

## TELEVISION GENRES FOR MAJORS – Winter 2021

SCWR 151 (Section 501, 510) **(This course has both a synchronous and an asynchronous section).**

Tuesdays: 1:30pm to 4:45pm (Via Zoom. Zoom links available on D2L. We will not be on Zoom for the entire scheduled class period).

Instructor: Nathan DeWitt, MFA

Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays: 10am to 1pm, Tuesdays 10am to 1:30pm. I am available via phone, Zoom or email during my office hours. Please make an appointment.

Office: Online

[ndewitt@depaul.edu](mailto:ndewitt@depaul.edu)

Course Management System: D2L.

Prerequisites: NONE.

### Course Description:

This course focuses on the form of scripted television, its history, tropes and trends from the professional's point of view. Students will analyze comedy and drama, serials and procedurals, network, cable and internet shows to gain a full perspective of the scripted television landscape and develop a toolbox of techniques to use when creating television series.

“More than jazz or musical theatre or morbid obesity, television is the true American art form.”

– Kenneth Parcell, 30 ROCK

### Learning Outcomes:

- ☐ Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, what a television episode is about and or how it was produced. In addition to learning how to analyze and interpret narrative scripted television, students also gain an understanding of how the development process affects the final content. Students will not only watch and analyze television, they will learn the socioeconomic and technological factors impacting the genre and industry. The papers in this class focus on students' understanding of Basic Structure, Character, Theme and eventually a complete analysis.
- ☐ Students will be able to comment on the relationship between form and content in a work. They will learn the generic expectations of a particular form and how an artist (writer, producer, actor, etc) can complicate, enrich or subvert these expectations. Analysis and examination of the relationship between form and content represents the bulk of this course. Students are given a framework of knowledge regarding what to expect from half-hour and hourlong scripted programming, both in terms of form and content. Once this framework has been established, students examine ways in which artists used the form to deepen the audience's sense of character, tension and theme. Students investigate these relationships through class discussions, exam questions, several shorter papers and a longer final paper in which they write a complete analysis for a television series.
- ☐ Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put these qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings. To better equip them in their analysis of television, students will learn a mix of common cinematic and literary language in addition to specialized screenwriting and film-making vernacular. This language will be employed in class discussions, exams and several papers.
- ☐ Where appropriate, students will be able to consider the original audience to witness a work of art and consider how their expectations differ from our own. This examination may include the elements of form, rhythm or style, the visual material and aesthetic of a piece. Students will be able to articulate a subject as well as write about it, explaining how narrative and aesthetic elements comprise a particular style of television (art). Students will learn about the context in

which each episode aired and how this context affected its original reception. Students will also learn about the genre of television, how it has evolved over time and the technological innovations shaping the genre today.

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. **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 scheduled start of the asynchronous section meeting time for both the synchronous and asynchronous sections. [Please pay attention to D2L for specific due dates and times.](#)

### **Late Work Policy:**

NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED unless you have a medical emergency, or you contact the professor for an extension. Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis, but generally, the professor understands this course is not the most important thing in your life. In the event you need extra time on an assignment for this course, reach out to the professor to communicate your needs and demonstrate you're engaged in the course. 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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**Panopto:**

Many of the assigned episodes are available for free via Panopto. Where available, links to these episodes are provided on D2L. Log in with your Campus Connect credentials.

**Watch and Learn:**

As an optional addition to this course, “Watch and Learn” commentary tracks are available on D2L. These audio tracks offer additional insights from the professor on the material and are meant to be played while you watch the episode. The professor recommends you watch the episode without commentary first, then watch with commentary if you so choose.

**Online Class Participation:**

There are three types of class participation required for this course. Submissions may be submitted as written responses, audio files or video files.

