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NBC's Chuck Todd Said Comedian Stephen Colbert is Making a Mockery of the Political System

Winthrop University

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Quick Facts

- Addressing the audience on media coverage of the political campaign, Chuck Todd said comedian Stephen Colbert is making a mockery of the system.
- The process is a mess, Todd said, but he wondered if Colbert is trying to influence it with his own agenda that may be anti-Republican. And is that fair to the Republican Party?



Chuck Todd

ROCK HILL, S.C. - **NBC political honcho Chuck Todd** pulled no punches Thursday when discussing the actions of **comedian Stephen Colbert** with a capacity crowd who had gathered to hear him talk at Winthrop University in South Carolina.

Addressing the audience on media coverage of the political campaign--and joined by colleagues Steve Brusk, CNN Political Coverage Manager, and Steve Brook, managing editor of The State newspaper, Todd had this to say about Colbert--who hails from SC, the same state Colbert recently announced he was forming a committee for in order to explore a presidential bid:

"The criticism isn't of him, it's of how we in the media--and frankly political officeholders--are treating him as. Look, he's got a schtick. I admire how he has educated his audiences on Super PACs. I think that's noble, and I think that's great. But I remember I was very offended when he testified on Capitol Hill in character. And I was more offended that members of Congress allowed him to do that.

"He is making a mockery of the system. And maybe the system deserves some mocking. Again, I don't dispute that notion. But what he's doing now, with the campaign--is that fair to the process? Yes, the process is a mess. But he's doing it in a way that it feels as if he's trying to influence it with his own agenda that may be anti-Republican. And is that fair to the Republican Party?

And we in the media are covering it as schtick and a satire. But it's like wait a minute here, he also seems to be doing his best to marginalize the Republican candidates in a way--and we're participating in that marginalization. I think that we in the --quote--mainstream media need to be careful and wonder what is he up to--what is his real agenda here? Is it to educate the public about the dangers of money and politics, and what's going on? Or, is it simply to marginalize the Republican Party? And so I think if I were a Republican candidate I would be concerned about that.

"Again, I like how he's educating the public and (indecipherable) had some fun with it. But, it's sort of like--both Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert have this ability to want to mock us in the media all the time--proclaiming we don't do our jobs. And then when you call them out on it, they say, 'We're just comedians.' Actually, no, you're not anymore. You were mocking what we're doing and you want a place in this and you are also going to be held accountable for how you cover and how you do your job a little bit. So, I say that in the amount of fun that I enjoy watching the shows, too. I enjoy the parody. I enjoy the satire. But it's sort of like I have to admit I'm uncomfortable when it's like actually

merging into the real world...As William Hurt said in 'Broadcast News,' 'You know, you tell me we're crossing the line--they keep moving the sucker.' "

"...We wonder, we complain now that we feel like the most qualified people decide not to run, because they don't want to be the butt of jokes--well, I think this is going to exacerbate the process."

VIDEO IS AVAILABLE AT: <http://youtu.be/tugYuxycCBY>

[\[Back to Previous Page\]](#)

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Arts	Directory	Family Programs	Majors & More	Residence Life	Wingspan