



**FILM 105 - 408**  
**Foundations of Television**

**Autumn 2020-21**

Type of Course: In Person, TuTh 3:10PM - 4:40PM, CDM Center 216

Course Management System: D2L

Instructor: Rachael Mason

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: [rmason13@depaul.edu](mailto:rmason13@depaul.edu)

**Course Description:**

This course provides an introduction and framework of the history of television production. Evolving story forms will be examined from television's beginnings to the present. Developments in story and production styles will be analyzed and discussed.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

1. Identify important events in the history of television that propelled its evolution, and/or had a significant impact in society.
2. Recognize the basic content production elements of a television show and create a basic pitch presentation for an original program.
3. Compare the structure of basic television genres.
4. Distinguish the basic principles of the business of television.

**Reading:**

Required: Mittell, Jason (2010) TELEVISION AND AMERICAN CULTURE; Michael Wiese Productions. ISBN-13: 978-0195306675; ISBN-10: 0195306678

You are also invited to examine the following magazines that report on the newest developments in this thriving industry:

VARIETY & THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

The lectures might be supplemented with handouts from the instructor over the course of the quarter.

**Grading:**

Final grades will be based on 2 reading quizzes, 7 module quizzes, 6 papers, a mid-term presentation, a final presentation, class participation and attitude. Because it has to present shows on time every hour of every day, television is one of the most demanding industries, this charge carries over to those who are preparing for it, which is why missed deadlines will result in assignment failure (0%).

**MODULE 01**

Reading Quiz (Chapter 1) – 5%:  
Quiz on Module 1 – 4%

**MODULE 02**

Reading Quiz (Chapter 2) – 5%:  
Quiz on Module 2 – 4%

**MODULE 03**

Quiz on Module 3 – 4%

**MODULE 04**

Paper on Greenlight Projects (Aquaman) – 5%

**MODULE 05**

Paper on Ratings Vs. Quality – 5%  
Quiz on Module 5 – 4%

**MODULE 06**

Old Show Pitch Presentation – 10%  
Original Show Pitch Presentation – 15%

**MODULE 07**

Paper on Context and Series (drama/comedy) –  
5% Quiz on Module 7 – 4% (down 1%)

**MODULE 08**

Quiz on Module 8 – 5%

**MODULE 09**

Paper on Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation  
on TV (Chapter 8) – 5%

**MODULE 10**

Paper on Political and Cultural Identities on TV  
(Chapter 9) – 5%

**ALL MODULES**

Discussions & Participation – 15%

All assignments must be typed and free of grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors. It's your work; you're responsible for its quality.

**Grading Standards:**

Letter Grade	Minimum % of Total Points	Letter Grade	Minimum % of Total Points
A	92	C+	78
A-	90	C	72
B+	88	C-	70
B	82	D+	68
B-	80	D	60
		F	0

**Course Policies:****1. Participation**

At this level, students should be interested in the subject of the course. The only way to see this is through participation in class, either taking part in the online activities, asking questions or adding constructive comments to other student's presentations and the instructor's lectures.

Each zoom meeting brings the possibility of earning one point in the participation percentage of the grade. Just being there won't give you full credit, you need to actively contribute to the discussions, the activities or the chat.

## 2. Attendance

It does not constitute a specific part of your grade, but perfect attendance is required. Most of the information you need to complete your assignments will be discussed in class; also, examples of what you have to do will be given there. Subjects and/or assignments will not be discussed outside of the programmed zoom meetings. This makes attendance critical, and thus not an issue to be negotiated. However, if you have to miss a zoom meeting or a deadline, make sure to plan ahead, and inform the instructor in advance. Calling in advance does not automatically excuse an absence or a missed deadline, but it is the only way to present your case. If you fail to communicate before the next class period to explain an absence or a missed deadline, they will not be excused. Please note that work, non-emergency medical and dental appointments, hangovers, intramural games, visitors from out of town, fixing your roommate's computer, fraternity/sorority events, arguments with boyfriends or girlfriends and studying for other classes do not constitute excused absences or missed assignments.

