

## TELEVISION GENRES – Spring 2017

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

Wednesdays 10:00am to 1:15pm

14 East Jackson, LL 105 (CDM Theater)

Instructor: Nathan DeWitt, MFA

Office Hours: Mondays: 12:00pm to 1:30pm (Loop). Wednesdays: 8:30am to 10:00am (Loop).

Thursdays: 8:00am to 9:30am (Lincoln Park). I am in and out of my office frequently during office hours so please let me know if you will be stopping by. I'm also available by appointment.

Lincoln Park Office: STDC 332; Loop Office: CDM 616

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:**

There are two 2-3 page Papers and 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.

Writing Expectations will be met with three graded assignments. Two of these papers will be based on a show of the Professor’s choosing, a longer paper will be based on a show of the student’s choosing.

### **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. **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:**

In-class Students may find it helpful to watch the episodes we are going to watch in class beforehand, Online Students are required to watch these episodes as part of this class. All Students will definitely find it helpful to re-watch the episodes they are expected to write about. Digital copies of all episodes will be available on ColTube. <http://coltube.cdm.depaul.edu> Login with Campus Connect information.

**Grading:**

Papers: 30% (Breakdown, Character Paper, Theme Paper)

Midterm: 25%

Final Paper: 35%

Homework and Participation: 10%

**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

**THE SCHEDULE****March 29:**

Class 1:

Lecture: Introduction, The Basics. Types of Shows: The Situation Comedy, The Procedural

In-class viewing: FRIENDS “The One With the Embryos” & THE X FILES “Pilot”

**READING AT HOME:** Sepinwall: Prologue “Let's be careful out there...”

**Homework:** Personal introduction. Due on D2L: April 5, 2017 at 10:00am.

**April 5:**

Class 2

Lecture: Development. Characters. Types of Shows: The Principal Lead. The Unruly Woman Sitcom, The Hospital Drama.

In-class viewing: 30 ROCK “Pilot” & HOUSE “Pilot”

**Homework:** Breakdown a NETWORK show of your choosing. NO PREMIUM SHOWS. A handout will be provided. Due on D2L: April 12, 2017 by 10:00am.

**April 12:**

Class 3:

Lecture: The Professional TV Writing Process, Types of Shows: Partnerships, The LGBT Sitcom

In-class viewing: WILL & GRACE “Pilot” & BREAKING BAD “Pilot”

**READING AT HOME:** Sepinwall: Chapter 2, “All Due Respect” and Chapter 12 “I Am The One Who Knocks!...”

**Homework:** Questions about the reading. Due on D2L: April 19, 2017 by 10:00am.

**April 19:**

Class 4:

Lecture: Intersecting Storylines, Types of Shows: Ensembles

In-class viewing: SEINFELD “The Opposite,” “The Slicer” & THE SOPRANOS “Pilot”

**Homework:** Character Paper. Write a Three Page Paper on the characters of the SIX FEET UNDER pilot episode. A link and handout will be provided. Due on D2L: April 26, 2017 by 10:00am.

**April 26:**

Class 5:

Lecture: Tension, Types of Shows: Science Fiction

In-class viewing: ENLIGHTENED “Pilot” and LOST “Walkabout”

**READING AT HOME:** Sepinwall: Chapter 6 “Do you want to know a secret?...”

**Homework:** Questions about the reading. Due on D2L: May 3, 2017 by 10:00am.

**May 3:**

Class 6:

Lecture: Non-linear narrative, Innovations in Form. Types of Shows: The Anthology Series, The African American Sitcom

In-class viewing: THE BERNIE MAC SHOW “Pilot”, BLACK-ISH “The Word,” COMMUNITY “Remedial Chaos Theory” & TRUE DETECTIVE “The Long Bright Dark”

**Homework:** Take home MIDTERM. Due on D2L: May 10, 2017 at 10:00am.

**May 10**

Class 7:

Lecture: Theme. Types of shows: The Police Series, The Period Piece.

In-class viewing: THE WIRE “The Target” & THE AMERICANS “Pilot”

**READING AT HOME:** Sepinwall: Chapter 3 “All the Pieces Matter” and Chapter 11 “It's a time machine...”

**Homework:** Questions about the reading. Due on D2L: May 17 2017 by 10:00am.

**May 17:**

Class 8:

Lecture: Adult Animation

In-Class viewing: THE SIMPSONS “Bart Sells his Soul,” “HOMR” & SOUTH PARK “The Hobbit” & THE BOONDOCKS “Return of the King”

**Homework:** Theme Paper. Discuss the themes of any adult animation show of your choosing. A handout will be provided. Due on D2L: May 24, 2017 at 10:00am.

**May 24:**

Class 9:

Lecture: Internet Shows

In-class viewing: ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT “Pilot” & ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK “I Wasn't Ready” & TRANSPARENT “Pilot”

**READING AT HOME:** Sepinwall: Epilogue “Don't stop believing...”

**Homework:** Personal Conclusion. Due on D2L: May 31, 2017 at 10:00am.

**May 31:**

Class 10:

Lecture: Post Water Cooler TV. The Future of the Industry.

In-class viewing: MODERN FAMILY “Fizbo” & LOUIE “Poker/Divorce” & EMPIRE “Pilot”

**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 7, 2017 by 5:00pm.**

**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**