Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb
Questions for Analysis

(Stanley Kubrick, UK, 1964, 93 minutes, b&w)
Screenplay by Stanley Kubrick & Terry Southern
With Peter Sellers (in 3 roles), George C. Scott, Sterling Hayden

A U.S. Air Force general decides to launch a nuclear attack against the Russians for his own ridiculous and insane reasons. He actually initiates the process, which may be unstoppable. This act will almost certainly mean the destruction of the world, as the Russians have a secret “Doomsday” device that will destroy the Earth if they are attacked. The American military and politicians must decide what to do to stop him.

1. Why might the director use satire (see reverse for definition) instead of straightforward drama to present his message?

2. List some ways the film presents irony (see reverse for definition).

3. How is the film a commentary on the Cold War and those waging that war?

4. What are some possible meanings of the film’s title?
**satire** |ˈsəˌtər|
noun
the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues. See note at **wit**.  
• a play, novel, film, or other work that uses satire: a stinging **satire on** American politics.  
• a genre of literature characterized by the use of satire.  
• (in Latin literature) a literary miscellany, esp. a poem ridiculing prevalent vices or follies.  
**DERIVATIVES**

**satirist** |ˈsatərist| noun  
ORIGIN early 16th cent.: from French, or from Latin **satira**, later form of **satura** 'poetic medley.'

**irony**₁ |ˈiərənē; ˈiərnē|  
noun (pl. -**nies**)  
the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect: "Don't go overboard with the gratitude," he rejoined with heavy irony. See note at **wit**.  
• a state of affairs or an event that seems deliberately contrary to what one expects and is often amusing as a result: [with clause] the irony is that I thought he could help me.  
• (also **dramatic** or **tragic irony**) a literary technique, originally used in Greek tragedy, by which the full significance of a character's words or actions are clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character.