrix College

Wet Humor

Kyle Stevens, Appalachian State University

Feminist Comedians as Political Battleground

Amber Day, Bryant University

Panel #4— Humor on the Television (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: Jeffrey Melton

A Comedy of Errors: NBC's Sitcom Failings in the 1970s
Laura Brown, Boston University

Comedic Cultural Exchange: America and Canada's Comedy Interplay
Jay Friesen, University of Alberta

"Two Scoops of Haagen-Dazs French Vanilla Boobies": Dark Humor and Sex Positivity in
Netflix's *Big Mouth*
Sam Chesters, University of Houston

Through the Eyes Fools: Social Commentary in *Baskets*
Elizabeth Kelsey, University of Missouri, Kansas City

12:00-1:00 -- Lunch

Session #3 -- 1:15-2:30pm

Panel #5— Humor on the Internet (Wabash 1016)

Session Chair: Jo Ann Oravec

"Weird" Humor as a 21st Century Aesthetic Category
Andrew Dorkin, University of Buffalo, SUNY

The New Wave of Social Activists: Public Intellectualism's Increasing Sense of Humor
Rachel Blackburn, University of Kansas

From Heckling to Online Social Shaming: Implications for Humor and Comedic
Presentations
Jo Ann Oravec, University of Wisconsin at Whitewater and Madison

Panel #6— Mark Twain and Religion (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: Larry Howe

"Undeceive Yourself": Mark Twain's Satan Markets Religion in *Letters from the Earth*
Micah Hallman, Middle Tennessee State University

Mark Twain's Serious Humor and That Peculiar Institution: Christianity
Christopher Kramer, Santa Barbara City College

Revising *Genesis*, for Laughs: Mark Twain's Adam and Eve's Diaries
Larry Howe, Roosevelt University

2:30-2:45 Coffee and Pastries

Session #4 -- 2:45-4:00pm

Panel #7—Humor on the Page and Stage (Wabash 1016)

Session Chair: John Lowe

Anaesthetizing and Alienating Pain: Black Comedy on the Stage
Miriam Chirico, Eastern Connecticut State University

“I’m the biggest hypocrite”: An Analysis of Black Assimilation and Afro-Pessimism in Paul
Beatty’s *Slumberland*
Tajanae Barnes, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Double Yoke? Double the Joke! The Comedy of Dual Ethnicity in *The Last Night of
Ballyhoo* and *Mona in the Promised Land*
John Lowe, The University of Georgia

Panel #8—Comedic Performances (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: David Gillota

Dick Gregory: The Journey from Comedy to Civil Disobedience
Don Baird, Independent Scholar

The Dark Side of Stand-Up Comedy: Archetypes of “Darkness”
Eric Shouse, East Carolina University

The Boundaries of Performance: Experimental Stand-Up Comedy
David Gillota, University of Wisconsin, Platteville

4:15-5:30pm -- Plenary Talk (Session #5—Wabash 1016)

Satire as the Comic Public Sphere

James Caron, President, AHSA
University of Hawai’i at Manoa

Satire has always been a particular kind of speech act, but what does satire mean for the public sphere of politics and public discourse? That question is urgent when we consider the postmodern penchant for irony and parody, and especially the impact of social media on public discourse—what Alan Kirby calls “digimodernism”—in the twenty-first century. The itinerary for this lecture begins with the idea of the public sphere, its current digital form, and how the idea of the comic public sphere functions as supplement, followed by discussion about speech act theory and how satire might be understood as a particular form of comic speech. In a final stop, we’ll look at two examples of recent satire with a well-defined activist ingredient.

Friday, July 13, 2018
8:00 – 9:00am Coffee, Tea, and Pastries

Session #6 -- 9:00 – 10:15am

Panel #10— Private Mark Twain (Wabash 1016)

Session Chair: John Bird

Venice, Italy, and the Influence on Twain's Life and Satire on Capitalism
Harold Helwig, Idaho State University

Humor, Play, and Games in Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*
Artur Skweres, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

Waiting for the Punchline to Land: Twain's Reader Correspondence and Kinds of
Humorist Engagement
Courtney Bates, University of Findlay

Panel #11—Sustainable Humor (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: Kim Ruffin

A Big Bear, A Beanfield, and A Landslide: Crafting a Humorous Dwelling Place in
Nineteenth-Century Nature Writing
Benjamin Click, St. Mary's College of Maryland

"Shaky Ground": An Ethos of Humor in Twentieth-Century Nature Writing
Brian O'Sullivan, St. Mary's College of Maryland

