

TELEVISION GENRES – FALL 2020

SCWR 150

This asynchronous course is taught entirely online.

Instructor: Nathan DeWitt, MFA

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays: 9:00am to 11am. I am available via phone, Zoom or email during my office hours. **Please make an appointment.**

Office: Online

ndewitt@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:

SCWR 150 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 and quizzes.

Writing Expectations:

Writing Expectations will be met with graded assignments. There are FOUR paper packets which consist of several writing assignments. There is also 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: <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 your assignments for this course. Login with Campus Connect information.

Homework:

All assignments for this course must be typed and submitted on D2L. Homework is due at the start of class. Or, if you're an online student, homework is due at the time your corresponding in-class section meets. **PAY ATTENTION TO D2L. NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED! Homework is not accepted via email unless there is a malfunction with D2L. Please do not send me assignments via email unless I ask for them first.**

Reading:

The Television Genre Book (3rd Edition): Creeber, Glenn, editor. British Film Institute, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.

ISBN-13: 978-1844575268, ISBN-10: 1844575268

Select readings from this textbook will be made available to students. **(You do not need to buy the book).**

Other readings distributed by Professor.

Viewing:

Since this course focuses on studying television and television storytelling it's very important students have access to streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, HBO Max and Disney+ and/or an ability to purchase episodes on iTunes or Amazon. The subscriptions to these sites should be considered part of your 'books' expenses for this course. Please do not pirate materials for this course.

Panopto:

We are working to make free streaming copies of all assigned episodes available to students. Stay tuned for updates.

Instructor's Note:

The Professor may modify or revise this syllabus as circumstances and episode availability warrant.

Grading:

The course is out of 1,000 possible points.

4 Paper Packets, 100 points each. (400 points)

5 Online Quizzes, 60 points each. (300 points)

Final Paper: 300 points.

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

Add/ Drop dates can be found here: <https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

THE SCHEDULE:

Assignments are due Wednesdays by the end of the day.

September 9

Class 1:

Lectures:

The TV Industry Overview, Development, The Professional TV Writing Process

Viewing:

30 ROCK "Pilot" (NBC, Hulu, Peacock)

MAD MEN "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" (Pilot) (AMC, Amazon, available for purchase)

Reading:

30 Rock Pilot Script (D2L)

Homework:

Quiz 1 (covers Class 1) 30 questions, 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due next week.

September 16

Class 2

Lectures:

Network Television, Story Basics - Episodes, The Procedural Drama, The Police Series, The Situation Comedy

Viewing:

THE X FILES "Pilot" (Fox, Hulu)

THE SIMPSONS "Bart Sells his Soul" S7, E4 (Fox, Disney+)

SEINFELD "The Contest" S4, E11 (NBC, Hulu)

Reading:

From Creeber: Catherine Johnson on "The X-Files," and K.J. Donnelly on "The Simpsons and South Park."

How Dan Harmon Drives Himself Crazy Making COMMUNITY (Raftery, Wired):

https://www.wired.com/2011/09/mf_harmon/

Homework:

Paper Packet 1 (covers Classes 1 and 2) 100 possible points. Due next week.

September 23

Class 3:

Lectures:

Cable Television, HBO, Story Structure, TV Tech and DIY Production

Viewing:

THE SOPRANOS “Pilot” (HBO, HBO Max, Amazon)

SOUTH PARK “Make Love, Not Warcraft” S8, E10 (Comedy Central, Hulu)

ATLANTA “The Big Bang” (Pilot) (FX, Hulu)

Reading:

From Greeber: Glen Creeber on “The Sopranos”

The Shapes of Stories (Vonnegut): <http://www.openculture.com/2014/02/kurt-vonnegut-masters-thesis-rejected-by-u-chicago.html>

Quiz 2: Covers Classes 2-3 and the assigned reading. 30 questions. 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due next week.

September 30

Class 4:

Lecture:

Internet Television, Serial Programming, Adult Animation

Viewing:

BOJACK HORSEMAN “The Bojack Horseman Story: Chapter One” (Pilot) (Netflix)

TRANSPARENT “Pilot” (Amazon)

THE HANDMAID’S TALE “Offred” (Pilot) (Hulu) (This episode contains graphic sexual violence; viewer discretion is advised. See Paper Packet 2 Prompt for alternative assignment)

Reading:

The Netflix Decade (Coster, Reuters): <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-netflix-decade-in-review/the-netflix-decade-how-one-company-changed-the-way-we-watch-tv-idUSKBN1YR1AR>

Homework:

Paper Packet 2 (covers Classes 3 and 4). 100 possible points. Due next week.

October 7

Class 5:

Lectures:

Character, The Hero’s Journey

Viewing:

SIX FEET UNDER “Pilot” (HBO, HBO Max, Amazon)

FRIENDS “The One with Two Parties” S2, E22 (NBC, HBO Max).