Discussion Board posts ask about your familiarity with the series being exhibited and ask you to relate topics discussed in lecture to the assigned episodes. (10 points per post)

In Development posts ask you to engage in creative practice, pitching television projects similar to the ones we watch in class. The projects you come up with here may end up being something you write or even produce down the line. (5 points per post)

TV News Round Up posts ask you to find ONE article per week from an entertainment industry trade publication such as Variety, The Hollywood Reporter or Deadline Hollywood, and create a summary of the article explaining why this news item interesting and important to you personally and how you think it will impact the television industry. (Synchronous students will present their news items each week during our Zoom sessions). (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, 40 points each. (200 points)

10 Discussion Board posts, 10 points each (100 points)

10 In Development posts, 5 points each (50 points)

10 TV News Round Up posts/ presentations, 10 points each (100 points)

Final Paper: 150 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****January 5:**

Class 1:

In-Class:

Course Introduction

Viewing:

30 ROCK "Pilot" (NBC, Hulu)

MAD MEN "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" (Pilot) (AMC, Amazon)

Lectures:

The TV Industry Overview, Development, The Professional TV Writing Process

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

Reading:

30 Rock Pilot Script (D2L)

(optional) Watch and Learn: 30 Rock "Pilot"

Homework:

TV News Round Up

Quiz 1 (covers Class 1) 20 questions, 40 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due before next class.

### **January 12:**

Class 2

In-Class:

TV News Roundup, Questions and Answers as needed

Viewing:

THE X FILES "Pilot" (Fox, Hulu)

THE SIMPSONS "Bart Sells his Soul" S7, E4 (Fox, Disney+)

SEINFELD "The Contest" S4, E11 (NBC, Hulu)

Lectures:

Network Television, Story Basics - Episodes, The Procedural Drama, The Police Series, The Situation Comedy

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

Reading:

From Creeber: Catherine Johnson on "The X-Files," and K.J. Donnelly on "The Simpsons and South Park."

How Dan Harmon Drives Himself Crazy Making COMMUNITY (Raftery, Wired):

[https://www.wired.com/2011/09/mf\\_harmon/](https://www.wired.com/2011/09/mf_harmon/)

(optional) Watch and Learn: The X-Files "Pilot"

Homework:

TV News Roundup

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

### **January 19:**

Class 3:

In-Class:

TV News Roundup, Questions and Answers as needed

Viewing:

THE SOPRANOS "Pilot" (HBO Max, Amazon)

SOUTH PARK "Make Love, Not Warcraft" S8, E10 (Comedy Central, Hulu)

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

Lectures:

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

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

Reading:

From Creeber: Glen Creeber on “The Sopranos”

The Shapes of Stories (Vonnegut): <http://www.openculture.com/2014/02/kurt-vonnegut-masters-thesis-rejected-by-u-chicago.html>

(optional) Watch and Learn: The Sopranos “Pilot”

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Quiz 2: Covers Classes 2-3 and the assigned reading. 20 questions. 40 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due before next class.

## **January 26:**

Class 4:

In-Class:

TV News Roundup, Questions and Answers as needed

Viewing:

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

TRANSPARENT “Pilot” (Amazon)

THE HANDMAID’S TALE “Offred” (Pilot) (Hulu) (This episode contains graphic sexual violence; viewer discretion is advised. See Paper Packet 2 Prompt for alternative assignment)

Lectures:

Internet Television, Serial Programming, Adult Animation

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

Reading:

The Netflix Decade (Coster, Reuters): <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-netflix-decade-in-review/the-netflix-decade-how-one-company-changed-the-way-we-watch-tv-idUSKBN1YR1AR>

(optional) Watch and Learn: Transparent “Pilot”

Homework:

TV News Roundup

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

## **February 2:**

Class 5:

In-Class:

TV News Roundup, Questions and Answers as needed

Viewing:

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

FRIENDS “The One with Two Parties” S2, E22 (NBC, HBO Max).

RUSSIAN DOLL “Nothing in this World is Easy” (Pilot) Netflix

Lectures:

Characters, The Hero’s Journey

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

Reading:

The Hero's Journey: Mythic Structure of Joseph Campbell's Monomyth (Bronzite):

<http://www.movieoutline.com/articles/the-hero-journey-mythic-structure-of-joseph-campbell-monomyth.html>

Hero's Journey as Psychological Journey (Myers): <https://gointothestory.blcklst.com/heros-journey-as-psychological-journey-152d0f7a8be1>

(optional) Joseph Campbell and the Hero's Journey (Myers): <https://gointothestory.blcklst.com/joseph-campbell-and-the-heros-journey-5b0477f2f012>

(optional) Watch and Learn: Six Feet Under "Pilot"

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Quiz 3: Covers Classes 4-5 and the assigned reading. 20 questions. 40 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due before next class.