Stuffed Owls, Ducks, and Loons: The Earthbound American Lyric
Calista McRae, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Response: Kim Ruffin, Roosevelt University

Session #7 -- 10:30am – 12:00pm

Panel #12— American Humor & Technological Change (Wabash 1016)

Session Chair: Philip Scepanski

"Where the Future is Being Made Today": Technological Breakdowns on *The Muppet Show* vs. Technological Breakthroughs on *Fraggle Rock*
Daniel Amernick, Marist College

Virtual Slapstick: Digital Technology, Threats to Identity, and Technophobic Comedy
Philip Scepanski, Marist College

Deep in ESPN's Tape Library: Negotiating Institutional Priorities in *Cheap Seats*
Alex Kupfer, Vassar College

Sarah Silverman Loves America: The Comedian as Critical Pedagogue
Peter Kunze, University of Texas at Austin

Panel #13— Humor and Genre (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: Jennifer Hughes

From *Duffy's Tavern* to *Shameless*: Irish-American Working-Class Identity on the
Airwaves

Andrew Gaber, University of Arkansas

Extemporaneous Rhetoric and the Art of Improv

Jason Parker, Texas Woman's University

"How Did These Get Made": Towards a Theory of Comedy Podcast Consumption

Owen Cantrell, Perimeter College

"Any Questions?" A Postmodern Exploration of David S. Pumpkins

Meredith Pasahow, Texas Women's University

12:00-1:00

AHSA Lunch & Business Meeting

If you did not order a box lunch, please see Tracy Wuster
during the conference or feel free to attend.

We will have some extra lunches.

(Wabash 1016)

Session #8 -- 1:15-2:30pm

Panel #14— Plenary: Publishing in Humor Studies and Mark Twain (Wabash 1016)

Chair: Larry Howe

Participants: Studies in American Humor editorial team—Larry Howe, Jim Caron, David
Gillota, Sabrina Fuchs Abrams

Mark Twain Annual editorial team—Chad Rohman, Ben Click

Mark Twain Journal/marktwainstudies.org—Matt Seybold

Humor in America series editors—Judith Yaross Lee, Tracy Wuster

Mark Twain and His Circle series editor—John Bird

Session #9 -- 2:45-4:00pm

Panel #15— Performing Mark Twain (Wabash 1016)

Chair: Alex Effgen

Twins of Genius?: A New Examination of the Twain-Cable Lecture Tour

John Bird, Winthrop University

Perspectives from the Stage: performing Mark Twain

Richard Henzel, Performer and Independent Scholar

Between Comedy and Spoken Words: Contextualizing Hal Holbrook in "Mark Twain
Tonight!"

Alex Effgen, Independent Scholar

Panel #16— Humor in American Periodicals (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: M.M. Dawley

Fanny Fern's Domestic Activism: Using Humor to Buffer Sentimental Fiction
Abigail Hennon, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Samantha Allen: Marietta Holley's Suffragette Sage
M.M. Dawley, Boston University

Session #10 -- 4:15-5:15pm

Plenary Roundtable: The futures of humor/comedy studies (Wabash 1016)

Tracy Wuster, *The Twain Shall Meet*
Bruce Michelson, *Comic Dimensions*
Maggie Hennefeld, *Laughter Theory at the Crossroads of Affect and Power*
Rebecca Krefting, *The Future of Laughing Matters*

5:30-6:30 -- Session #11

(Wabash 1016)

Democracy Burlesque: Sketches from its upcoming show,

*RESISTANCE USA! SKETCH COMEDY ABOUT PROTEST IN AMERICA
FROM 1776-ISH TO THIS AFTERNOON*

DB COMEDY is Chicago's only theatre company entirely devoted to political satire and sketch comedy (as far as they know). Since 2006, DB Comedy's Writers of Wrongs develop shows built around specific themes, in sketch format, performed by their in-house troupe, The Actors of Evil. Many of their performances are partnerships with nonprofits or neighborhood do-gooders, creating communities to raise money, ideas, consciousness, or just share a laugh or an emotion.

