

## TELEVISION GENRES (Spring 2017)

DC 229

Wednesdays: (1:30 pm – 4:45 pm)

Room: #214; 14 East Jackson

Instructor: Christopher Parrish

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30 – 1:00 pm

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Course Description: In this course, 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.

Prerequisite: None

Type of Instruction: Lecture, screenings, readings and discussions.

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. (IT IS VERY IMPORTANT ONLINE STUDENTS WATCH VIDEO LECTURES TO PREP FOR QUIZZES AND BE AWARE OF ANY CHANGES TO SYLLABUS.)

Required Viewing/Reading Materials: Television programs will be viewed in class. Unfortunately, for online viewers, the picture and sound quality isn't optimum. Whenever possible, please try to find the assigned programs through TV.com, Crackle, Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, Vudu, iTunes, AppleTV, video on demand, YouTube, cable or basic television, the public library or a video store (yes, they still exist.)

Course Management System: D2L

Required Reading:

**The Revolution was Televised** by Alan Sepinwall

**Sitcom** by Saul Austerlitz

Written Assignments: **All written assignments must be written in 12 point font, double-spaced, 1” margins and posted on D2L in PDF. No late work will be accepted without a verified medical or personal emergency. Do not post assignments on D2L in any other format that is not PDF. DO NOT EMAIL ME YOUR ASSIGNMENTS. THEY WON'T BE GRADED.**

Withdrawal Drop Dates: April 7<sup>th</sup> – Last day to swap classes with no penalty.

May 12<sup>th</sup> – Last day to withdraw from Spring Quarter classes.

Course Objectives: Enabling 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 an insider's language to the television business, 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, themes, character tropes, as well as means of creating and sustaining tension.

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 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 to come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment.

These courses focus on works of literature, art, theatre, or music as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Students who take courses in this domain choose three courses from such choices as literature, the visual arts, media arts, music, and theater. No more than two courses can be chosen from one department or program.

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 filmmaking 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.

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 and quizzes.

#### Writing Expectations:

There are three Papers, three Take Home Quizzes and one Final Presentation in this course. Papers are expected to be free of spelling and grammatical errors.

#### Online Course Management System:

D2L: <https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/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 their assignments for this course. Login with Campus Connect information.

#### Grading:

Paper #1: Letter of Protest: 5%

Quiz #1: 15%

Paper #2: TV Moment That Moved You: 10%

Quiz #2: 15%

Paper #3: Television Series Analysis: 10%

Quiz #3: 15%

Final TV Pitch Presentation: 20%

Participation: 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

#### Attendance/Participation:

Each week's class consists of lectures, screenings and discussions.

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\* Online students, to receive participation points, you must post on the D2L discussion board once a week.**

Course Schedule:

**Class 1: March 29<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Introductions. Course Syllabus. Television Basic Formats and Types. Television Pioneers (Lucy, The Honeymooners and Rod Serling)

Screenings

I LOVE LUCY “Lucy Does a TV Commercial”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6T8bLJ4FqeU>

Season 1: Episode 30

Also available on Hulu

THE HONEYMOONERS “Better Living Through TV”

Season 5: Episode 7

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPq\\_lgtidbQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPq_lgtidbQ)

ROD SERLING INTERVIEW

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8sT6nz7VUM&t=79s>

Television Science Fiction Pioneer – Rod Serling:

THE TWILIGHT ZONE “It’s a Good Life”

Season 3: Episode 8

Available on Netflix

THE TWILIGHT ZONE “The Eye of the Beholder”

Season 2: Episode 6

Available on Netflix

**Reading Assignment: Chapters 1 and 2 from Sitcom**

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**Class 2: April 5<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture:

How TV Scripts Are Formatted – TV Script Spreadsheet and Script Samples

Types:

Serialized

Episodic aka Stand Alone

Procedural

Anthology Shows

Styles:

Non-Linear

Mockumentary

Screenings:

Procedural/Principal Lead:

MY NAME IS EARL “Joy’s Wedding” (Comedy)

Season 1: Episode 8

Available on Netflix

Episodic/Ensemble:

FRIENDS: “The One with All the Embryos” (Comedy)

Season 4: Episode 12

Available on Netflix

JJ ABRAMS “MYSTERY BOX” TED TALK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpjVgF5JDq8>

Serialized/Ensemble:

LOST “Pilot” (Drama)

Season 1: Episode 1

Available on Netflix

**Reading Assignment: Chapter 17 from Sitcom and Chapter 6 from The Revolution was Televised**

**Homework Assignment: Paper #1 - Letter of Protest (DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT CLASS. FOLLOW RUBRIC FOR INSTRUCTIONS.)**

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**Class 3: April 12th**

Lecture: Popular Types of Characters (Matriarch, Patriarch, Craftsman, Clown)

Principal / Titular Leads

Partners

The Whole Ensemble

Workplace/Family Comedies

Screenings:

Drama: THE SOPRANOS “Pilot”

Season 1: Episode 1

On Amazon Prime

Dramedy: FREAKS AND GEEKS “Dead Dogs and Gym Teachers” (Ensemble)

Season 1: Episode 14

Available on Netflix

Comedy: W.K.R.P. IN CINCINNATI “Turkeys Away” (Workplace Comedy)

Season 1: Episode 7

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekrop2r9gbw>

Comedy: EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND “A Date for Peter” (Family Comedy)

