

## TELEVISION GENRES – Spring 2018

DC 229 (Section 602, 611) (**This course has both an online and an in-class section**).

Wednesdays: 10:00am to 1:15pm

Daley Building (14 East Jackson), Room 214

Instructor: Nathan DeWitt, MFA

Office Hours: Tuesdays (Lincoln Park): 10:00am to 1:00pm, Wednesdays (Loop): 8:30am to 10:00am, (I am in and out of my office frequently during office hours so please let me know if you will be stopping by).

Offices: Lincoln Park Student Center, Room 302; CDM Center, Room 616

[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:**

DC 229 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, pop quizzes and a midterm exam.

### **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 Revolution Was Televised by Alan Sepinwall. Touchstone, reprint edition, May 2013.  
**ISBN-10:** 1476739676, **ISBN-13:** 978-1476739670

### **Viewing:**

Since this course focuses on studying television and television storytelling it's very important students have access to Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, HBO Go, HBO Now, FX Now and/or an ability to purchase episodes on iTunes or Amazon. The subscriptions to these sites should be considered your ‘books’ for this course. Please do not pirate materials for this course.

**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://offices.depaul.edu/oaa/academic-calendar/Pages/Full-Year-2017-2018.aspx>

**THE SCHEDULE****March 28:**

Class 1:

Lectures:

The TV Industry, Development, The Professional TV Writing Process

Viewing:

30 ROCK "Pilot" (NBC, Hulu)

UnREAL "Return" (Pilot) (Lifetime, Hulu)

Homework:

Quiz 1 (covers week 1) 30 questions, 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due before next week's class.

**April 4:**

Class 2

Lectures:

Story Basics, The Procedural Drama, The Police Series, The Situation Comedy

Viewing:

THE X FILES "Pilot" (Fox, Hulu)

SEINFELD "The Opposite" S5, E21, (NBC, Hulu)

FRIENDS "The One Where No One's Ready" S3, E2, (NBC, Netflix)

Homework:

Paper Packet 1 (covers Weeks 1 and 2) 100 possible points. Due before next week's class.

**April 11:**

Class 3:

Lectures:

Characters, HBO, Serial Programming

Viewing:

THE SOPRANOS "Pilot" (HBO, HBO Now, HBO Go, Amazon)

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT "Pilot" (Fox, Hulu) (*Time permitting*)

BREAKING BAD (AMC, Netflix)

Reading:

Sepinwall Chapters 2 “All Due Respect” and 12 “I am the One Who Knocks”

Quiz 2: Covers classes 2-3 and the assigned reading. 30 questions. 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due before next week’s class.

**April 18:**

Class 4:

Lecture:

The Unruly Woman Sitcom

Viewing:

ROSEANNE “Life and Stuff” (Pilot) (ABC, Amazon)

SEX AND THE CITY “Sex and the City” (Pilot) (HBO, HBO Now, HBO Go, Amazon)

GIRLS “Pilot” (HBO, HBO Now, HBO Go, Amazon)

PARKS AND RECREATION “Ann’s Decision” S5, E12 (NBC, Hulu)

MOM “Pilot” (CBS, Hulu)

Homework:

Paper Packet 2 (covers weeks 3 and 4). 100 possible points. Due before next week’s class.

**April 25:**

Class 5:

Lectures:

Tension and Non-linear narrative, The Espionage Series, Science Fiction and The Dawn of Spectacle TV

Viewing:

24 “12:00am to 1:00am” (Pilot) (Fox, Amazon)

LOST “Walkabout” S1, E4 (ABC, Hulu)

Reading:

Sepinwall Chapters 6 “Do You Want to Know a Secret?” and 8 “Tell me Where the Bomb Is!”

Homework:

Quiz 3: Covers classes 4-5 and the assigned reading. 30 questions. 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due before next week’s class.

**May 2:**

Class 6:

Lectures:

Theme, Adult Animation

Viewing:

THE SIMPSONS “Last Exit to Springfield” S4, E17 (Fox, FX, streaming)

SOUTH PARK “Margaritaville?” S13, E3 (Comedy Central, Hulu)

THE BOONDOCKS “Return of the King” S1, E9 (Cartoon Network, Hulu)

RICK AND MORTY “The Lawnmower Dog,” S1, E2 (Cartoon Network, Hulu)

BoJACK HORSEMAN “Fish out of Water” S3, E4 (Netflix)

Homework:

Paper Packet 3 (covers weeks 5 and 6). 100 possible points. Due before next week’s class.

**May 9**

Class 7:

Lectures:

The Hospital Drama, The Horror Series

Viewing:

GREY'S ANATOMY "A Hard Day's Night" (Pilot) (ABC, Netflix)

THE WALKING DEAD "Days Gone Bye" (Pilot) (AMC, Netflix)

Reading:

Sepinwall Chapters 3 "All the Pieces Matter" and 7 "She Saved the World. A Lot." (We do not watch THE WIRE or BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER in this course but you are expected to read about them).

Homework:

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

### **May 16:**

Class 8:

Lectures:

The African American Sitcom, The Primetime Soap

Viewing:

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

ATLANTA "The Big Bang" (Pilot) (FX, Hulu)

INSECURE "Insecure As Fuck" (Pilot) (HBO, HBO Go, HBO Now)

EMPIRE "Pilot" (Fox, Hulu)

Homework:

Paper Packet 4 (covers weeks 7 and 8). 100 possible points. Due before next week's class.

### **May 23:**

Class 9

Lectures:

The Period Piece, The Anthology Series and the Fantasy Drama

Viewing:

GAME OF THRONES "Winter is Coming" (Pilot) (HBO, HBO Go, HBO Now)

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

Reading:

Sepinwall Chapters 4 "A Lie Agreed Upon" and 11 "It's a Time Machine" (We do not watch DEADWOOD or MAD MEN in this course but you are expected to read about them).

Homework:

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

### **May 30:**

Class 10:

Lectures:

The LGBTQ Sitcom, Internet TV

Viewing:

TRANSPARENT "Pilot" (Amazon)

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

THE HANDMAID'S TALE "Offred" (Pilot) (Hulu)

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, June 6, 2018 by 9:00pm.**

**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**