

TELEVISION GENRES – SPRING 2016

DC 229 (Section 601, 610) (**This course has both an online and an in-class section**).

Mondays, 1:30pm to 4:45pm

14 East Jackson, LL 105 (CDM Theater)

Instructor: Nathan DeWitt, MFA

Office Hours: Mondays: 12:30pm to 1:30pm, Wednesdays: 9:10am to 10:10am, Thursdays: 3:00pm to 5:45pm. I am in and out of my office frequently during office hours so please let me know if you will be stopping by. I'm also available by appointment.

Office: CDM 616

ndewitt@cdm.depaul.edu

Course Management System: D2L.

Prerequisites: NONE.

Course Description:

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.

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.

“More than jazz or musical theatre or morbid obesity, television is the true American art form.”

- Kenneth Parcell, 30 ROCK

Prerequisites:

None.

Learning Domain Description:

DC 229 Television Genres is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Arts and Literature domain. Courses in the Arts and Literature domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts while developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning, and through critical and/or creative activity, come to better understand the original audience that witnessed a work of art and how its meaning and significance changes over time. These courses focus on works of art or literature, however the process of analysis may include social, cultural, and historical issues. Genres covered in this domain include literature, the visual arts, media arts, the performing arts, music, and theater.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and/or how it was produced

- Articulate and explain the “content” of that work and/or its methodology of production.
- Comment on the relationship between form and content in a work.
 - How does the 14-line sonnet both enable and inhibit its practitioner, for example?
 - What are the generic expectations of a particular form?
 - How does an artist complicate, enrich, or subvert such expectations?
- Assess the formal aspects of their subject and put those qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings.
- Contextualize a work of art.
 - Do so with respect to other works of art in terms of defining its place within a broader style or genre.
 - Contextualize a work of art in terms of contemporaneous aesthetic, social, or political concerns, discussing how these might shape the work’s reception and how that reception might differ amongst various peoples and historical periods.

Learning Outcomes will be met through lectures, viewings and readings on the history and story structure principles of many television forms and measured via written papers, pop quizzes and a midterm exam.

Writing Expectations:

There are two 2-3 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.**

Writing Expectations will be met with three graded assignments. Two of these papers will be based on a show of the Professor’s choosing, a longer paper will be based on a show of the student’s choosing.

Online Course Management System:

D2L: <https://d21.depaul.edu/d21/home> 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:

In-class Students may find it helpful to watch the episodes we are going to watch in class beforehand, Online Students are required to watch these episodes as part of this class. All 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 ColTube. <http://coltube.cdm.depaul.edu> Login with Campus Connect information.

Pop Quizzes:

Pop Quizzes will be given periodically to make sure In-class Students are staying current with the reading and Online Students are keeping current with viewing the lectures and the reading. **These quizzes may happen at the start of class or partway through the lecture. They will not be mentioned on D2L and the only way to get the Quiz is to watch the lectures or be present in class.** These quizzes will be five questions directly related to the readings. If students have read the pages, students should have no problems passing the quizzes. Online Students have ONE WEEK from the date of the quiz to email their answers. **Emailed quizzes MUST INCLUDE student's name and section number.** After one week, no late quizzes will be accepted.

Grading:

Homework: 30% (Breakdown, Character Paper, Theme Paper)

Midterm: 25%

Final Paper: 35%

Participation/ Pop Quizzes: 10%

Grading Scale:

A: 93.5-100%; A-: 92.5-93.49%

B+: 89.5-92.49%; B: 83.5-89.49%; B-: 82.5-83.49%

C+: 79.5-82.49%; C: 73.5-79.49%; C-: 72.5-73.49%

D+: 69.5-72.49%; D: 63.5-69.49%; Below 63.5% is an F

THE SCHEDULE**March 28:**

Class 1:

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

In-class viewing: FRIENDS “The One With the Embryos” & THE X FILES “Pilot”

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

April 4:

Class 2:

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

In-class viewing: 30 ROCK “Pilot” & HOUSE “Pilot”

Homework: Breakdown a NETWORK show of your choosing. NO PREMIUM SHOWS. A handout will be provided. Due on D2L: April 11, 2016 by 1:30pm.

April 11:

Class 3:

Lecture: The Professional TV Writing Process, Types of Shows: Partnerships, The LGBT Sitcom, The Action Series.

In-class viewing: WILL & GRACE “Pilot” & BREAKING BAD “Pilot”

READING AT HOME: Sepinwall: Chapter 2, “All Due Respect” and Chapter 12 “I Am The One Who Knocks!...” (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

April 18:

Class 4:

Lecture: Intersecting Storylines, Types of Shows: Ensembles

In-class viewing: SEINFELD “The Opposite,” “The Slicer” & THE SOPRANOS “Pilot”

Homework: Character Paper. Write a Three Page Paper on the characters of the SIX FEET UNDER pilot episode. A link and handout will be provided. Due on D2L: April 25, 2016 by 1:30pm.

April 25:

Class 5:

Lecture: Tension, Types of Shows: Science Fiction

In-class viewing: ENLIGHTENED “Pilot” and LOST “Walkabout”

READING AT HOME: Sepinwall: Chapter 6 “Do you want to know a secret?... (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

May 2:

Class 6:

Lecture: Non-linear narrative, Innovations in Form. Types of Shows: The Anthology Series, The African American Sitcom

In-class viewing: THE BERNIE MAC SHOW “Pilot”, COMMUNITY “Remedial Chaos Theory” & TRUE DETECTIVE “The Long Bright Dark”

Homework: Take home MIDTERM. Due on D2L: May 9, 2016 at 1:30pm.

May 9:

Class 7:

Lecture: Theme. Types of shows: The Police Series, The Period Piece.

In-class viewing: THE WIRE “The Target” & THE AMERICANS “Pilot”

READING AT HOME: Sepinwall: Chapter 3 “All the Pieces Matter” and Chapter 11 “It’s a time machine...” (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

May 16:

Class 8:

Lecture: Adult Animation

In-Class viewing: THE SIMPSONS “Bart Sells his Soul,” “HOMR” & SOUTH PARK “The Hobbit” & THE BOONDOCKS “Return of the King”

Homework: Theme Paper. Discuss the themes of any adult animation show of your choosing. A handout will be provided. Due on D2L: May 23, 2016 at 1:30pm.

May 23:

Class 9:

Lecture: Internet Shows

In-class viewing: ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT “Pilot” & ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK “I Wasn’t Ready” & TRANSPARENT “Pilot”

READING AT HOME: Sepinwall: Epilogue “Don’t stop believing...” (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

May 30:

Class 10: NO CLASS DUE TO MEMORIAL DAY. (Episodes and course materials will be viewed online)

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

In-class viewing: MODERN FAMILY “Fizbo” & LOUIE “Poker/Divorce” & EMPIRE “Pilot”

Final Paper:

Watch and discuss a scripted TV show we have not covered. Talk about its genre, structure, its tensions, the type of characters and architecture the show employs and what themes the show explores. 6-10 pages. **Due on D2L Monday, June 6 by 5:00pm.**

College Policies**Online Course Evaluations**

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 three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

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 the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

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