

DC 229-402/411: TELEVISION GENRES
Autumn 2016-2017

Tuesdays 1:30pm – 4:45pm
14 E. Jackson, Room 214

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Instructor: Heather Ash
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30 – 1pm
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Course Description & Objectives

From *I Love Lucy* to *Orange Is the New Black*, television genres have been influenced by the art forms that came before, and the technologies that transformed them. In only the last few years we have seen an explosion of different ways for a viewer to engage with television, with the structure and content of television changing as a result.

We will study American scripted, narrative television from the professional's point of view and within the frameworks of *platform* and *genre*. Students will analyze and discuss some of the most important and influential shows in television history. Programs of various genres and eras will be examined. Students will learn how to recognize basic structural elements in finished episodes and develop a language with which to discuss television. Students will learn about the writer-centric form of scripted television, where it's been, and where it's heading.

Prerequisites: None

Learning Domain Description

DC229 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 by 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.

Course Changes

Depending on time factors and availability of materials, the lectures, screenings, and assignments may require alteration or rescheduling. Such changes if any, will be announced in class. Online students must watch video lectures to be aware of any changes in the course. If you are an online student, email me a picture of a dinosaur before next week's class.

Required Viewing/Reading Materials

All assigned reading material will be posted on D2L. In many cases, videos are not available on ColTube <http://coltube.cdm.depaul.edu> and you will need to watch them via a different platform. Almost all videos selected for this class are available via a Netflix & Hulu subscription, though some key episodes may require individual purchase/loan.

REQUIRED

-- **The Revolution Was Televised** by Alan Sepinwall, ©2012 (can be bought used)

- ISBN: 978-4767-3967-0

- **Netflix subscription:** \$7.99/month for basic streaming.
- **Hulu subscription:** \$7.99/month with a one-month free trial

Select videos and DVDs may also be available for loan at the library or on other viewing platforms.

Course Management System: D2L

Readings & Viewings: PDFs of readings not in the Sepinwall book will be posted on D2L. There will be weekly viewing assignments separate from class. It is recommended that you also watch all videos for the upcoming class in advance, as I stop and start episodes frequently to comment. Any episode not watched in its entirety in class will need to be watched at home, and students will be responsible for the content.

You are expected to engage with the material, not just absorb it passively. Take notes on ideas and facts in the readings and episodes.

Written Assignments

All written assignments must be written in 12 point font, double-spaced, 1" margins, and posted on D2L in pdf form. No late work will be accepted without a verified medical or personal emergency. Do not post assignments on D2L in any other format: it will not be graded. Emailed assignments will not be accepted.

Time and date deadlines are clearly posted on D2L. If you post your assignment after the time it was due, it is considered late and will not be graded.

Important Dates

September 13	Last day to add/swap classes
September 20	Last day to drop with no penalty (100% tuition refund)
September 21	Grades of "W" assigned for AQ2015 dropped on or after today
October 25	Last day to withdraw from AQ2015 classes

Learning Outcomes

- 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. Analysis and examination of the relationship between form and content represents the bulk of this course. Students are given a framework of knowledge regarding what to expect from half-hour and hour-long 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.

- Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put these qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings. To better equip them in their analysis of television, students will learn a mix of common cinematic and literary language in addition to specialized screenwriting and film-making vernacular. This language will be employed in class discussions, exams and several papers.
- Where appropriate, students will be able to consider the original audience to witness a work of art and consider how their expectations differ from our own. This examination may include the elements of form, rhythm or style, the visual material and aesthetic of a piece. Students will be able to articulate a subject as well as write about it, explaining how narrative and aesthetic elements comprise a particular style of television (art). Students will learn about the context in which each episode aired and how this context affected its original reception. Students will also learn about the genre of television, how it has evolved over time and the technological innovations shaping the genre today.

How Learning Outcomes Will Be Met

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

Writing Expectations

There are two 2-3 page papers, a take-home midterm, and one 6-10 page final paper in this course. All papers are expected to be free of spelling and grammatical errors. (Papers with more than five errors will be marked down by one letter grade.) Two of these papers will be on a show of the instructor's choosing, the last will be based on a show of the student's choosing. All papers must be submitted via D2L. **All work must be your own. Students should be familiar with DePaul's plagiarism policy.**

In addition, ONLINE STUDENTS will be expected to respond to weekly lectures and readings on the D2L discussion boards.

Pop Quizzes

Pop quizzes will be given periodically to make sure in-class students are staying current with the readings, lectures, and screenings, as well as to make sure online students are keeping current with the course. **Quizzes may happen at any time during the lectures. 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.** Each quiz will be five questions directly related to the readings/viewings/lectures. Online students have UNTIL 12:00PM THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY from the in-class quiz to submit their answers to D2L in the appropriate folder. (If a quiz is given on 9/13, it is due by 12pm on 9/20.) No quiz answers posted after seven days of the day given in class will be accepted.