Saturday, July 14, 2018
8:00 – 9:00am Coffee, Tea, and Pastries

Session #12 -- 9:00 – 10:15 am

Panel #18—Breaking Boundaries (Wabash 1016)

Session Chair: Sabrina Fuchs Abrams

Breaking Boundaries: New York Women of Wit in the Modern Age
Sabrina Fuchs Abrams, SUNY Empire State College

Hannah Gadsby Stands Down: Feminist Comedy Studies
Rebecca Krefting, Skidmore College

'My Mom's a Cunt': Bitches and Bawds Ride the Fourth Wave
Joanne Gilbert, Alma College

Panel #19— Irreverent Twain (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: Linda Morris

Doppelgangers, Flatulence, and Old Northumberland: The Subversive Humor of Mark
Twain's Tudors
William Robison, Southeastern Louisiana University

"Land, What a Sight!": Medieval Curiosity in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*
Patrick Kindig, Indiana University

"A Delirium of Laughter" in the Texts of Mark Twain
Linda Morris, University of California, Davis

Session #13 -- 10:30am – 12:00pm

**Panel #20—Laughing at Difficult Topics: Humor on Rape, Race, AIDS, and Genocide
(Wabash 1016)**

Session Chair: Jennifer Caplan, Towson University

We're Safe Here, but Poland is a State of Mind: Jewish Literature and the Exploitation of
Holocaust Consciousness
Sascha Cohen, Brandeis University

"In My Time We Was Too Scared To Talk Open": Rape and the 1970s American Sitcom
Amadi Ozier, Rutgers University

Richard Pryor's White Body
Jarrod Tanny, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Glitter and Be Gay: Camp Politics, Queer Resistance
Matthew Jones, Miami University

Panel #21— Conflict, Violence, and Comedy (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: Matt Seybold

Humor and Conflict in the Nineteen Twenties
Teresa Prados-Torreira, Columbia College Chicago

Prosocial Racial Humor in Luís Valdez’s “Los Vendidos”
Mark Hama, Angelo State University

The Neo-Slapstick Problematic: Comedic Violence and Humor-as-Crisis in Contemporary
‘Reality’ Media
Joshua Louis Moss, Cal State University-Chico

Joke, Joke, Jeremiad: A Poetics of Neoliberalism
Matt Seybold, Elmira College

12:00-1:00—Lunch

Session #14 -- 1:15-2:30pm

Panel #22—Standing Up (Wabash 1016)

Session Chair: David Gillota

A Stage of Their Own: The Feminist Comedy Circuit, 1974-1994
Mariana Brandman, University of Chicago

Challenging the Stand-up Stage’s Gendered Space: How Female Comics Negotiate the
Affordances of Televisual Stand-up Specials
Eric Forthun, The University of Texas at Austin

"Quit Being White and Weird": Tom Segura's Post-Politically Correct Post-Race Standup
Jared Champion, Young Harris College

Panel #23—“Waiting for Susy” by Bruce Michelson (Wabash 1017)

World premiere of a short play about Sam Clemens, one daughter, and a furry French
mysterious stranger. Rouen, 1894.

Bruce Michelson, University of Illinois
John Bird, Winthrop University
James Caron, University of Hawai’i
Megan Dawley, Boston University

2:30-2:45 Coffee and Pastries

Session #15 -- 2:45-4:00pm

Panel #24— Writing Humor/Writing Gender (Wabash 1016)

Session Chair: Jeff Melton

Zombie Jesus and Organ Donation: Benign Violation in Jenny Lawson's *Let's Pretend This Never Happened*

Linda Kornasky, Angelo State University

Deliberate Design: Barbara Brandon, Anita Hill & the American Comedic Tradition

Jaylah Burrell, DePaul University

Erma Bombeck and the Humor of the Mundane

Jeffrey Melton, University of Alabama

Panel #25— Social Contexts of 19th Century Humor (Wabash 1017)

Session Chair: Todd Thompson

Conduct Literature and Women's Wit in the Early United States

Yvette Piggush, College of St. Benedict and St. John's University

Almanacs and Annexation: Comic Imperialism in the 19th-Century Pacific

Todd Thompson, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

4:15-5:30pm—Plenary Talk

(Session #16—Wabash 1016)

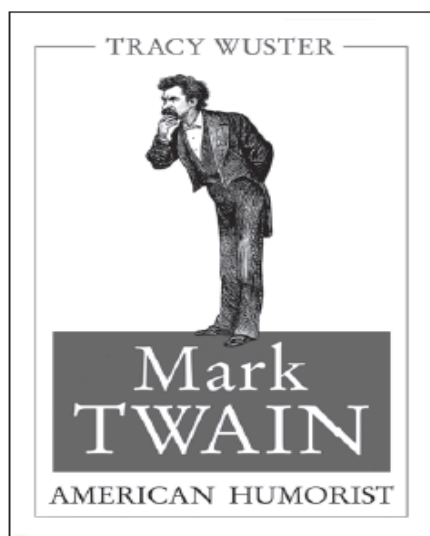
American Humor and Matters of Empire: An Immodest Proposal