## February 9:

Class 6:

In-Class:

TV News Roundup, Questions and Answers as needed

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)**

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

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

INSECURE "Racist as Fuck" S1, E3 (HBO Max)

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

Lectures:

Sitcom and Representation. The Unruly Woman Sitcom, The African American Sitcom and The LGBTQ+ Sitcom

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

Reading:

What Normalization Means? (Hsu, The New Yorker): <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/what-normalization-means>

How Angela Bassett Pushed MASTER OF NONE'S "Thanksgiving" Episode to the Next Level (Bradley, Vanity Fair): <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2017/05/master-of-none-season-2-thanksgiving-lena-waithe>

How ONE DAY AT A TIME Captures a Community Most TV Ignores (Bradley, Vanity Fair): <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2018/01/one-day-at-a-time-season-2-review-interview-rita-moreno-justina-machado-gloria-calderon-kellett>

(optional) Watch and Learn: The Boondocks "Return of the King" and Black-ish "THE Word"

Homework:

TV News Roundup

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

## February 16:

Class 7:

In-Class:

TV News Roundup, Questions and Answers as needed

Viewing:

GREY'S ANATOMY "Who's Zooming Who?" S1, E9 (S1 Finale) (ABC, Netflix)

THE LEFTOVERS "Pilot" (HBO Max) **(This episode contains depictions of violence against animals, viewer discretion is advised)**

Lectures:

Tension, The Primetime Soap, The Hospital Drama, The Horror Series

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

Reading:

From Creeber: Mareike Jenner on "Grey's Anatomy."

(Optional) Watch and Learn: The Leftover "Pilot"

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Quiz 4: Covers Classes 6-7 and the assigned reading. 20 questions. 40 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due before next class.

## **February 23:**

Class 8:

In-Class:

TV News Roundup, Questions and Answers as needed

Viewing:

LOST "The Constant" S4, E5 (ABC, Hulu)

RICK AND MORTY "Total Rickall" S2, E4 (Cartoon Network, Hulu, HBO Max)

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

Lectures:

Non-Linear Narrative, Theme, The Anthology Series, Sci-Fi and The Period Piece

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

Reading:

How LOST Changed the Way the World Watches TV (Epstein, Quartz): <https://qz.com/267903/how-lost-changed-the-way-the-world-watches-tv/>

(Optional) Watch and Learn: Lost "The Constant"

Homework:

TV News Roundup

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

## **March 2:**

Class 9:

In-Class:

TV News Roundup, Questions and Answers as needed

Viewing:

HOMELAND "Pilot" (SHOWTIME, Hulu)

GAME OF THRONES "Winter is Coming" (Pilot) (HBO Max)

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

Lectures:



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

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

Reading:

From Creeber: Lisa Richards on “Homeland” and Helen Wheatley on “Game of Thrones.”

(optional) Watch and Learn: Game of Thrones “Winter is Coming.”

Homework:

Quiz 5: Covers Classes 8-9 and the assigned reading. 20 questions. 40 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due before next class.

### **March 9:**

Class 10:

In-Class:

TV News Roundup, Questions and Answers as needed

Viewing:

THE REAL WORLD (New York) (MTV, MTV.com)

NATAN FOR YOU “Gas Station/ Caricature Artist” S1,E4 (Comedy Central, Hulu)

COSMOS “Standing Up in the Milky Way” (Pilot) (Disney+).

Lectures:

Reality TV, Documentary/ Non-Fiction TV.

Discussion:

Discussion Board

In Development

(optional) Watch and Learn: Nathan For You “Gas Station/ Caricature Artist”.

Homework:

TV News Roundup (asynchronous students, submit your story online, there is no class meeting Finals week).

Final Paper. 150 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 Tuesday, March 16, 2021 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](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**