

# SCWR 150 (601) Television Genres

Instructor: Lee Madsen

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## 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.

Prerequisites: None

Course Outcomes: Final analysis paper

## Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- differentiate show genres in television, describing how narrative and aesthetic elements comprise a particular style of TV (art).
- explain how television genres have evolved over time, the technological innovations shaping them today, as well as possible future iterations they might have.
- analyze story structure and character development over the course of a complete season of a television show.
- describe the function of writers, directors and actors in relation to character development in a TV show.
- apprise storytelling technique and structure episode by episode and through the entire season of a TV show.

## Required Textbook:

- The Revolution Was Televised – The Cops, Crooks, Slingers, and Slayers Who Changed TV Drama Forever ISBN13: 9781628927405

**Writing Expectations:** There are three 4-page Papers and one 6-page *Final Analysis 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. All

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

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.

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 rewatch 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 our CONTENT page, also, I'll link them to our class via 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 Analysis Paper: (35%)

Participation: (10%) Pop Quizzes

## THE SCHEDULE

March 30th - Class 1

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

Screening: *NEWSRADIO* "The Public Domain" & *Broad City* "Wisdom Teeth" & *LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT* "Raw" check out the breakdown handout on D2L

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

April 6th - Class 2

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

Screening: *30 ROCK* "Pilot" *HOUSE* "Pilot"

Homework: Breakdown Paper: Breakdown a *NETWORK* show of your choosing. NO PREMIUM CABLE SHOWS (this means no shows from HBO, SHOWTIME, CINEMAX, STARS). Choose a *NETWORK* show - break it down. A handout will be provided on

D2L. Due: April 13

April 13th - Class 3

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

Screening: WILL & GRACE "Pilot" & THE X FILES "Pilot" Breakdown paper due

April 20th - Class 4

Lecture: Types of Shows: Ensembles

Screening: FRIENDS "The One With Two Parties," "The One with the Embryos" & SIX FEET UNDER "Pilot"

Homework: Character Paper. Write a Three Page Paper on the characters of SIX FEET UNDER. A handout will be provided. Due on D2L: April 27

April 27th - Class 5

Lecture: Tension: Intersecting Storylines

Screening: SEINFELD "The Opposite," "The Slicer" & THE WIRE "Old Cases"

Reading: Sepinwall: Chapter 3 "All the pieces matter..." (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

Character paper due today

May 4th - Class 6

Lecture: Tension: Non-linear narrative.

Screening: ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT "Pilot" & DAMAGES "Pilot"

Homework: MIDTERM & Quiz 1. Due May 11 by 10pm.

May 11th - Class 7

Lecture: Theme. Adult Animation. Anime.

Screening: THE SIMPSONS "Lisa on Ice" & THE SOPRANOS "Pilot" & SOUTH PARK "Margaritaville"

Reading: Sepinwall: Chapter 2 "All due respect..." (You may be quizzed on this material next class).

Due: Midterm & Quiz 1

May 18th - Class 8

Lecture: The Costume Drama/The Period Piece.

Screening: HANDMAIDS TALE, DEADWOOD

Reading: 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 Quiz 2.

May 25th - Class 9

Lecture: The Action Drama. The Police Drama.

Screening: TRUE DETECTIVE & BREAKING BAD

Reading: 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).

Due: Quiz 2 & Theme paper due today on D2L.

June 1st - Class 10

Lecture: The Future of the Industry is here. Internet Shows.

Screening: ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK, PATRIOT

Homework: 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 pages. June 8th 11:59pm. A handout will be provided. Also, Quiz 3.

June 8th - Final Paper Due:

Homework: 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 pages. Due on D2L 10:00pm.

Attendance:

### **Secret Word or Phrase**

A "secret phrase" will be given at some point during the lecture. Failure to include the secret phrase will result in a grade deduction for the paper. The point of the secret phrase is to ensure that you watch and listen to the entire lecture as if you were in class. If you cannot find the secret phrase, you may be multitasking and should try focusing on only the class recording. Hence, I will not provide the phrase (as I would not give the answer to a midterm question).

Class Discussion/Participation:

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 either in class or online. Secondly, students will contribute to the course discussion boards on D2L. Each student must post one comment per week and reply to two others to receive the full participation grade for class.

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 and stowed in your bag. 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.

#### Course Management:

This course is housed and managed on D2L. There, you will find each week's recorded lecture (available after 5:30 PM on Wednesdays), the required reading material, most of our assignments, and, as the semester progresses – your current grade. Also posted on D2L will be a weekly discussion forum for questions and thoughts concerning the films, lectures, assignments and the course itself which are part of the course participation grade.

#### Required Textbook:

The Revolution Was Televised – The Cops, Crooks, Slingers, and Slayers Who Changed TV Drama Forever ISBN13: 9781628927405

#### Software/Hardware needed to complete assignments:

Word processing program for written assignments.

Computer/internet access and D2L for assignment submission, quizzes, discussions etc

#### 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

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