Judith Yaross Lee

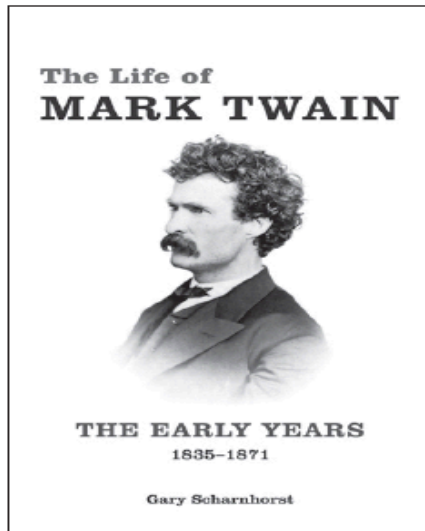
School of Communication Studies, Ohio University

What do *The Book of Mormon* musical, *The Interview* movie, and Mark Twain's novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* have in common? All are comic fantasies of American empire with varied takes on the role of the US in the world. In doing so they counter two other strands of American humor, which rely on rhetorical continuity with or vernacular rejection of the former colonial relations of the US and Europe. After years in which ethnic and media studies have splintered American comic rhetoric into many distinct traditions, Judith Yaross Lee draws on ideas from postcolonial studies to consider how matters of empire braid distinct American comic themes, media, and techniques into what Edward Said called contrapuntal harmony.

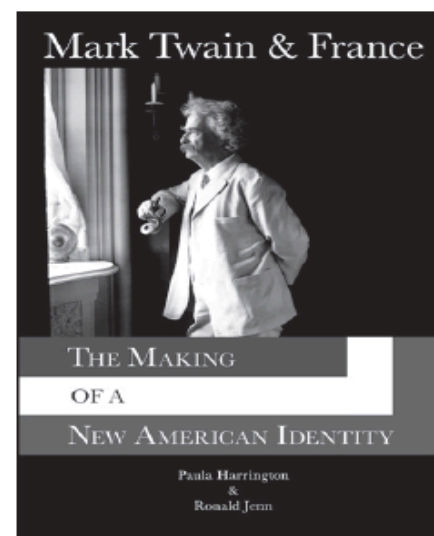
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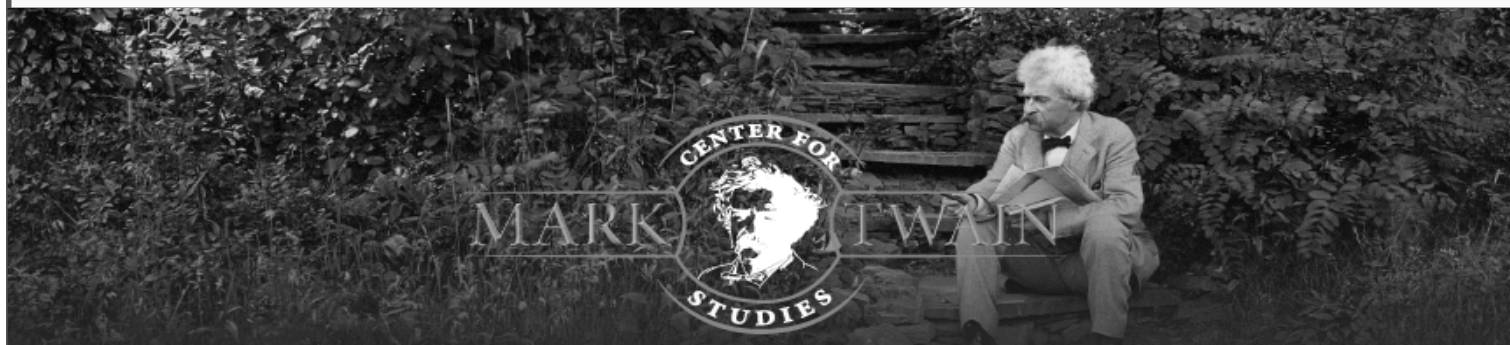


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Visit: www.marktwainstudies.org for more information.