In order to petition for an excused absence, students who miss class due to illness or significant personal circumstances should complete the Absence Notification process through the Dean of Students office. The form can be accessed at: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/forms.html> Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right whether to offer an excused absence and/or academic accommodations for an excused absence.

## 3. Tardiness

One true thing in all professional fields is the lack of tolerance for tardiness. Employers do not generally tolerate such behavior, and employees who offer weak, irritating excuses frequently find themselves unemployed and unemployable. We will be working under the same rules.

Remember it is your responsibility to make the arrangements when a deadline or a class has to be missed. I will treat you professionally, expecting a responsible attitude. This means that it is you who must be worried about solving the problem, not me.

## 4. Missed Assignments

Since television creation is a cumulative effort, if you fail to turn in any of the assignments you will fail it with 0%. There will be no exceptions. This is a zero tolerance policy. I have no time or patience for those who are not going to take this class seriously. Many students have flunked my courses for this reason. If you cannot make it a priority to complete all assignments, you better consider not taking this course. One more thing, turning-in an assignment does not guarantee you will have a passing grade, although the opposite will be true: Not turning them in will fail you inevitably.

## 5. Attitude

We are going to be spending a lot of time discussing other student's or your own work. This will be made in an orderly fashion, no matter how vehemently we feel for an argument, we have to be able to provide it in a disciplined manner. It is better to wait and later speak than not speaking at all. My evaluation of your attitude and attention will be based on your participation during discussions, as much as it will be based on your assertiveness when making a comment. Students who are not insightful enough to value the learning opportunities inherent to this class tend to do poorly.

## 6. Zoom Etiquette

The DePaul Code of Student Responsibility applies to online behavior as well as in person or classroom behavior.

The following are policies for the course meetings with Zoom:

- General – Sign in with your preferred first name and last name. If you do not have access to a computer or smartphone with internet access, call into class. This is not optimal; try to locate an

internet-enabled device to use for this course. Please stay engaged in class activities. Close any apps on your device that are not relevant and turn off notifications.

- Video – Turn on your video when possible. It is helpful to be able to see each other, just as in an in-person class. You may elect to turn off your video if you have limited internet bandwidth, no webcam or if you're unable to find an environment without a lot of visual distractions.
- Audio – Mute your microphone when you are not talking. Be in a quiet place when possible and turn off any music, videos, etc. in the background.

#### 7. Uncivilized Behavior

Even though you are students who must constantly thrive to grow, we need to start acting professionally. This is why there will be no tolerance for uncivilized behavior. I require an orderly ambiance to be able to make the most of each session.

By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand my expectations for students concerning attitude and work ethic.

I reserve the right to drop any student with an F (0%) if he/she has excessive absences (more than four, and if he/she doesn't participate in any of the assignments), engages in disruptive behavior, has a poor attitude, or in any other way is clearly not taking the class seriously.

#### 8. Ethics

Although your grade does not contain an ethics component like some other courses, I require complete honesty in producing your work. By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand the seriousness of academic dishonesty and realize I will impose the harshest sanctions possible if I can prove you have engaged in such behavior. You are also indicating that you understand what constitutes academic dishonesty; I will not tolerate an excuse that claims the student did not know he/she was engaging in academic dishonesty.

#### 9. Plagiarism

Plagiarism, cheating and/or fabrication will not be tolerated. They are serious offenses – both in course and in media careers. Thus, I reserve the right to drop any student with an F (0%) if he/she engages in any form of academic dishonesty. I further reserve the right to recommend other sanctions as may be appropriate.

Plagiarism is useless to you anyway. By having someone else do the work for you, you are missing an opportunity to immerse yourself in the television industry. You are also waiving your right to learn. If you are willing to do that, then you have to evaluate if it's worth the aggravation and the time you invest in this course.

