

## **TELEVISION GENRES – AUTUMN QUARTER 2015-16**

DC 229 - 101

Thursdays from 1 pm to 4:45 pm

Lincoln Park Campus

Room - TBA

Adjunct Professor Lee Madsen

Text book - The Revolution Was Televised by Alan Sepinwall. Touchstone, reprint edition, May 2013. ISBN-10: 1476739676, ISBN-13:

978-1476739670

Office & Office Hours: TBA

lmadsen3@cdm.depaul.edu

### **Course Description:**

The purpose of this class is to enable students to study scripted television from the professional's point of view. The course involves critical analysis of successful scripted television shows, their narrative structures and themes. Programs of various genres and eras will be examined. Students will learn how to recognize basic structural elements in finished episodes. Students will develop a language with which to discuss television as well as a toolbox of techniques to use when creating television. Key concepts to be discussed include: basic structure, types of shows, genres of shows, character tropes, means of creating and sustaining tension, themes and advancements in form. Students will analyze and discuss some of the most important and influential shows in television history. Students will learn all about the writer-centric form of scripted television, where it's been and where it's heading. Students study serials and procedurals, network and cable shows, principal leads, partnerships and ensembles, comedy and drama, prevalent themes, innovations in content and form, the impact of DVR, and the impact of the internet.

Prerequisites: None.

### **Learning Outcomes & How They Will Be Met:**

– Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a television episode is about and or how it was produced. In addition to learning how to analyze and interpret narrative scripted television, students also gain an understanding of how the development process affects the final content.

Students will not only watch and analyze television, they will learn the socioeconomic and technological factors impacting the genre and industry. The papers in this class focus on students' understanding of Basic Structure, Character, Theme and eventually a complete analysis.

– Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work. They will learn the generic expectations of a particular form and how an artist (writer, producer, actor, etc) can complicate, enrich or subvert these expectations. Students are given a framework of knowledge regarding what to expect from half-hour and hourlong scripted programming, both in terms of form and content. Once this framework has been established, students examine ways in which artists used the form to deepen the audience's sense of character, tension and theme. Students investigate these relationships through class discussions, exam questions, several shorter papers and a longer final paper in which they write a complete analysis for a television series.

#### Writing Expectations:

There are three 2-4 page Papers and one 6-10 page Final Paper in this course. Papers are expected to be free of spelling and grammatical errors. It's YOUR work, YOU'RE responsible for its clarity.

#### Online Course Management System:

D2L - Here students will find lecture slides, lecture videos, links to streams of the episodes for this course and any other relevant information they may need. This is where students will upload your assignments for this course. Login with Campus Connect information.

#### Homework:

All assignments for this course must be typed and submitted on D2L. NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED!

#### Reading:

The Revolution Was Televised by Alan Sepinwall. Touchstone, reprint edition, May 2013. ISBN-10: 1476739676, ISBN-13: 978-1476739670

#### Viewing:

Students may find it helpful to watch the episodes we are going to watch in class beforehand. Students will definitely find it helpful to re-watch the

episodes they are expected to write about. Digital copies of all episodes will be available on D2L or a link will be provided to find the episode on Coltube.

#### Pop Quizzes:

Pop Quizzes will be given periodically to make sure students are staying current with the reading. These quizzes will be five questions directly related to the readings. If you have read the pages, you should have no problems passing the quizzes.

#### Grading:

Homework: 30% - Breakdown paper, Character Paper, Theme Paper.

Midterm: 25%

Final Paper: 35%

Participation/ Pop Quizzes: 10%

### **THE SCHEDULE**

Sept 10

Class 1:

Lecture: Introduction, The Basics. Types of Shows: The Situation Comedy, The Police Series.

In-class viewing: NEWSRADIO "The Public Domain" & LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT "Raw"

READING AT HOME: Sepinwall: Prologue "Let's be careful out there..." (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

Sept 17

Class 2:

Lecture: Development. Types of Shows: The Principal Lead. The Unruly Woman Sitcom, The Hospital Drama.

