

English/Film Studies 291
Introduction to Television Studies

Spring 2017
Section 001 – 3 credits



Instructor: Jessica Johnston

Email: johnst84@uwm.edu

Office: Curtin 483

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-3pm, & by appt.

Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays

Time: 10:00-11:50am

Location: Curtin 104

COURSE DESCRIPTION

For decades, the television set has been an important fixture in our daily lives. Today we increasingly watch television on the go, using computers, cell phones, DVRs, and DVDs to keep up with our favorite shows. This course provides an introduction to television studies by looking at the different factors shaping how television looks, how we encounter it, and how we understand it. We will also spend time thinking about how television influences and reflects upon society, and how society in turn influences what we see on television. We will have screenings from a variety of time periods and genres in order to give ourselves the broadest scope of understanding.

There are no prerequisites for this course, and you are not expected to have any prior knowledge of television or media studies. You are, however, expected to treat the material as a legitimate object of study. We will begin with the premise that television offers much more than "entertainment" and that, accordingly, studying it is a serious undertaking requiring rigor and diligence.

COURSE TEXTS AND SCREENINGS

- NO TEXTBOOK REQUIRED - all readings will be provided as PDFs on D2L
- All screenings will take place in class

****Content Advisory**** From time to time, we may watch and discuss screenings that feature objectionable language, sexual content, and other situations that some may find offensive. I expect all screenings to be treated with serious academic study and all discussion to maintain a tone of dispassionate courtesy.

Readings Available on D2L:

Becker, Ron. "Guy Love: A Queer Straight Masculinity for a Post-Closet Era?" *Queer TV: Theories, Histories, Politics*. Routledge, 2009.

Butler, Jeremy G. *Television: Critical Methods and Applications, 4th Edition*. Routledge, 2012.

Doty, Alexander. "I Love Laverne and Shirley: Lesbian Narratives, Queer Pleasures, and Television Sitcoms." *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture*. University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Mittell, Jason. "Three Evasions of the Future of Television." *The Future of Television Part II*, special issue of *Flow*, vol. 19, 2014. <http://www.flowjournal.org/2014/01/three-evasions-of-the-future-of-television/>.

Gray, Herman. "The Politics of Representation in Network Television." *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness*. University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

Gray, Jonathan and Amanda D. Lotz. "Introduction: Why Television Studies? Why Now?" *Television Studies, 1st Edition*. Polity, 2011.

Gray, Jonathan and Amanda D. Lotz. "Audiences." *Television Studies, 1st Edition*. Polity, 2011.

Gray, Jonathan. "How Can We Tell the Future." *The Future of Television Part II*, special issue of *Flow*, vol. 19, 2014. <http://www.flowjournal.org/2014/01/how-can-we-tell-the-future/>.

Newcomb, Horace and Paul M. Hirsch. "Television as a Cultural Forum." *Quarterly Review of Film and Television*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1983, pp. 45-55.

Perren, Alisa. "The Future of Television is...Comics?" *The Future of Television Part II*, special issue of *Flow*, vol. 19, 2014. <http://www.flowjournal.org/2014/01/the-future-of-television-is-comics/>.

Schatz, Thomas. "HBO and Netflix – Getting Back to the Future." *The Future of Television Part II*, special issue of *Flow*, vol. 19, 2014. <http://www.flowjournal.org/2014/01/hbo-and-netflix-%E2%80%93-getting-back-to-the-future/>

GRADING SCALE

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	86-89
B	85
B-	80-84
C+	76-79
C	75
C-	70-74
D+	66-69
D	65
D-	60-64
F	0-59

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will:

- 1) understand fundamental modes of inquiry in the study of television and media;
- 2) learn how to treat television as an object of critical study through in-class examination;
- 3) practice analytical approaches in comprehending the narrative, aesthetic, and ideological value of television programs;
- 4) develop and improve writing, discussion, and interpretive skills through class assignments and activities;

- 5) deepen an understanding of the impact television has had on people socially, culturally, and politically

ASSIGNMENTS

Screening Responses (30%)

Each week, you will be asked to type and submit a 300-word (minimum) response to the week's screening due each **Thursday by 10:00am** in the D2L Dropbox. I will provide a question at the end of each screening on Tuesday asking you to consider the relationship between the week's reading and TV shows. This writing assignment will help you draw your own connections and interpretations of the texts being studied prior to lecture and discussion as well as aid you in your essay exams.

Responses are graded as credit/no credit. If you complete the response and meet the 300-word minimum, you will receive full points. If it is not submitted on time or does not meet the word count, it will receive a zero. Please check your word count by highlighting the text in Microsoft Word > selecting Tools > selecting Word Count.

