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Can watching The Daily Show make you smarter?
Should The Daily Show play such a prominent role in our news culture?
Where does “Stephen Colbert” end and Stephen Colbert begin?

Looking for the real deal on “fake” news? Want to know how Jon Stewart stacks up against today’s brightest public intellectuals? Or how far down Stephen Colbert’s irony goes? Perhaps you’re curious about how The Daily Show hones your critical thinking skills against bad media, bullshit, and political spin. If so, good news, because here’s The Ultimate Daily Show and Philosophy: revised, expanded, and updated to probe deeper than ever before the philosophical significance of the quintessential “fake” news show of the twenty-first century. The Daily Show is much more than hilarious faux news: along with its successful spin-off, The Colbert Report, The Daily Show’s surging popularity is claiming an increasingly significant role in contemporary American culture. What better way to plumb its comedic depths than with the razor-sharp, media-savvy minds of our Senior Philosophical Correspondents? With moments of Zen-like clarity, The Ultimate Daily Show and Philosophy represents the most philosophically astute observations regarding the premier American satirical news show available anywhere.

Jason Holt is Associate Professor at Acadia University. He is author of Blindsight and the Nature of Consciousness, co-author of Flexibility: A Concise Guide, and editor of The Daily Show and Philosophy and Philosophy of Sport: Core Readings.

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To learn more about the Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture series, visit www.andphilosophy.com
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To Megan
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Acknowledgments

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Introduction
From Wiley-Blackwell’s World Philosophy Headquarters in Malden

Welcome to *The Ultimate Daily Show and Philosophy*. I’m your editor, Jason Holt, and let me just say first off, thanks for not being deterred by the title. How brash to dub this the “ultimate” with the show still in production, popular as ever. Ultimate indeed! Other modifiers—“more,” “2.0,” “TNG,” and such were considered, but here we are at “ultimate.” If you thought the first edition was amazing, or pretty good, or just adequate, brace yourself. This one’s, well, better.

I think we’re okay with the subtitle: *More Moments of Zen, More Indecision Theory*. Everyone who’s seen *The Daily Show* knows its practice of ending each show with a clip, the so-called moment of Zen. What could be more philosophical than a moment of Zen? When putting together the original volume in 2006, I supposed one of the contributors would explain moments of Zen, perhaps even devoting a chapter to the subject. Didn’t happen. But, when the call came to put together this “ultimate” edition you now hold in your hand, or “on” your digital thingamabob, or listen to as an audiobook, it didn’t happen either. So, I guess I’ll have to say *something* about it here. It’s a matter of conscience. So what are moments of Zen? Short video clips, usually of politicians or other public figures, which encapsulate an implicit yet evident point: be it the hypocrisy of the speaker, an obvious truth that’s gone unsaid, criticism that’s been marginalized, and so on. What do such often-poignant clips have to do with Zen? Well, not