In-class viewing: 30 ROCK "Pilot" & ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK & HOUSE "Pilot"

Homework: Breakdown a NETWORK show of your choosing. NO PREMIUM CABLE SHOWS. A handout will be provided on D2L.

Due on D2L: Thursday Sept 24 by noon.

Sept 24

Class 3:

Lecture: Characters. Types of Shows: Partnerships, The “Gay” and “Queer” Sitcom, Science Fiction.

In-class viewing: WILL & GRACE “Pilot” & THE X FILES “Pilot”

Breakdown paper due today on D2L.

Oct 1

Class 4:

Lecture: Types of Shows: Ensembles

In-class viewing: FRIENDS “The One With Two Parties,” “The One with the Embryos” & SIX FEET UNDER “Pilot” & Time permitting - GAME OF THRONES

Homework: Character Paper. Write a Three Page Paper on the characters of SIX FEET UNDER. A handout will be provided.

Due on D2L: Oct 8 by noon.

Oct 8

Class 5:

Lecture: Tension: Intersecting Storylines

In-class viewing: SEINFELD “The Opposite,” “The Slicer” & THE WIRE “Old Cases” & COMEDIANS IN CARS GETTING COFFEE.

READING AT HOME: Sepinwall: Chapter 3 “All the pieces matter...” (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

Character paper due today on D2L.

Oct 15

Class 6:

Lecture: Tension: Non-linear narrative.

In-class viewing: ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT “Pilot” & DAMAGES “Pilot”

Homework: Take home MIDTERM. **Take home POP QUIZ 1**. Due on D2L: Oct 22 by noon.

Oct 22

Class 7:

Lecture: Theme. Adult Animation. Anime.

In-class viewing: THE SIMPSONS “Lisa on Ice” & THE SOPRANOS “Pilot” & SOUTH PARK “Margaritaville”

READING AT HOME: Sepinwall: Chapter 2 “All due respect...” (You may

be quizzed on this material next class).

**Pop Quiz 1 & Midterm** due today on D2L.

Oct 29

Class 8:

Lecture: The Costume Drama.

In-Class viewing: LOUIE "Poker/Divorce," "Barney/Never" & MAD MEN "Maidenform" & DEADWOOD

READING AT HOME: Sepinwall: Chapter 11 "It's a time machine..." (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

Homework: Theme Paper. Discuss the themes of the SOUTH PARK episode "Margaritaville." A handout will be provided on D2L. **Take home POP QUIZ 2.**

Due on D2L: Nov 5 by noon.

Nov 5

Class 9:

Lecture: The Action Drama.

In-class viewing: MODERN FAMILY "Fizbo" & LOST "Walkabout" & TRUE DETECTIVE

READING AT HOME: Sepinwall: Chapter 6 "Do you want to know a secret?...", Chapter 12 "I am the one who knocks!..." Epilogue "Don't stop believing..." (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

**Pop Quiz 3 & Theme paper** due today on D2L

Nov 12

Class 10:

Lecture: Post Water Cooler TV. The Future of the Industry.

In-class viewing: BREAKING BAD "Pilot" & Community "Remedial Chaos Theory" or House Of Cards "Pilot"

**Final Paper:**

Watch and discuss a TV show we have not covered. Talk about its genre, premise, structure, its tensions, the type of characters and architecture the show employs and what themes the show explores. 6-10 pages. Due on D2L: Nov 19th by 10:00pm.

SCHOOL POLICIES:

Online Instructor Evaluation

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over two weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online at <https://mycti.cti.depaul.edu/mycti>

#### Email

Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should be sure their email listed under "demographic information" at CampusConnect is correct.

#### Academic Integrity Policy

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>

#### Plagiarism

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

#### Incomplete

An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

### Changes to Syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L or COLWeb and sent via email.

### Resources for Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted either the PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) or The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370 Phone number: (773)325.1677 Fax:  
(773)325.3720 TTY: (773)325.7296