Participation (10%)

This class is designed around discussion of the TV shows we watch, and as such, verbal participation is necessary to have a productive and stimulating class session. As part of participation, I will ask each of you to sign up for 2 separate weeks during the semester to contribute at least 1 discussion question about the television texts and readings we are studying. These questions will be due on the D2L discussion board by **midnight of the Thursday** you signed up for. They will then be incorporated into our class discussion. Similar to the screening responses, discussion questions receive full points if they are relevant to the class topic and are completed on time.

It is also vital that everyone arrive to class on time, complete in-class activities, take notes, and show engagement during class. Tardies, disruptions (texting, sleeping, talking during lecture, etc.), performing tasks on your laptop unrelated to class, and/or failing to complete in-class work will adversely affect the overall grade.

Essay Exam 1: Narrative (20%)

The first essay exam will have you examine the television concepts and terms from our first unit. Each of the three essays you write will be 4-5 pages (1200-1400 words), double-spaced, and following MLA Style Guidelines. This essay will be due in the D2L Dropbox: **Thursday, February 23 at 10:00am**.

Essay Exam 2: Production and Aesthetics (20%)

The second essay exam will have you examine the television concepts and terms from our second unit. This essay will be due in the D2L Dropbox: **Thursday, April 6 at 10:00am**.

Essay Exam 3: Ideology and Representation (20%)

The third and final essay exam will have you examine the television concepts and terms from our third unit. This essay will be due in the D2L Dropbox: **Thursday, May 18 at 10:00am**.

LATE WORK POLICY

All work is expected to be completed by the deadline marked in the class schedule. That said, I understand that you all have lives outside of this class that might interfere with your coursework. Everyone is allowed ONE late weekly response without grade penalty IF it is submitted within one week of its due date; responses that are more than a week late will receive a zero.

Essay exams WILL NOT be accepted late except in the case of special emergencies (and I must be e-mailed in advance). Essays that are permitted late will be deducted one full letter grade from the assigned grade for each day it is not turned in.

ATTENDANCE

Students should show up to every class in order to perform well. Of course, sicknesses and other unexpected emergencies can prevent you from attending class. One or two missed classes will not hurt your performance, but excessive absences, tardies, or early departures will hinder your final grade. If you anticipate being absent, class materials can be found on our D2L course site.

CONTACTING ME

For any questions or concerns, I can be reached by email (johnst84@uwm.edu) or during my office hours on Tuesday 12-3pm or by appointment. I'm usually very prompt when responding to emails, but please give me up to 24 hours to reply before emailing me again. When contacting me, please include your full name and the class you're emailing me about. You can also just address me as Jessica (not Professor or Dr. – I'm only a PhD student at the moment).

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Plagiarism: All work in this class must be your own. Any material or ideas taken from another person must be appropriately cited and contextualized. Failure to do these things will be considered an act of plagiarism and will lead to failure in the class. Plagiarism is a serious offense under UWM's code of ethics and has serious consequences. For more information and additional university policies, go here: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>.

Writing Center: This is a great resource that provides one-on-one tutoring for students in any discipline. They are excited to help you with all stages of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting to revising. Please use these tutors! They are trained, experienced, talented, and wonderful. To make an appointment, visit www.writingcenter.uwm.edu, call 414-229-4339 or stop by Curtin 127 or the East Wing of the Golda Meir Library to schedule in person or do a walk-in appointment. Special note: As someone who worked in the Writing Center, I can attest that this place gets VERY busy towards the end of the semester. I advise making appointments well in advance if you plan to use their services.

Add/Drop Policies: The last day to add a class or change a section is Friday, February 3rd. The last day to withdraw without a "W" on your transcript is Friday, February 17th. The last day to withdraw from classes is Friday, March 17th.

Accessibility Resource Center (ARC): If you are working with the Accessibility Resource Center (formerly known as SAC) and have been issued a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA), please contact me during the first week of class. If you are concerned that you might have a learning disability, visit the ARC office in 116 Mitchell Hall or call 414-229-3800. For further information, check out the webpage: <http://uwm.edu/arc/>

Counseling/Psychology/Substance Abuse Services: If you ever feel overwhelmed, overly stressed, or are experiencing extreme life difficulties, please let me know. I can help you find appropriate resources at UWM to help even the most complicated life situations. Additionally, Norris Health Center on campus is a great, budget-friendly resource for medical attention and counseling. You can check them out here: <http://www4.uwm.edu/norris/>

Accommodations for Absences: Information on absences due to religious observances can be found here: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>. Information on absences due to active military duty can be found here: <http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/>.

Incompletes: A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work.
<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf>

Technical Problems: If you encounter technical problems with D2L, you should notify me right away – not after a deadline has passed. I may not always be able to help with technical problems. Your best option is to contact the IT Help Desk at <http://www4.uwm.edu/technology/help/campus/gettechhelp.cfm> or (414) 229-4040.