Studies in American Humor

Lawrence Howe, Editor

Studies in American Humor publishes articles on topics, themes, practices, practitioners, and media across the wide spectrum of American humor, past and present, for an audience made up primarily of scholars and students in the humanities, especially literary and cultural studies. *StAH* values new transnational and interdisciplinary approaches as well as traditional critical and historical humanities scholarship. Published continuously since 1982, *Studies in American Humor* is the official journal of the American Humor Studies Association.

The Mark Twain Annual

Chad Rohman, Editor

The Mark Twain Annual publishes articles related to Mark Twain and those who surrounded him and serves as an outlet for new scholarship as well as new pedagogical approaches. It is the official publication of the Mark Twain Circle of America, an international association of people interested in the life and work of Mark Twain.



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Humor in America

Series Editors

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From Benjamin Franklin to Mark Twain, Mel Brooks to Richard Pryor, Our Gang to Inside Amy Schumer, American humor has time and again proven itself to be more than mere entertainment: it has brought cultural norms and practices in America into sharp relief and, sometimes, successfully changed them. The *Humor in America* series considers humor as an expression that reflects key concerns of people in specific times and places.

The series engages the full range of the field, from literature, theater, and stand-up comedy to comics, radio, and other media in which humor addresses American experiences. With interdisciplinary research, historical and transnational approaches, and comparative scholarship that carefully examines contexts such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and region, books in the *Humor in America* series show how the artistic and cultural expression of humor both responds to and shapes American culture. The series will publish mainly authored volumes, not edited collections, and will appeal to audiences that include scholars, students, and the intellectually curious general reader.

Initial inquiries should take the form of a three- to five-page proposal outlining the intent of the project, its scope and relation to other work on the topic, and the likely audience(s) for the book. Please also include a current CV. The editors note that although it is a logical fallacy to expect scholarship on humor to be funny, the best humor scholarship can be fun—and illuminate its exemplars' comic spirit—while also being intellectually rigorous and a pleasure to read.

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Coffee

Cafecito, 26 E. Congress
Starbuck's 55 E. Jackson
Dunkin Donuts 62 E. Jackson

Food

Quick lunch:

Artists Café, 420 S. Michigan
Cafecito, 26 E. Congress (Cuban)
BeeZzee Fresh Food, 425 S. Wabash
Corner Bakery, 224 S. Michigan
Potbelly Sandwiches, 55 E. Jackson
Roti 59 E. Jackson (Mediterranean)
Tokyo Lunch box 60 E. Jackson
Panera, 501 S. State
Chipotle, 10 E. Jackson

Dinner (\$\$\$):

Park Grille, 11 N. Michigan
The Gage, 24 S. Michigan
Frontera Grill 445 N. Clark (acclaimed Mexican—advance reservations)

Food and/or Drink

Tavern 2Twenty2, 222 S. Wabash
Miller's Pub, 134 S. Wabash
Cavanaugh's Bar, 53 W. Jackson (historic Monadnock Building)
Plymouth Restaurant and Rooftop bar, 327 S. Plymouth Court

Outdoor attractions

Grant Park (directly across from Roosevelt to lakefront)
Millenium Park (4 blocks north on Michigan Ave.)
Lincoln Park zoo and conservatory (about a mile north)

Museums

Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 S. Michigan
Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington (free)
Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Ave.
Field Museum, 1400 S. Lakeshore Drive
Shedd Aquarium, 1200 S. Lakeshore Drive
American Writer's Museum, 180 N. Michigan Ave

Night Life

Buddy Guy's Legends Blues Club, 700 S. Wabash
The Jazz Showcase, 806 S Plymouth Ct, Dearborn Station
Tavern 2Twenty2, 222 S. Wabash
Green Mill, 4802 N. Broadway
Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N Lincoln Ave
City Winery, 1200 W Randolph St
Second City, 1616 N Wells

From the airports:

O'Hare to downtown. Take the CTA Blue line and get off at Jackson. You'll come above ground at State and Jackson, walk west one block to Wabash, then south to either hotel (Travelodge is on Wabash; Congress Plaza is at Congress and S. Michigan, one block east of Wabash). CTA fare is \$2.50 vs. a cab for \$28. You'll need to buy a CTA ticket from a machine at the entrance to the turnstiles.

Midway to downtown. Take the orange line and get off at Harold Washington Library (Van Buren and Wabash). Walk south to either hotel (Travelodge is on Wabash; Congress Plaza is at Congress and S. Michigan, one block east of Wabash). CTA fare is \$2.50 vs. a cab for \$28. You'll need to buy a CTA ticket from a machine at the entrance to the turnstiles

