FILM 105

Foundations of Television

Instructor: Martha McGee

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| Winter 2021 |  |
| T/Th 11:50am-1:20pm <https://depaul.zoom.us/j/231128872> |  |
| Office Hours: By appointment  Please make appointments on BlueStar  Course Management System: D2L  Email: [mmcgee9@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:mmcgee9@cdm.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, production styles, technology, cultural impact and reflection will be analyzed and discussed.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

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

**Required Reading**: Mittell, Jason (2010) **Television and American Culture**; Michael Wiese Productions. ISBN-13: 978-0195306675; ISBN-10: 0195306678

You are also asked to examine and **provide/post** **a timely article on D2L under “Discussions” for every week** from the following magazines that report on the newest developments in this industry:

**Variety**

**The Hollywood Reporter**

Lectures will be supplemented with handouts on D2L from the instructor over the course of the semester.

Any assignments/reading/watching that is mandatory will be on D2L content and require you to check it off of the checklist. Anything that is not mandatory will not have a check next to it and will be supporting materials.

**Grading:**

Final grades will be based on written reports, exams, a mid-term paper, a final presentation, class participation and attitude. Because it is 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.

Written Reports: - 20%

Exams – 10%:

MidTerm Paper – 20%

Final Presentation and Paper – 30%

Participation – 20%

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 | 93 | C+ | 78 |
| A- | 90 | C | 73 |
| B+ | 88 | C- | 70 |
| B | 83 | D+ | 68 |
| B- | 80 | D | 60 |
|  |  | F | Below 60% |
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# *Grading*

All undergraduate students

Students in all undergraduate classes, with the exception of those in CEO cohort programs, may opt to change the grading basis for any or all of their courses to Pass/D/Fail. A grade of Pass (P) will indicate that the student's work met expectations for a grade of at least C-. Work that would merit a grade of D+ or D in the traditional grading basis would still earn a D+ or D. Work that does not merit a passing grade will earn a Fail (F). The Pass/D/Fail grading option may apply to any graduation requirement, including courses in the major, minor, Liberal Studies Program or open electives.

<https://resources.depaul.edu/coronavirus/faqs/Pages/classes-academics-students.aspx>

Graduate students

*School of Cinematic Arts & School of Design*

Students in graduate classes in these two schools may opt to change the grading basis for any or all of their courses to Pass/D/Fail. A grade of Pass (P) will indicate that the student's work met expectations for a grade of at least C-. Work that would merit a grade of D+ or D in the traditional grading basis would still earn a D+ or D. Work that does not merit a passing grade will earn a Fail (F). The Pass/D/Fail grading option may apply to any graduation requirement.

*School of Computing*

Students in graduate classes in the school will use the A/B/C/D/F grading basis.

**Course Policies:**

1. **Participation**

At this level students should be interested in the subject of the class. The only way to see this is through participation in class, either asking questions or adding constructive comments to other student’s presentations.

1. **Attendance**

It does not constitute a specific part of your grade, but perfect attendance is part of participation. Most of the information you need to complete your assignments will be discussed in-class. Subjects and/or assignments will not be discussed outside of the programmed sessions. This makes attendance critical, and thus not an issue to be negotiated. However if you have to miss a class or a deadline, make sure to plan ahead, and inform the instructor in advance. Calling or emailing 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.

1. **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 of you a responsible attitude. This means that it is you who must be worried about solving the problem, not me.

1. **Missed Assignments**

Do not miss your assignments. Turn them in on time and put them in the correct D2L dropbox.

1. **Attitude**

We are going to be watching and discussing television programs and culture. This will be made in an orderly fashion. 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.

1. **Use of Technology**

Cellular phones and other similar devices will not be tolerated. I recommend students to turn off or switch to silence mode such devices. Students whose phones and/or computers make noise during class may be asked to leave immediately.   
(obviously this does not apply to use of computers in an online course)

1. **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 if he/she has excessive absences, engages in disruptive behavior, has a poor attitude, or in any other way is clearly not taking the class seriously.

1. **Ethics**

Although your grade does not contain an ethics component like some other courses, I require complete honesty in producing your work. 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 your are willing to do that, then you have to evaluate if it’s worth the aggravation and the time you invest in this course.

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.

1. **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 if he/she engages in any form of academic dishonesty. I further reserve the right to recommend other sanctions as may be appropriate.

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

1. **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.

1. **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

1. **Special Accommodations:**

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:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370

Phone number: (773)325.1677

Fax: (773)325.3720 TTY: (773)325.7296

**Course Organization and Schedule:**

We will leave few minutes before the class ends 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.

**All keynotes and television shows for the class are on D2L under “Content”.**

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**WEEK ONE**

Review Syllabus and course objectives.

Origins of Television – Radio Industry and transition to television. The FCC and the conditions of live television.