Interested in a Film Studies Major or Minor?

Well, there are many ways to get more details! For information on the L&S Film Studies program, see the "Film Studies Fact Sheet" under the "Course Documents" tab on D2L, visit <http://www4.uwm.edu/lets/filmstudies/>, or contact Ben Schneider (advisor for the Film Studies program) at terrapin@uwm.edu.

Note regarding the Digital Arts and Culture Certificate

This course fulfills one of the requirements for the Digital Arts and Culture certificate. The DAC certificate combines courses in the areas of arts, humanities, social sciences, and information studies, and it provides a noticeable complement to your academic and career goals. DAC students become part of a networked community of students, artists, scholars, and practitioners who share an interest in imagining the future by studying and shaping emerging media forms. For more information on the DAC program, please visit <http://dac.uwm.edu>.

TV STUDIES COURSE CALENDAR

Screenings are subject to change

Unit One: Narrative

Week 1: What is TV Studies? (1/24-1/26)

Tuesday, January 24

- Course Introduction and Syllabus
- **Screening:** "Return" –*UnREAL* (Lifetime, S01E01, 2015, 45 minutes)
- **Homework:** Read Gray & Lotz, "Why Television Studies?" and Butler, "Television's Ebb and Flow"; Watch 1 hour of "live" television (not streaming, not DVR, we want commercials here)

Thursday, January 26

- Lecture: Intro to TV Studies
- Screening & Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Read Butler, "Ch. 2 – Narrative Structure"

Week 2: Narrative Structure (1/31-2/2)

Tuesday, January 31

- **Screening:** (1) "Stolen Phone" –*Broad City* (Comedy Central, S01E06, 2014, 22 minutes);
(2) "D-Day" –*New Girl* (Fox, S05E12, 2016, 22 minutes);
(3) "Chapter Twenty-One" –*Jane the Virgin* (The CW, S01E21, 2015, 42 minutes)
- **Homework:** Screening Response 1 (due: 2/2 @ 10am)

Thursday, February 2

- Lecture: Narrative Structure
- Screening & Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Read Butler, "Ch. 3 – Building Narrative"

*** Friday, Feb. 3 – Last Day to Add/Change Class**

Week 3: Characters and Actors (2/7-2/9)

Tuesday, February 7

- **Screening:** (1) "The Yada Yada" –*Seinfeld* (NBC, S08E19, 1997, 26 minutes);
(2) "Rollerskates" –*Malcolm in the Middle* (Fox, S01E13, 2000, 23 minutes);
(3) "Crazy Handful of Nothin'" –*Breaking Bad* (AMC, S01E06, 2008, 48 minutes)
- **Homework:** Screening Response 2 (due: 2/9 @ 10am)

Thursday, February 9

- Lecture: Characters and Actors
- Screening & Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Read Butler, "Ch. 4 Beyond and Beside Narrative Structure"

Week 4: Reality TV (2/14-2/16)

Tuesday, February 14

- **Screening:** (1) "Out with the Old..." –*The Hills* (MTV, S02E01, 2007, 23 minutes);
(2) "Hamilton" –*Drunk History* (Comedy Central, S04E10, 2016, 21 minutes);
(3) "Week 6" –*The Bachelor* (ABC, S21E06, 2017, remaining time)
- **Homework:** Screening Response 3 (due: 2/16 @ 10am)

Thursday, February 16

- Lecture: Reality TV
- Screening & Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Essay Exam 1 – Television Narrative

*** Friday, Feb. 17 - Last Day to Drop w/o a W**

Week 5: Essay Exam 1 (2/21-2/23)

- CLASSES CANCELED – Essay Due Thursday, February 23 @ 10am
- **Homework for 2/28:** Read Butler, "Ch. 6—An Intro to Television Style"

Unit Two: Production and Aesthetics

Week 6: Modes of Production (2/28-3/2)

Tuesday, February 28

- **Screening:** (1) "Today I am a Ma'am" –*The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (CBS, S01E02, 1970, 26 min);
(2) "Blind Date" –*30 Rock* (NBC, S01E03, 2006, 22 min);

- (3) “Josh Just Happens to Live Here!” –*Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* (The CW, S01E01, 2015, 40 min)
- **Homework:** Screening Response 4 (due: 3/2 @ 10am)

Thursday, March 2

- Lecture: Modes of Production
- Screening & Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Read Butler, “Ch. 7—Style and Setting

Week 7: Mise-en-Scene (3/7-3/9)

Tuesday, March 7

- **Screening:** (1) “Séance” –*Penny Dreadful* (Showtime, S01E02, 2014, 55 minutes);
(2) “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes” –*Mad Men* (AMC, S01E01, 2007, 48 minutes)
- **Homework:** Screening Response 5 (due: 3/9 @ 10am)

