

Georgia State University
Department of Communication
COMM 6910/8980: Television Studies
CRN #16529 & 16731
Spring 2007

Class Meetings: Wednesdays, 4:30-7:00 p.m., One Park Place 1020

Professor: Dr. Alisa Perren
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Course Description and Objectives:

What is television today? In what ways are television's aesthetics and economics changing in the age of the mobisode and video iPod? How have representations of gender, race and class changed due to television's transformation from a three-channel mass medium to a multi-channel niche-oriented medium? These and many other issues regarding television's past and present role as a cultural, social, political and industrial force will be explored over the course of the semester.

This course has two primary goals: First, we will trace the development of television studies from a humanistic perspective, exploring a variety of critical approaches which have been taken in the study of the medium. We will look at some of the "canonical" texts from the last three decades and consider the ways in which they have continued to shape ideas in this still young and emerging field of study.

Second, we will look at recent work in television studies as a means of assessing both the changing nature of television and of television studies as an area of inquiry. The readings for the class will explore the range of industrial/institutional, sociocultural, textual and audience analyses, approaches and issues presently being discussed by television studies scholars.

Required Texts:

- Course packet available at Bestway Copies
- Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*
- Chris Anderson, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties*
- Laurie Oullette, *Viewers Like You? How Public TV Failed the People*
- Todd Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time*
- Herman Gray, *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness*
- Amanda Lotz, *Redesigning Women: Television after the Network Era*
- Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation: How Repeats Invented American Television*
- Lynn Spigel & Jan Olsson, *Television After TV*

Recommended:

- www.flowtv.org
- Robert Allen, *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*
- Bernadette Casey et al, *Television Studies: The Key Concepts*
- John Corner, *Critical Ideas in Television Studies*
- Michele Hilmes, *Only Connect: A Cultural History of Broadcasting in the United States*
- Horace Newcomb, *Television: The Critical View* (7th Edition)

Grading Breakdown

		<u>Due date</u>
Class participation	20%	
Flow assignment	15%	March 15
Reading presentation	10%	Sign up for your week
Final paper presentation	10%	April 25 & May 2
Term paper	45%	May 4 (rough draft due April 23)

- There will be plus and minus grades in this course. Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

93 – 100	A	77 – 79	C+
90 – 92	A-	70 – 76	C
87 – 89	B+	60 – 69	D
83 – 86	B	Below 60	F
80 – 82	B-		

Regarding Incompletes: Incompletes are only given in special hardship cases.

Participation: Class participation comprises 20% of your course grade. You are required to be on time and in class for each meeting. Excused absences are only those that are documented medical or family emergencies; all other absences will affect your participation grade. In general, you are expected to attend all class meetings/screenings, to actively participate in class discussions, and to demonstrate your command of the assigned material.

Presentations: Each student will be responsible for two presentations in this class: one on the reading(s) for the week and one on your ongoing semester research project. Reading presentations will be relatively short (15-20 minutes) and should summarize the main points of the week's reading(s) while also offering key issues and/or questions for discussion. Research presentations will be on your works in progress and are a way to share your work as well as get helpful feedback from the class and instructor. They will be scheduled later in the semester.

Flow assignment: Using selected readings from the first half of the course, you will be asked to write two short "opinion pieces" (approx. 500-1000 words each) suitable for publication in the "Flow" online journal. The assignment demands that you to re-think long-standing issues and debates in television studies, and use these writings to make connections to other contexts and contemporary issues.

Term paper: Your principal assignment for this course is to conduct research and write a term paper (approx. 17-30 pages) that will comprise 45% of your grade. You can focus on any aspect of television studies that is of interest to you. You will need to incorporate primary research as well as secondary sources into your work. Everyone is required to submit a proposal/abstract and a first draft before the final draft and due dates are specified above. Your proposal should sketch out the basic research topic, locate its argument within course concerns, and identify key evidentiary sources in a preliminary bibliography. The logic behind the proposal and draft is that I would like you to approach writing as a PROCESS as opposed to a TORTURE SESSION that begins the night before the paper is due. This way better enables us to do some interesting critical work in this class and benefit from one another's insights and feedback. You will also be presenting your work to the class. Ideally the paper should be suitable to submit for publication in a media-related journal. Students should meet with me during the semester to discuss their ideas and research progress.

Special accommodations: If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities that you believe may require accommodations for this course, please meet with me after class or during my office hours to discuss appropriate adaptations or modifications which might be helpful to you. The Office of Disability Services (<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwods/>; 3-9044) can provide you with information and other assistance to manage any challenges that may affect your performance in coursework.

Regarding Scholastic Dishonesty: I take this matter very seriously and will report any suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Please see the following page for details on the University's policy on Academic Honesty. For more information, you can also look at the Office's website at http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/codeofconduct_conpol.html or the Policy on Academic Honesty in the Faculty Handbook (section 409).

Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, all individual articles are in the course packet.

Week 1

January 10 Introduction to the course, syllabus, schedule

In-class Screening: *Burns & Allen, Jack Benny, The Honeymooners*

Theoretical Foundations

Week 2

January 17 A Taste of Television's Past

In-class Screening: *Amos 'n' Andy, Dragnet, I Love Lucy, Marty*

Readings:

- Charlotte Brunson, "What is the 'Television' of Television Studies?"
- Jostein Gripsrud, "Television, Broadcasting, Flow: Key Metaphors in TV Theory"
- Horace Newcomb, "The Development of Television Studies"
- Lynn Spigel, "The Making of a TV Literate Elite"
- Raymond Williams, "Programming: Distribution and Flow"

Week 3

January 24 What is Television Studies?

