

## TELEVISION GENRES FOR MAJORS – Spring 2023

SCWR 151 (Section 601, 610) (**This course has both an in-class and an online asynchronous section**).

Mondays 1:30pm to 4:45pm (Class recordings available shortly after 4:45pm Mondays)

Room: 14 East Jackson, Room 206

Instructor: Nathan DeWitt, MFA

Office Hours: Mondays: Noon to 1:30pm and 4:45 to 5:30pm in office, Tuesdays 10:45am to 1:00pm via Zoom. **Please make an appointment via email.**

Office(s): JCDM Center, Room 616

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

Course Management System: D2L.

Prerequisites: NONE.

### Course Description:

This analytical course examines the screenplay's evolution to the screen from a writer's perspective. Students will read scripts of varying genres and then perform a critical analysis and comparison of the text to the final produced versions of the series. Storytelling conventions such as structure, character development, theme, and tension will be used to uncover alterations and how these adjustments ultimately impacted the show's reception. In addition to series of various genres, students will examine shows by, for, and about a diverse range of intersectional characters and creators reflective of our communities.

### 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.**

### **Covid-19 Statement:**

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

### **Attendance Policy:**

Attendance is not required. All necessary course materials are available online. Regardless of course section, students may interact with course content in a modality which makes sense for them as individual learners. In-class students may feel free to participate as online asynchronous students if they so desire.

### **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. Please pay attention to D2L for specific due dates and times. Assignments will be graded within a week of submission.

### **Late Work Policy:**

Late work is eligible for partial credit. For each day an assignment is late, a 10% grade reduction will result. **If an assignment is more than 10 days late, the opportunity for partial credit expires and the grade falls to 0.** Exceptions to the late work policy and extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis; but generally, the professor does their best to work with the student. In the event you need extra time on an assignment for this course, please reach out via email to communicate your needs. 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. **Viewing will occur outside of class.** In the event you cannot access the assigned series or episode, please email the professor and an alternate assignment can be provided.

**Class Participation:**

There are three types of class participation required for this course.

**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. **In-class students will participate in class discussions and do not need to submit online unless they miss class. Online students will submit online.** (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. **In-class students will pitch in-class, online students will submit pitches online.** (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. **Regardless of modality, all students submit online.** Online submissions may be submitted as written responses, audio files or video files. (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:**

Assignments are due Mondays at 1:30pm

**March 27**

Class 1: The TV Industry Overview

Viewing:

30 ROCK “Pilot” (NBC, Hulu, Peacock)

MAD MEN “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes” (Pilot) (AMC, Amazon, available for purchase)

Lectures:

The TV Industry: TV Basics, The TV industry: TV Revenues, Development, The Professional TV Writing Process

In Development

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Reading: 30 Rock Pilot Script (D2L), Mad Men “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes” (Pilot) Script (D2L)

Quiz 1 (covers Class 1) 30 questions, 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due next week.

**April 3**

Class 2: Network Television

Viewing:

THE X FILES “Pilot” (Fox, Hulu)

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

SEINFELD “The Contest” S4, E10 (NBC, Netflix)

TV News Roundup Presentations

Lectures:

Story Basics, Story Basics – Acts and Scenes, Story Basics – Plots and Storylines, The Procedural Drama, The Police Series, The Situation Comedy

In Development

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Reading: From Creeber: Catherine Johnson on “The X-Files,” and K.J. Donnelly on “The Simpsons and South Park.” Seinfeld “The Contest” Script (D2L)

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

**April 10**

Class 3: Cable Television

Viewing:

THE SOPRANOS “Pilot” (HBO, HBO Max, Amazon)

SOUTH PARK “Scott Tenorman Must Die” S5, E4 (Comedy Central, Hulu)

ATLANTA “The Big Bang” (Pilot) (FX, Hulu)

TV News Roundup Presentations

Lectures:

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

In Development

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Reading: From Creeber: Glen Creeber on “The Sopranos,” Atlanta Pilot Script (D2L), Vonnegut on The Shape of Stories

Quiz 2: Covers Classes 2-3 and the assigned reading. 30 questions. 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due next week.