Thursday, March 9

- Lecture: Mise-en-Scene
- Screening & Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Read Butler, “Ch. 8—Style and the Camera”

Week 8: Cinematography (3/14-3/16)

Tuesday, March 14

- **Screening:** (1) “Cake Week” –*The Great American Baking Show* (ABC, S01E01, 2016, 43 minutes);
(2) “Pilot” –*Empire* (Fox, S01E01, 2015, 46 minutes)
- **Homework:** Screening Response 6 (due: 3/16 @ 10am)

Thursday, March 16

- Lecture: Cinematography
- Screening & Reading Discussion
- Select Wk 10 screening
- **Homework:** Read Butler, “Ch. 9—Style and Editing” and “Ch. 10—Style and Sound”

*** Friday, March 17 – Last Day to Drop/Withdraw**

Week 9: Spring Break (3/21-3/23)

- CLASSES CANCELED

Week 10: Editing and Sound (3/28-3/30)

Tuesday, March 28

- **Screening:** (1) “Chapter One: The Vanishing of Will Byers” –*Stranger Things* (Netflix, S01E01, 2016, 48 minutes);
(2) “Britney/Brittany” –*Glee* (Fox, S02E02, 2010, 44 minutes)
- **Homework:** Screening Response 7 (due: 3/30 @ 10am)

Thursday, March 30

- Lecture: Editing and Sound
- Screening and Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Essay Exam 2 – Television Production and Aesthetics

Week 11: Essay Exam 2 (4/4-4/6)

- CLASSES CANCELED – Essay Due Thursday, April 6 @ 10am

- **Homework for 4/11:** Read Newcomb and Hirsch, "Television as a Cultural Forum"

Unit Three: Ideology and Representation

Week 12: TV as a Cultural Forum (4/11-4/13)

Tuesday, April 11

- **Screening:** (1) "Betty, Girl Engineer" –*Father Knows Best* (NBC, S02E30, 1956, 30 minutes); (2) "The Liberation of Marcia Brady" –*The Brady Bunch* (ABC, S02E19, 1971, 25 minutes); (3) "Indians on TV" –*Master of None* (Netflix, S01E04, 2015, 31 minutes);
- **Homework:** Screening Response 8 (due: 4/13 @ 10am)

Thursday, April 13

- Lecture: TV as a Cultural Forum
- Screening and Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Read Doty, "I Love Laverne and Shirley" and Becker, "Guy Love"

Week 13: Gender and Sexuality (4/18-4/20)

Tuesday, April 18

- **Screening:** (1) "Honeymoon Hotel" –*Laverne & Shirley* (ABC, S02E18, 1977, 25 minutes); (2) "Isn't It Romantic?" –*The Golden Girls* (NBC, S02E05, 1986, 28 minutes); (3) "The One with the Male Nanny" –*Friends* (NBC, S09E06, 2002, 32 minutes);
- **Homework:** Screening Response 9 (due: 4/20 @ 10am)

Thursday, April 20

- Lecture: Gender and Sexuality
- Screening and Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Gray, "The Politics of Representation in Network Television"

Week 14: Race and Representation (4/25-4/27)

Tuesday, April 25

- **Screening:** (1) "Fonzie's New Friend" –*Happy Days* (ABC, S03E13, 1975, 20 minutes); (2) "Radio Free Hillman" –*A Different World* (NBC, S02E10, 1989, 24 minutes); (3) "Carfool" –*The Bernie Mac Show* (Fox, S02E03, 2002, 21 minutes); (4) "Hope" –*Black-ish* (ABC, S02E16, 2016, 24 minutes)
- **Homework:** Screening Response 10 (due 4/27 @ 10am)

Thursday, April 27

- Lecture: Race and Representation
- Screening and Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Gray and Lotz, "Ch. 2—Audiences"

Week 15: Audiences and Fans (5/2-5/4)

Tuesday, May 2

- **Screening:** (1) "Episode 1," "Episode 2," & "Episode 3" –*Dramaworld* (Netflix, 2016, 36 minutes); (2) Students' choice (live tweeting)
- **Homework:** Screening Response 11 (due 5/4 @ 10am)

Thursday, May 4

- Lecture: Audiences and Fans

- Screening and Reading Discussion
- **Homework:** Read Gray, Mittell, Schatz, & Perren (*Flow* articles)

Week 16: The Future of Television Studies (5/9-5/11)

Tuesday, May 9

- **Screening:** Students' Choice
- **Homework:** Screening Response 12 (due 5/6 @ 10am), Question for guest

Thursday, May 11

- Screening and Reading Discussion
- **TV Studies Guest Lecture/Q&A:** Bridget Kies (PhD Candidate in Media, Cinema, and Digital Studies)
- **Homework:** Essay Exam 3—Television Ideology and Representation

Essay Exam 3 Due Thursday, May 18 @ 10am