Sign up for reading presentations

Readings:

- John Fiske and John Hartley, "Forward" and "'Reading' Television"
- Tanya Modleski, "The Rhythms of Reception: Daytime Television and Women's Work"
- Robert Allen, "On Reading Soaps: A Semiotic Primer"
- Horace Newcomb and Paul Hirsch, "Television as a Cultural Forum"
- Nick Browne, "The Political Economy of the Television (Super)Text"

Television Studies, Broadcast History and the "Network" Era

Week 4

January 31 Bringing Television Home: Domestic Space and "New" Technologies

Reading: Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*

Week 5

February 7 Rethinking the Cultural Industries: Early Industry Structure and Content

Reading: Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties*

Week 6
February 14 Alternative Visions for American Television: Public Broadcasting and Cultural Policy

Reading: Laurie Oullette, *Viewers Like You? How Public Television Failed the People*

Week 7
February 21 Cultural Production in the Network Era

Reading: Todd Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time*

Week 8
February 28 Race and Representation in the Network Era

Reading: Herman Gray, *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for Blackness*

Mar. 1 ***Full semester mid-point: Last day to withdraw and receive a “W”***

Week 9
March 7 ***Spring Break***

New Directions in Television Studies

Week 10
March 14 Gender in the Post-Network Era

Hand out “Flow” assignment (due **Monday, March 15** by 5 p.m.)

Reading: Amanda Lotz, *Re-designing Women: Television after the Network Era*

Recommended: Michael Curtin, “On Edge: Culture Industries in the Neo-Network Era”

Week 11
March 21 U.S. Television History – and Television Studies – Reconsidered

Paper proposals due at start of class

Reading: Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation: How Repeats Invented American Television*

Recommended: David Marc, “What Was Broadcasting?”

Week 12

March 28

Global Television Studies: An Overview

Readings:

- Lisa Parks and Shanti Kumar, "Introduction"
- Shanti Kumar, "Is There Anything Called Global Television Studies?"
- Michele Hilmes, "Who We Are, Who We Are Not: Battle of the Global Paradigms"
- Mimi White, "Flows and Other Close Encounters with Television"
- Michael Curtin, "Media Capitals: Cultural Geographies of Global TV" (in Spigel & Olsson)

Week 13

April 4

Television after TV: Industry, Programs and Production Contexts (all readings this week are in Spigel & Olsson)

Readings:

- Lynn Spigel, "Introduction"
- John Caldwell, "Convergence Television: Aggregating Form and Repurposing Content in the Culture of Conglomeration"
- Jeffrey Sconce, "What If? Charting Television's New Textual Boundaries"
- William Boddy, "Interactive Television and Advertising Form in Contemporary U.S. Television"

Week 14

April 11

Television After TV: Technology, Society and Cultural Form (all readings this week are in Spigel & Olsson)

Readings:

- William Uricchio, "Television's Next Generation"
- Anna McCarthy, "The Rhythms of the Reception Area: Crisis, Capitalism and the Waiting Room TV"
- Jostein Gripsrud, "Broadcast Television: The Chances of its Survival in the Digital Age"
- David Morley, "At Home with Television"

Week 15

April 18

Re-considering Television (Studies)

Readings:

- Julie D'acci, "Cultural Studies, Television Studies and the Crisis in the Humanities" (in Spigel & Olsson)
- John Hartley, "Television as Transmodern Teaching"
- Roger Silverstone, "Regulation, Media Literacy and Media Civics"
- Lynn Spigel, "Our TV Heritage: Television, the Archive and the Reasons for Preservation"

Week 16

April 23

Drafts of term papers due

April 25

Term paper presentations

Final Exam Week

May 2

Continue term paper presentations

May 4

*Final papers due by 5 p.m

This syllabus is the general plan for this course.

****Deviations may be necessary as the semester progresses.****

Policy on Academic Honesty

Reprinted from the Georgia State University Faculty Handbook | FALL 06

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The university assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for fairness require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.

The university's policy on academic honesty is published in the Faculty Affairs Handbook and the On Campus: The Undergraduate Co-Curricular Affairs Handbook and is available to all members of the university community. The policy represents a core value of the university and all members of the university community are responsible for abiding by its tenets. Lack of knowledge of this policy is not an acceptable defense to any charge of academic dishonesty. All members of the academic community -- students, faculty, and staff -- are expected to report violations of these standards of academic conduct to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are on file in the offices of the deans of each college, the office of the dean of students, and the office of the provost.

In an effort to foster an environment of academic integrity and to prevent academic dishonesty, students are expected to discuss with faculty the expectations regarding course assignments and standards of conduct. Students are encouraged to discuss freely with faculty, academic advisors, and other members of the university community any questions pertaining to the provisions of this policy. In addition, students are encouraged to avail themselves of programs in establishing personal standards and ethics offered through the university's Counseling Center.

Definitions and Examples

The examples and definitions given below are intended to clarify the standards by which academic honesty and academically honorable conduct are to be judged. The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions and examples suggest conditions under which unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs; however, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions which also will be judged unacceptable by the academic community.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or in part, taken from the Internet or other computer-based resource without properly referencing the source (for example, the URL) is considered plagiarism. A complete reference is required in order that all parties may locate and view the original source. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

Cheating on Examinations. Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, computer based resources, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the faculty member.

Unauthorized Collaboration. Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as its being one's own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with another person or source, or computer-based resource, is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty knowingly to provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

Falsification. It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of the results of experiments or of computer data, false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage).

Multiple Submissions. It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.