

TELEVISION GENRES – Spring 2023

SCWR 150 (Sections 901 and 910) **This class has both an in-class and an online section.**

In-class meeting time: Mondays: 6:00pm to 9:15pm

Classroom: Lincoln Park Student Center, Room 330 (Class recordings available shortly after 9:15pm Mondays)

Instructor: Nathan DeWitt, MFA

Office Hours: Mondays: Noon to 1:30pm and 4:45 to 5:30pm in office, Tuesdays 10:45am to 1:00pm via Zoom. **Please make an appointment via email.**

Office(s): JCDM 616 (Loop)

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. This analytical course examines the screenplay's evolution to the screen from a writer's perspective. Students will read scripts of varying genres and then perform a critical analysis and comparison of the text to the final produced versions of the series. Storytelling conventions such as structure, character development, theme, and tension will be used to uncover alterations and how these adjustments ultimately impacted the show's reception. In addition to series of various genres, students will examine shows by, for, and about a diverse range of intersectional characters and creators reflective of our community.

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:

- Differentiate show genres in television, describing how narrative and aesthetic elements comprise a particular style of TV (art) across a variety of series featuring a diverse range of characters, communities and perspectives.

- Explain, in well-written prose, what a work of art is about and/or how it was produced (i.e. they should be able to articulate and explain the “content” of that work and 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. **Due to the writing requirements of this course, you cannot pass this class without submitting a Final Paper.**

Covid-19 Statement:

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul’s Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is not required. All necessary course materials are available online. Regardless of course section, students may interact with course content in a modality which makes sense for them as individual learners. In-class students may feel free to participate as online asynchronous students if they so desire.

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. Assignments will be graded within a week of submission.

Late Work Policy:

Late work is eligible for partial credit. For each day an assignment is late, a 10% grade reduction will result. **If an assignment is more than 10 days late, the opportunity for partial credit expires and the grade falls to 0.** Exceptions to the late work policy and extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis; but generally, the professor does their best to work with the student. In the event you need extra time on an assignment for this course, please reach out via email to communicate your needs. 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 (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 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. **Viewing will occur outside of class.** In the event you cannot access the assigned series or episode, please email the professor and an alternate assignment can be provided.

Class Participation:

Students may choose how they participate in this course, depending on whether they attend class meetings.

Students who attend in-class sessions should be prepared to participate in class discussions related to the assigned viewing and reading. Discussion topics may relate to your familiarity with the series being exhibited, they may ask you to relate topics discussed in lecture or covered in readings to the assigned episodes and/or they may involve creative practice. Students who attend class and participate in class discussions do not need to complete the online discussion board posts. (10 points per class period)

The Online Discussion Board is available for students who wish to participate online. Posts ask about your familiarity with the series being exhibited and ask you to relate topics discussed in lecture or covered in readings 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 Mondays at 6:00pm. Please pay attention to D2L for specific due dates and times.

March 27

Class 1: The TV Industry Overview

Lectures:

The TV Industry: TV Basics, The TV industry: TV Revenues, 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)

Homework:

Discussion Board

Reading: 30 Rock Pilot Script (D2L), Mad Men "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" (Pilot) Script (D2L)

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

April 3

Class 2: Network Television

Lectures:

Story Basics, Story Basics – Acts and Scenes, Story Basics – Plots and Storylines, 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, Netflix)

Homework:

Discussion Board

Reading: From Creeber: Catherine Johnson on “The X-Files,” and K.J. Donnelly on “The Simpsons and South Park.” Seinfeld “The Contest” Script (D2L)

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

April 10

Class 3: Cable Television

Lectures:

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

Viewing:

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

SOUTH PARK “Scott Tenorman Must Die” S5, E4 (Comedy Central, Hulu)

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

Homework:

Discussion Board

Reading: From Creeber: Glen Creeber on “The Sopranos,” Atlanta Pilot Script (D2L), Vonnegut on The Shape of Stories

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

April 17

Class 4: Internet Television

Lectures:

Serial Programming, Adult Animation, Internet Television

Viewing:

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

TRANSPARENT “Pilot” (Amazon)

THE MANDALORIAN “Chapter 1: The Mandalorian” (Pilot) (Disney+)

RAMY “Strawberries” (S1, E4) (Hulu).

Homework:

Discussion Board

Reading: The Netflix Decade (Coster, Reuters), The Mandalorian: This is the Way (Holben, American Cinematographer), Airing Authenticity: Does Ramy Have to be Real to be Fun? (Bhatti, Bitch Media)

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

April 24

Class 5: Characters

Lectures:

Characters and Desire, Characterization, Types of Characters, The Hero’s Journey

Viewing:

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

FLEABAG “Series 2, Episode 1” (BBC, Amazon)

MASTER OF NONE “Thanksgiving” S2, E8 (Netflix)

Homework:

Discussion Board

Reading: How Angela Bassett Pushed MASTER OF NONE’S “Thanksgiving” Episode to the Next Level (Bradley, Vanity Fair), Fleabag “Series 2, Episode 1” script (D2L), The Hero’s Journey: Mythic Structure of Joseph Campbell’s Monomyth (Bronzite), Hero’s Journey as Psychological Journey (Myers), Joseph Campbell and the Hero’s Journey (Myers, OPTIONAL)

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

May 1

Class 6: Sitcom and Representation

Lectures:

The Unruly Woman Sitcom, The African American Sitcom, The LGBTQ+ Sitcom and Beyond

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)**

INSECURE “Racist as Fuck” S1, E3 (HBO, HBO Max)

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

RESERVATION DOGS “F*ckin’ Rez Dogs” (Pilot) (FX on Hulu)

Homework:

Discussion Board

Reading: What Normalization Means? (Hsu, The New Yorker),

How ONE DAY AT A TIME Captures a Community Most TV Ignores (Bradley, Vanity Fair),

"Reservation Dogs" Uses Humor, Not Magic, to Conjure Native Culture (Miller, The New York Times)

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

May 8

Class 7: Tension

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)

STRANGER THINGS “Chapter One: The Vanishing of Will Byers (Pilot) (Netflix).

Homework:

Discussion Board

Reading: From Creeber: Mareike Jenner on “Grey’s Anatomy.” Stranger Things (Montauk) Show Bible and pilot Script (D2L)

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

May 15

Class 8:

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, Hulu)

Homework:

Discussion Board

Reading:

How LOST Changed the Way the World Watches TV (Epstein, Quartz), American Crime Story: People Vs. OJ “From the Ashes of Tragedy” script (D2L)

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

May 22

Class 9

Lectures:

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

Viewing:

HOMELAND “Pilot” (SHOWTIME, Hulu)

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

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

Homework:

Discussion Board

Reading: The Good Place Pilot Script (D2L), From Creeber: Lisa Richards on “Homeland” and Helen Wheatley on “Game of Thrones”.

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

May 29

NO CLASS DUE TO MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY. ALL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE ONLINE

Class 10: Unscripted TV

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:

Discussion Board

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 Monday, June 5, 2023 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.

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