Course Description:
This course presents an introduction to the industrial, political, aesthetic, and cultural analysis of American television. Students will read a variety of critical, theoretical, and historical essays about television in order to engage a range of issues and debates concerning the industry, programming, and the audience.

Student Learning Outcomes:
After taking this course, the student will be able to:
1. Demonstrate understanding of television history and critical approaches to the study of television.
2. Apply critical models to past and current TV programs and genres.
3. Examine the cultural role and impact of television.
4. Create critical commentary about TV content and style.

Required Course Texts:

How to Watch Television, Ethan Thompson & Jason Mittell, editors. NYU Press, 2013.

Evaluation: Since this is a criticism course, grades are primarily based on written assignments. Detailed descriptions of the assignments briefly described below will be distributed and discussed in class.

- TV Journal: 10%. (Diary + 750-1000 word essay)
- Flow Analysis: 10% (750-1000 word essay) An essay in which you describe the strategies a channel uses to attract and maintain an audience.
- TV Style Group Presentation: 10% A group presentation (10 minutes) describing the formal style (look, sound) of a series. Your group must create a Powerpoint-style presentation featuring screen shots and video clips.
- Narrative Analysis: 20% (1200 – 1500 word essay) A critical essay in which you analyze narrative structure in a series of your choosing.
- Cultural Analysis: 20% (1200 – 1500 word essay) A critical essay in which you analyze how a program represents a particular social issue.
- Weekly Quizzes: 20%. Multiple choice and short answer.
• **Final Exam**: Optional. Replaces either the overall quiz or lowest analysis grade. Multiple choice and short answer.

• **Attendance and Active Participation**: 10%

Grade Scale: A = 100-90, B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60, F = 59 and under.

**Course Policies**

**Attendance**
Attendance is mandatory. Two absences are acceptable, but any additional unexcused absences will cause a five-point deduction from your attendance and participation grade, and you may not make up any missed work. Excused absences require official documentation. Two “lates” (or leaving early) equal an absence.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in an automatic zero on the assignment and further disciplinary action.

**Dropping a Class**
Events sometimes occur that make dropping a course seem necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

**Classroom/Professional behavior**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Additionally, students are expected to:

1. **Silence and put away cell phones. Texting (including the reading of texts!) is not allowed in class.** Your social life will survive until the break, I promise.
2. **Come to class on-time.** Do not get up and leave early.
3. **Participate in class discussions.** In addition to the enlightening lectures, our goal during each class will be to have a lively, informed discussion. You will not get an “A” if you do not regularly contribute to class discussion in a productive manner.

4. **Be responsible for any information and materials missed when absent.**

5. **Complete readings and assignments as assigned.** All assignments must be handed in on time; exceptions will be made only for extraordinary cases and official documentation is needed. Exams may not be rescheduled. Do not make travel plans that conflict with exams.

6. **Proofread all work before turning it in.** Really.

7. **Seek help with writing if necessary.** The Writing Center of TAMU-CC, located in GSSC 112, provides free help for students at any stage in the writing process. More information is available at the Center for Academic Student Achievement website, casa.tamucc.edu.

8. **Properly cite sources.** Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form, and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and further disciplinary action. A useful guide to citing references in APA style is located at http://library.nmu.eduguides/userguides/style_apa.htm.

9. **Respect the privacy and opinions of fellow students.** I expect students to participate in discussion, and I expect students to respect each other’s (hopefully well-informed) opinions. Grades and course performance are considered private information. Students are not to openly discuss their grades (good or bad) inside my classroom.

10. **Meet with the instructor during office hours.** I will not discuss individual student grades in the classroom. I will, however, be happy to discuss grades on papers, exams, course performance, etc. during office hours. I also do not allow the following topics to be openly discussed in the classroom: student opinions about other faculty, student opinions about other students, student grades in other classes.

*Notice to Students with Disabilities:* Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible. Please have your accommodation letter from Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi Disability Services (DS) Office with you when you come see me. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Disability Services Office (located in 116 Corpus Christi Hall) at 361.825.5816.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

***Grade Appeal Process.*** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student
with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
Course Schedule

You are expected to have done the readings by the day listed. “Mittell” refers to the Mittell textbook; H2WTV refers to the anthology, *How to Watch Television*.

Week 1 9/4: Introduction to the Course
- Why study TV?
- What are the usual criticisms of television?
- What challenges face the industry today?
- How would you change television?

Week 2 9/9: History and Structure
Mittell: Chapter 1
Screenings: Tales of Tomorrow ("The Window"), Texaco Star Theatre, Ernie Kovacs

Week 3 9/16: Programming Development and Strategies
Mittell: Chapter 2
Screenings: Twilight Zone, Story of a Family, Person to Person
Assignment Due: TV Journal

Week 4 9/23: Programming Development and Strategies
H2WTV: Onion News Network, Modern Family, Monday Night Football
Screenings: Onion News Network, MNF (YouTube), Modern Family

Week 5 9/30: Public Interest and Documentary TV
Mittell: Chapter 3 AND 4
H2WTV: 30 Days, Fox & Friends, NYPD Blue
Assignment Due: Flow
Screenings: 30 Days, Harvest of Shame

Week 6 10/7: Modes of Production and TV Style
Mittell: Chapter 5
H2WTV: I Love Lucy, Mad Men, Nip/Tuck
Screenings: I Love Lucy, Mad Men and/or Nip/Tuck

Week 7 10/14: Modes of Production and TV Style
H2WTV: MASH, Homicide
Assignment Due: TV Style
Screenings: Arrested Development, Freaks and Geeks

Week 8 10/21: Narrative Structures
Mittell: Chapter 6
H2WTV: House, Phineas & Ferb
Screenings: Northern Exposure, House

Week 9 10/28: Narrative Structures
H2WTV: The Sopranos, One Life to Live
Screenings: The Sopranos, Malcolm in the Middle
Week 10 11/4: Transmedia/Paratexts/Fans
H2WTV: Battlestar Galactica, Gossip Girl
Assignment Due: Narrative
Screenings: BSG

Week 11 11/11: TV & Cultural Politics
Mittell: Chapter 7
H2WTV: Parks & Recreation, Family Guy, Star Trek
Screenings: Father Knows Best, “Betty, Girl Engineer”; Dragnet, “Blue Boy”; Parks & Recreation (2.1)g.

Week 12 11/18: TV & Cultural Politics: Race & Ethnicity
Mittell: Chapter 8, pp. 305-329
H2WTV: 24, The Cosby Show, The Amazing Race, Eva Luna
Screenings: The Cosby Show (Pilot), Amazing Race (7.x)

Week 13 11/25: TV & Cultural Politics: Gender & Sexuality
Mittell: Chapter 8, pp. 329-353
H2WTV: Grey’s Anatomy, Jersey Shore, Glee/House Hunters International
Screenings: Grey’s Anatomy (1.x), Jersey Shore (Pilot)

Week 14 12/2: TV & Taste
H2WTV: Everyday Italian, Tim & Eric’s Awesome Show, Great Job!, It’s Fun to Eat
Assignment Due: Cultural Analysis

Week 15 12/9: TV Pitches & Closing Notes

OPTIONAL FINAL EXAM 430-7, Monday 12/16: BH 126