

## TELEVISION GENRES – Spring 2021

SCWR 150

This asynchronous course is taught entirely online.

Instructor: Nathan DeWitt, MFA

Office Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00am to 1:00pm. I am available via phone, Zoom or email during my office hours. Please make an appointment.

Office: Online

[ndewitt@depaul.edu](mailto: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. [Please pay attention to D2L for specific due dates and times.](#)

### **Late Work Policy:**

NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED unless you have a medical emergency, or you contact the professor for an extension. Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis, but generally, the professor understands this course is not the most important thing in your life. In the event you need extra time on an assignment for this course, reach out to the professor to communicate your needs and demonstrate you're engaged in the course. The professor will do their best to accommodate you.

### **Email Policy:**

Assignments are not accepted via email unless there is a malfunction with D2L. Please do not send the professor assignments via email unless they are requested. If you need to send an assignment via email, reach out to the professor explaining the situation but do not attach the file. The professor will reply, requesting the assignment. At that point, please send your materials. An email record such as this makes it much easier to keep track of what has been submitted and when it was submitted.

**Reading:**

The Television Genre Book (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 is 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:**

Many of the assigned episodes are available for free via Panopto. Where available, links to these episodes are provided on D2L. Log in with your Campus Connect credentials.

**Online Class Participation:**

Weekly Discussion Board posts ask about your familiarity with the series being exhibited and ask you to relate topics discussed in lecture to the assigned episodes. Submissions may be submitted as written responses, audio files or video files. (10 points per post)

**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)

10 Discussion Board posts, 10 points each (100 points)

Final Paper: 200 points.

**Grading Scale:**

A: 92-100%; A-: 90-91.9%

B+: 88-89.9% B: 82-87.9%; B-: 80-81.9%

C+: 78-79.9%; C: 72-77.9%; C-: 70-71.9%

D+: 68-69%; D: 62-67.9%; Below 62% is an F

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

**THE SCHEDULE:**

**Assignments are due Tuesdays by the end of the day.**

**March 30**

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)

Discussion:

Discussion Board

Reading:

30 Rock Pilot Script (D2L)

Homework:

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

## **April 6**

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, E10 (NBC, Hulu)

Discussion:

Discussion Board

Reading:

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

Homework:

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

## **April 13**

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)

Discussion:

Discussion Board

Reading:

From Creeber: 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.

## **April 20**

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)

Discussion:

Discussion Board

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.

## **April 27**

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

Discussion:

Discussion Board

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.

## **May 4**

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)

Discussion:

Discussion Board

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.

## **May 11**

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)

Discussion:

Discussion Board

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.

## **May 18**

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)

Discussion:

Discussion Board

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.

## **May 25**

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).

Discussion:

Discussion Board

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.

## **June 1**

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).

Discussion:

Discussion Board

Homework:

Final Paper. 200 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 Tuesday, June 8, 2021 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](http://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](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

**Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.**

**Phone number: (312)362-8002**

**Fax: (312)362-6544**

**TTY: (773)325.7296**