Grading

Paper #1	15%
Paper #2	15%
Midterm	25%
Final Paper (#3)	30%
Participation (includes pop quizzes of 5%)	15%

Grading Scale

A = 93-100	C = 73-77	A = excellence
A- = 90-92	C- = 70-72	B = good work
B+ = 88-89	D+ = 68-69	C = satisfactory work
B = 83-87	D = 63-67	D = work is unsatisfactory in some respect
B- = 80-82	D- = 60-62	F = substantially unsatisfactory work
C+ = 78-79	F = 0-59	

Attendance

Each class consists of lectures, screenings, and discussions. Pop quizzes are never announced ahead of time, which is why it is important you attend class (or watch the complete lectures, online).

If you are a classroom student, you are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

Civil Discourse

DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be Socially Responsible Leaders. It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

Disagreement is not the same as disparagement.

Attitude

A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting, or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

Cell Phones/Screens

If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode and put away. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undistruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowed in class and laptops must remain closed and put away. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.

Class Discussions

Student participation in class discussions (and on discussion boards) will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relative to the day's topic. Participation during class allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading and viewing assignments. Students must keep up with the reading and viewing assignments to participate in class discussions.

Online students will participate with each other in discussions on the D2L discussion boards.

COLLEGE POLICIES

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 and sent via email.

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://offices.depaul.edu/oaa/faculty-resources/teaching/academic-integrity/for-students/Pages/default.aspx> 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:

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

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.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296

COURSE SCHEDULE

(N) = Netflix, (C) = ColTube, (A) = Amazon Prime, (H) = Hulu
Screenings may change based on availability and time

**Readings will be posted weekly in D2L.*

Week 1, September 13th

Introduction to television, television pioneers, the 1950s-1970s

I LOVE LUCY: "Lucy Does a Commercial" (H, C)

THE TWILIGHT ZONE: "Time Enough At Last" (N, H, C)

DICK VAN DYKE SHOW: "It May Look Like a Walnut" (N, H)

Viewing Assignment: THE WEST WING: "Pilot" (N, C), watch The Emmy Awards on Sunday, September 18th on ABC.

Reading Assignment*: Sepinwall: Introduction, Prologue

Week 2, September 20th

Characters and lead character dynamics, the basic format of television. The network to cable transition.

MARY TYLER MOORE: "Today I Am a Ma'am" (H)

WILL & GRACE: "Pilot" (C)

SEX & THE CITY: "The Baby Shower" (A)

Viewing Assignment: BUFFY: "Ted" (N, H)

Reading Assignment*: Sepinwall Ch. 6, 7

Week 3, September 27th: Paper #1 Assigned

Digging down into structure: script elements.

EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND: "No Fat" (N)

LOST: "Walkabout" (N)

Viewing Assignment: EMPIRE (H)

Reading Assignment*:

Week 4, October 4th

Hour-long genres and structure, procedurals vs. serials. Types of suspense.

HOUSE: "Pilot" (N, C)

THE AMERICANS: "Open House" (A, C)

Viewing Assignment: LAW & ORDER – pick any episode of any iteration of the series. Be prepared to briefly summarize it in class. Episodes are on NBC.com, Netflix, Hulu and ColTube and any hotel television in the universe.

Reading Assignment*: Sepinwall, Ch 5

Week 5, October 11th : Midterm Assigned

The police procedural – how television has changed through the ages. Television from 2000s to today.

THE ROCKFORD FILES: "The Oracle Wore a Cashmere Suit" (N, H)

HILL STREET BLUES: "Pilot" (partial) (C, H)

MIAMI VICE: "Smuggler's Blues" (partial) (C, H)

Viewing Assignment: THE SHIELD: "Pilot" (C, H)

Week 6, October 18th

Comedy: characters, structure, common themes.

CHEERS: "Give Me a Ring Sometime" (N, H)

SEINFELD: "The Contest" (H, C)

TRANSPARENT: "Pilot" (A)

Viewing Assignment: FREAKS & GEEKS: "Pilot" (N, C)

Reading Assignment*: Sepinwall Ch 2, 3, 12

Week 7, October 25th: Paper #2 Assigned

The Anti-hero.

THE SOPRANOS: "Pilot" (A, C)

BREAKING BAD: "Pilot" (N, C)

Viewing Assignment: UNREAL: "Pilot" (H), SHOWRUNNERS (N)

Reading Assignment*: Sepinwall Ch 10, Epilogue

Week 8, November 1st

Representation in front of and behind the camera.

BLACK-ISH: "The Word" (H)

MASTER OF NONE: "Indians on TV" (N)

THE GOLDEN GIRLS: "Blanche & the Younger Man" (C)

Viewing Assignment: FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS (TBD, N); THE WIRE: "Old Cases" (C, A)

Reading Assignment*:

Week 9, November 8th : Final Project Assigned

Binge watching and gluts. Innovations in style and form. "Peak TV."

CRAZY EX-GIRLFRIEND: "Pilot" (N, H)

ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK: "Lesbian Request Denied" (N)

Viewing Assignment: AMERICAN CRIME: Season 2, Episode 1 (N)

Reading Assignment*:

Final Paper assigned.

Week 10, November 15th

Innovations in style & form, the business of television

Screenings TBD.

Tuesday, November 22nd: Final Paper due by 5pm. Class does not meet.