RUSSIAN DOLL “Nothing in this World is Easy” (Pilot) Netflix

Reading:

The Hero’s Journey: Mythic Structure of Joseph Campbell’s Monomyth (Bronzite):

<http://www.movieoutline.com/articles/the-hero-journey-mythic-structure-of-joseph-campbell-monomyth.html>

Hero’s Journey as Psychological Journey (Myers): <https://gointothestory.blcklst.com/heros-journey-as-psychological-journey-152d0f7a8be1>

Joseph Campbell and the Hero's Journey (Myers, OPTIONAL):

<https://gointothestory.blcklst.com/joseph-campbell-and-the-heros-journey-5b0477f2f012>

Homework:

Quiz 3: Covers Classes 4-5 and the assigned reading. 30 questions. 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due next week.

October 14

Class 6:

Lectures:

Sitcom and Representation. The Unruly Woman Sitcom, The African American Sitcom and The LGBTQ+ Sitcom

Viewing:

THE BOONDOCKS "Return of the King" S1, E9 (Cartoon Network, HBO Max) (This episode depicts the likeness of a civil rights leader screaming racial epithets; viewer discretion is advised)

BLACK-ISH "THE Word" S2, E1 (ABC, Hulu)

MASTER OF NONE "Thanksgiving" S2, E8 (Netflix)

INSECURE "Racist as Fuck" S1, E3 (HBO, HBO Max)

ONE DAY AT A TIME "Outside" S3, E2 (Netflix)

Reading:

What Normalization Means? (Hsu, The New Yorker): <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/what-normalization-means>

How Angela Bassett Pushed MASTER OF NONE'S "Thanksgiving" Episode to the Next Level (Bradley, Vanity Fair): <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2017/05/master-of-none-season-2-thanksgiving-lena-waithe>

How ONE DAY AT A TIME Captures a Community Most TV Ignores (Bradley, Vanity Fair): <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2018/01/one-day-at-a-time-season-2-review-interview-rita-moreno-justina-machado-gloria-calderon-kellett>

Homework:

Paper Packet 3 (covers Classes 5 and 6). 100 possible points. Due next week.

October 21

Class 7:

Lectures:

Tension, The Primetime Soap, The Hospital Drama, The Horror Series

Viewing:

GREY'S ANATOMY "Who's Zooming Who?" S1, E9 (S1 Finale) (ABC, Netflix)

THE LEFTOVERS "Pilot" (HBO, HBO Max) (This episode contains depictions of violence against animals, viewer discretion is advised)

Reading:

From Creeber: Mareike Jenner on "Grey's Anatomy."

Homework:

Quiz 4: Covers Classes 6-7 and the assigned reading. 30 questions. 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due next week.

October 28

Class 8:

Lectures:

Non-Linear Narrative, Theme, The Anthology Series, Sci-Fi and The Period Piece

Viewing:

LOST “The Constant” S4, E5 (ABC, Hulu)

RICK AND MORTY “Total Rickall” S2, E4 (Cartoon Network, Hulu)

AMERICAN CRIME STORY: THE PEOPLE v. OJ SIMPSON “From the Ashes of Tragedy” (Pilot) (FX, Netflix)

Reading:

How LOST Changed the Way the World Watches TV (Epstein, Quartz): <https://qz.com/267903/how-lost-changed-the-way-the-world-watches-tv/>

Homework:

Paper Packet 4 (covers Classes 7 and 8). 100 possible points. Due next week.

November 4

Class 9

Lectures:

The Espionage Drama, The Fantasy Series and Post-Modern TV

Viewing:

HOMELAND “Pilot” (SHOWTIME, Hulu)

GAME OF THRONES “Winter is Coming” (Pilot) (HBO, HBO Max)

THE GOOD PLACE “Everything is Fine” (Pilot) (NBC, Netflix).

Reading:

From Creeber: Lisa Richards on “Homeland” and Helen Wheatley on “Game of Thrones”.

Homework:

Quiz 5: Covers Classes 8-9 and the assigned reading. 30 questions. 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due next week.

November 11

Class 10:

Lectures:

Reality TV, Documentary/ Non-Fiction TV.

Viewing:

THE REAL WORLD (New York) (MTV, MTV.com)

NATHAN FOR YOU “Gas Station/ Caricature Artist” S1,E4 (Comedy Central, Hulu)

COSMOS “Standing Up in the Milky Way” (Pilot) (Fox, Disney+, for purchase on Amazon Prime).

Homework:

Final Paper. 300 Possible points.

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 Wednesday, November 18, 2020 by the end of the day.**

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.

Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.

Phone number: (312)362-8002

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296