More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>

#### 10. Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system <http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>. Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

#### 11. Retroactive Withdrawal

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each

for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive withdrawal does not guarantee approval.

College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM. The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

Autumn Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter

Winter Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter

Spring Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

Summer Terms: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter 12. Special

#### Accommodations:

Students who feel they may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should inform 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:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370

Phone number: (773)325.1677

Fax: (773)325.3720

TTY: (773)325.7296

#### 13. Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns:

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

#### Course Organization and Schedule:

We will meet Tuesday and Thursday 3:10PM - 4:40PM. Students should have reviewed all the pertinent material for the module before the class starts. We will begin by answering questions that students may have regarding the content of the class or upcoming assignments. Then, we will proceed to discussion and recall activities based on the lectures, videos or student presentations. Towards the end of the class we will leave a few minutes to answer specific questions of the projects you will be handling.

*This syllabus is subject to modification; there may be several circumstances that will most likely change it. I reserve the right to amend the class schedule, or the syllabus, if circumstances make it necessary. You may receive at least one revised syllabus or schedule before the quarter is over. If assignments or deadline dates change, I will inform you well in advance. Constantly reviewing D2L announcements and emails is recommended for these purposes.*

#### **Schedule**

Module 01 ORIGINS OF TELEVISION

09-Sep Introduction to the course.  
09-Sep to 20-Sep EMMY Quiz (Before 6pm CDT)  
16-Sep Meeting Origins of Television  
16-Sep to 18-Sep Module 01 Quiz  
18-Sep to 20-Sep Reading Quiz Introduction & Chapter 1

#### Module 02 THE BUSINESS OF TELEVISION: TV STATION, GROUP & NETWORK

23-Sep TV Station, Group & Network  
23-Sep to 25-Sep Module 02 Quiz  
25-Sep to 27-Sep Reading Quiz Chapter 2

#### Module 03 THE BUSINESS OF TELEVISION: TALENT, STUDIO & DISTRIBUTION

30-Sep Talent, Studio & Distribution / The Pitch  
30-Sep to 02-Oct Module 03 Quiz

#### Module 04 THE BUSINESS OF TELEVISION: DEVELOPMENT & PRODUCTION OF TV SHOWS

07-Oct Development & Production of TV Shows  
07-Oct to 09-Oct Module 04 Quiz  
11-Oct Paper on Greenlight Projects (Aquaman)

#### Module 05 RATINGS

14-Oct Ratings  
14-Oct to 16-Oct Module 05 Quiz

#### Module 06 THE PITCH (PART I)

18-Oct TV Show Pitch Submission  
19-Oct to 21-Oct Comment on Peers' Pitches  
21-Oct Pitch Feedback and Voting

#### Module 07 TV SCRIPTED NARRATIVES: DRAMA & COMEDY

28-Oct TV Scripted Narratives: Drama & Comedy  
28-Oct to 30-Oct Module 07 Quiz  
01-Nov Paper on Context and Series

#### Module 08 NON-SCRIPTED NARRATIVES: NEWS & DOCUMENTARY, WITH A HINT OF REALITY

4-Nov Non-Scripted Narratives  
4-Nov to 6-Nov Module 08 Quiz  
08-Nov Paper on Non-Scripted Series

#### Module 09 IMPACT OF TELEVISION: RACE, GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

11-Nov Impact of Television: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation  
11-Nov to 13-Nov Module 09 Quiz  
15-Nov Paper on Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation

#### Module 10 IMPACT OF TELEVISION: POLITICS AND CULTURE

16-Nov Impact of Television: Politics and Culture  
16-Nov to 18-Nov Module 09 Quiz  
20-Nov Paper on Political and Cultural Identities

Final Assignment – Original Show Pitch Presentation

20-Nov Original TV Show Pitch Submission  
21-Nov to 23-Nov Comment on Peers' Pitches  
23-Nov (11:30 am) Pitch Feedback and Voting