## **April 17**

Class 4: Internet Television

Viewing:

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

TRANSPARENT “Pilot” (Amazon)

THE MANDALORIAN “Chapter 1: The Mandalorian” (Pilot) (Disney+)

RAMY “Strawberries” (S1, E4) (Hulu).

TV News Roundup Presentations

Lectures:

Serial Programming, Adult Animation, Internet Television

In Development

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Reading: The Netflix Decade (Coster, Reuters), The Mandalorian: This is the Way (Holben, American Cinematographer), Airing Authenticity: Does Ramy Have to be Real to be Fun? (Bhatti, Bitch Media)

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

## **April 24**

Class 5: Characters

Viewing:

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

FLEABAG “Series 2, Episode 1” (BBC, Amazon)

MASTER OF NONE “Thanksgiving” S2, E8 (Netflix)

TV News Roundup Presentations

Lectures:

Characters and Desire, Characterization, Types of Characters, The Hero’s Journey

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Reading: How Angela Bassett Pushed MASTER OF NONE’S “Thanksgiving” Episode to the Next Level (Bradley, Vanity Fair), Fleabag “Series 2, Episode 1” script (D2L), The Hero’s Journey: Mythic Structure of Joseph Campbell’s Monomyth (Bronzite), Hero’s Journey as Psychological Journey (Myers), Joseph Campbell and the Hero’s Journey (Myers, OPTIONAL)

Quiz 3: Covers Classes 4-5 and the assigned reading. 30 questions. 60 possible points. Administered on D2L. Due next week

## **May 1**

Class 6: Sitcom and Representation

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)

INSECURE “Racist as Fuck” S1, E3 (HBO, HBO Max)

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

RESERVATION DOGS “F\*ckin’ Rez Dogs” (Pilot) (FX on Hulu)

TV News Roundup Presentations

Lectures:

The Unruly Woman Sitcom, The African American Sitcom, The LGBTQ+ Sitcom and Beyond  
In Development

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Reading: What Normalization Means? (Hsu, The New Yorker),

How ONE DAY AT A TIME Captures a Community Most TV Ignores (Bradley, Vanity Fair),

"Reservation Dogs" Uses Humor, Not Magic, to Conjure Native Culture (Miller, The New York Times)

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

## **May 8**

Class 7: Tension

Viewing:

GREY’S ANATOMY “Who’s Zooming Who?” S1, E9 (S1 Finale) (ABC, Netflix)

STRANGER THINGS “Chapter One: The Vanishing of Will Byers (Pilot) (Netflix).

TV News Roundup Presentations

Lectures:

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

In Development

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Reading: From Creeber: Mareike Jenner on “Grey’s Anatomy.” Stranger Things (Montauk) Show Bible and pilot Script (D2L)

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

## **May 15**

Class 8:

Viewing:

LOST “The Constant” S4, E5 (ABC, Hulu)

RICK AND MORTY “Total Rickall” S2, E4 (Cartoon Network, Hulu)

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

TV News Roundup Presentations

Lectures:

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

In Development

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Reading:

How LOST Changed the Way the World Watches TV (Epstein, Quartz), American Crime Story: People Vs. OJ “From the Ashes of Tragedy” script (D2L)  
Paper Packet 4 (covers Classes 7 and 8). 100 possible points. Due next week.

## **May 22**

Class 9: Post-Modern TV

Viewing:

HOMELAND “Pilot” (SHOWTIME, Hulu)

GAME OF THRONES “Winter is Coming” (Pilot) (HBO, HBO Max)

THE GOOD PLACE “Everything is Fine” (Pilot) (NBC, Netflix)

TV News Roundup Presentations

Lectures:

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

In Development

Homework:

TV News Roundup

Reading: The Good Place Pilot Script (D2L), From Creeber: Lisa Richards on “Homeland” and Helen Wheatley on “Game of Thrones”.

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

## **May 29**

**NO CLASS DUE TO MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY. ALL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE ONLINE**

Class 10: Unscripted TV

Viewing:

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

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

COSMOS “Standing Up in the Milky Way” (Pilot) (Fox, Disney+, for purchase on Amazon Prime).

TV News Roundup Presentations

Lectures:

Reality TV, Documentary/ Non-Fiction TV

In Development

Homework:

TV News Roundup (All students submit online).

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 Monday, June 5, 2023 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.**

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