Season 9: Episode 9

Available on Netflix

**Reading Assignment: Chapter 2 from The Revolution Was Televised and Chapter 19 from Sitcom**

## Take Home Quiz #1 (DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT CLASS)

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### Class 4: April 19th

Lecture: Comparing & Contrasting Prevalent Themes (Cops, Kids and Women in the Workplace)

#### Screenings:

Drama: DRAGNET: “The LSD Story” (Cop Drama)

Season 1: Episode 1

Available on Hulu

Drama: THE SHIELD: “Pilot” (Cop Drama)

Season 1: Episode 1

Available on Hulu

Comedy: LEAVE IT TO BEAVER: “Beaver Gets Spelled” (Family Comedy)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9pRdn-nNfw>

Comedy: SPEECHLESS: “Pilot” (Family Comedy)

Season 1: Episode 1

Available on Hulu

Comedy: THE DICK VAN DYKE SHOW: “Forty-Four Tickets”

Season 1: Episode 10

Available on Amazon

Comedy: 30 ROCK: “Rosemary’s Baby”

Season 2: Episode 4

Available on Netflix

**Reading Assignment: Chapter 5 from The Revolution was Televised and Chapter 23 from Sitcom.**

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### Class 5: April 26th

Lecture:

The TV Business and an Analysis of TV Pilots

Tales How Creators Sold Their Series

Prolific Television Creators (Spelling, Lear, Marshall, Perry, Sorkin, Rhimes and MacFarlane)

#### Screenings:

SHONDA RHIMES TEDTALK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmj-azFbpkA>

HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER (Shonda Rhimes)

Season 1: “Pilot”

Available on Netflix

AARON SORKIN'S CLASS ON CHARACTER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eucVNYQNGAs>

THE NEWSROOM (Aaron Sorkin)

Season 1: Episode 1: "We Just Decided To"

Available on Amazon

SEINFELD (time permitting)

Season 4: Episode 3: "The Pitch"

Available on Hulu (43 minutes)

**Reading Assignment:** Chapter 15 from Sitcom

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**Class 6: May 3rd**

Lecture: Exploring Symbolism and Politics through Science Fiction & Fantasy

911 in Space

Gay "Conversion" Therapy

The Kiss Heard 'Round the Quadrant

Screenings:

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE: "The Xindi"

Season 3: Episode 1

Available on Hulu

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION: "The Outcast"

Season 5: Episode 17

Available on Hulu

STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES: "Plato's Stepchildren"

Season 3: Episode 10

Available on Hulu

**Homework Assignment – Paper #2 – TV**

**Moment That Moved You (CLIP DUE ON FRIDAY, MAY 5<sup>TH</sup>. PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT CLASS)**

**Reading Assignment – Chapter 9 from The Revolution Was Televised**

**Take Home Quiz #2 (DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT CLASS)**

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**Class 7: May 10th**

## **Classroom Activity: PRESENTING TV MOMENTS THAT MOVED YOU**

Lecture: Rise of the Antihero (they come in all shapes and sizes)

### Screenings:

Comedy: THE LARRY SANDERS SHOW “Mr. Sharon Stone”

Season 3: Episode 8

Available on Amazon for purchase

Drama: BREAKING BAD “Cornered”

Season 4: Episode 6

Available on Netflix

Comedy: IT’S ALWAYS SUNNY IN PHILADELPHIA (\*\*time permitting\*\*)

Season 7: Episode 1 “Frank’s Pretty Woman”

Available on Hulu

Drama: DEADWOOD (\*\*time permitting\*\*)

Season 1: Episode 1 “Deadwood”

Available on Amazon

## **Reading Assignment: Chapter 12 from The Revolution Was Televised and Chapter 16 from Sitcom**

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### **Week 8: May 17th**

Lecture:

Children’s Television

Mr. Rogers vs. Nixon

Sesame Street’s Mandate for Learning

The Disney Scam

Schoolhouse Rock

Yabba Dabba D’oh!: The History of Primetime Animation.

Cartoons for Grownups. Political Commentary vs. Shock Value

### Screenings:

SESAME STREET “Pilot”

Season 1: Episode 1

Available on Youtube

FAMILY GUY “Blue Harvest”

Season 6: Episodes 1 & 2

Available on Netflix

SOUTH PARK “Trapped in the Closet”

Season 9: Episode 12

Available on Hulu

**Homework Assignment – Paper #3 – Television Series Analysis (DUE BY NEXT CLASS)  
FOLLOW RUBRIC FOR INSTRUCTIONS.**

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**Week 9: May 24th**

Lecture: Web Series - The Future of the Television Distribution  
The Netflix Effect  
Louis CK

Screenings:

Dramedy: Horace and Pete  
Episode 1  
Available on Louisck.net

Comedy: Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt  
Season 1: Episode 1: “Kimmy Goes Outside”  
Available on Netflix

Drama: The Man in the High Castle  
Season 1: Episode 1: “The Man in the High Castle”  
Available on Amazon

Comedy: Difficult People  
Season 1: Episode 1: “Pilot”  
Available on Hulu

**Take Home Quiz #3 (DUE BY NEXT CLASS)**

**FINAL ASSIGNMENT: ORIGINAL TELEVISION PITCH PRESENTATION (ONLINE STUDENTS SUBMIT PRESENTATION AS QUICKTIME FILE.)**

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**Week 10: May 31<sup>st</sup>**

**TELEVISION PITCH PRESENTATIONS**

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**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://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: <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](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296

## Course Policies as Suggested by the Dean of Students Office (optional)

Attendance: Students 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.

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation 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 assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

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.

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.

Cell Phones/On Call: If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. 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 allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.

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