Reading Assignment: *Introduction: “Why Television?”,* *Chapter 1: Exchanging Programming*

Screening: *Texaco Star Theater*

**WEEK TWO**

The "Industry": How it works

* Structure of a show and network: Production, Distribution and Transmission. What is a Network?
* Development, historically and significant changes. What are Distribution companies looking for?
* Early television “The Golden Age”, what were the conditions and content
* Reading Assignment: *Chapter 2: Exchanging Audiences*

Screening: *Westinghouse Studio One “Twelve Angry Men”, Kraft Television Theatre “Patterns”*

Written Assignment #1 “Patterns”

**WEEK THREE**

Television Content: Fiction

Television Genres - focusing on The Sitcom. The evolution of sitcoms on American Television.

Transition from Black and White television to Color. Introduction of videotape.

* *Reading Assignment: Chapter 5: Making Meaning*

Screening: *The Jack Benny Program “Jack goes Christmas Shopping”, I Love Lucy “Lucy does a commercial”*, *“It’s Garry Shandling’s Show”*

**WEEK FOUR**

The "Biz": How it profits.

* Ratings, how are they measured. Advertising, Single and Magazine sponsorships.
* Upfronts and scatter, product integration.
* Historical ratings. Scheduling and promoting.

Modes of Production, Episodics and Serials

Screening*: Dragnet “The Big Betty”*

Screening: *“Good Night and Good Luck”*

*Midterm Project – as assigned*

* Reading Assignment: *Chapter 3: Serving the Public Interest*

**WEEK FIVE**

News, Public Interest and the change in the network newsroom. The Fairness Doctrine, Cable news, Shared national engagement.

Public Television: ETV, CPB and PBS. Mission and funding. Local stations.

* *Reading Assignment: Chapter 6: Telling Television Stories*

Screening: Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood, various news stories, PBS sizzle reel

**WEEK SIX**

Science Fiction genre. Transition from kids shows to adult. Allegories for relevant issues.

The 1960’s, Newton Minnow’s “Vast Wasteland” speech,

*Final Project assigned*

*MidTerms due*

* *Reading Assignment: Chapter 7: Screening America*

Screening: *Mike Wallace interview with Rod Serling, The Twilight Zone “Monsters are due on Maple Street”*

Screening*: “The Twilight Zone “Eye of the Beholder”, NPR “Fresh Air – The Smother’s Brothers”*

**WEEK SEVEN**

Representation on television, the rise of the reflective sitcom.

Politics and Society in TV

Ideology, Refection of Culture, Impact on Society

* *Reading Assignment: Chapter 8: Representing Identity*

Screening:*All in the Family “Sammy’s visit”, M\*A\*S\*H “The Late Captain Pierce”*

Screening*: America in Primetime “Man of the House”*

Written Homework #3: *Cultural Impact paper*

**WEEK EIGHT**

Rise of the Mini Series and “Quality Television”

Cable Television and splintering of the audience

* *Reading Assignment: Chapter 4: Televised Citizenship*

Screening:*Hill Street Blue: Pilot, America in Primetime “The Independent Woman”*

**WEEK NINE**

The 90’s and the shows that transformed television, The Rise and dominance of HBO “It’s not TV, it’s HBO”

Stereotypes and identity on television. Portrayal of women, minorities and homosexuals. Shows that broke out of stereotypes and changed perceptions.

* *Reading Assignment: Chapter 11: Television’s Transforming Technologies*

Screening:*The Larry Sanders Show “Eight”*

Screening:*The Sopranos “College”, America in Primetime “The Misfit”*

Written Assignment #4 “The Sopranos”

**WEEK TEN**

Transition for Standard definition to High definition. DVRs and VOD

The Future of Television, OTT Streaming services. How Netflix changed everything.

Screening at home:*America in Primetime “The Crusader”*

**WEEK ELEVEN**

*Final Project Presentations –* ***FINAL***

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## Course Policies

**Changes to Syllabus**

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter.  If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

**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. Please see <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx.

**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](https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx).  Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

**Incomplete Grades**

### An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

**Students with Disabilities**

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul’s Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling them to access accommodations and support services to assist with their success. There are two office locations:

* Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
* Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gergory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

**Proctored exams for OL courses (if applicable)**

If you are an online learning student living in the Chicagoland area (within 30 miles of Chicago), you will need to come to the Loop campus to take an exam. Online learning students outside of the Chicagoland area are required to locate a proctor at a local library, college or university. You will need to take the exam within the window your instructor gives. Students should examine the course syllabus to find exam dates and the instructor's policy on make-up exams. Detailed information on proctored exams for online learning students can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/onlinelearning/Pages/Exams.aspx>

**Online office hours for OL courses (if applicable)**

Faculty should be accessible to online students via phone, email and/or Skype.

**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](https://outlook.depaul.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=6Rw2QG1d7WhaUAGOZOhbOWlxnmZ6fSXQ6LLBiuwqEdSGIVMSG3fWCA..&URL=http%3a%2f%2fpolicies.depaul.edu%2fpolicy%2fpolicy.aspx%3fpid%3d332)

## Course Policies as Suggested by the Dean of Students Office (optional)

Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day’s topic. Participation allows the instructor to “hear” the student’s voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

Attitude: A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another’s opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

Civil Discourse: DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be [Socially Responsible Leaders](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/sli/about/framework.asp). It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student’s ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

Cell Phones/On Call: If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undisruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.