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 & Materials:

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

Subscription to Netflix streaming video.

Screenings: Because there is not a separate screening lab for this section, you will need to do screenings on your own. The screenings listed on the schedule are available through Netflix streaming.

Facebook Group: Television Criticism TAMUCC
The Facebook group is a way to facilitate course communication and participation (sharing questions, ideas, links, etc.). You don’t have to be Facebook friends with each other or me to join the group. I’d rather wait till you graduate to be friends, actually! There is no punishment or bonus for participating in the Facebook group.

E-Communication Policy:
- I will respond to email within 24 hours, except for Friday at 3 pm until Monday at 9 am.
- I will respond to queries on the Facebook group within 24 hours as well.
I will be happy to talk on the phone, instant message, Facetime etc with you during my office hours.
I am also happy to meet with you in person during office hours or some other time arranged in advance!

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

- “Columns”: 6 @ 5% each = 30%. About 500 - 700 words each. Individual instructions to come, will be posted to blog, and most will combine text and visuals. These will help prepare you for the papers. **FIVE NEXT TIME**
- “Papers”: 2 @ 15% each = 30%. See below for overview, and more instructions will follow.
- Weekly Attendance & Participation: 15%. Bring a notecard with a question or comment related to the reading to class. Regularly contribute to conversation in class, and comment on the blogs.
- Weekly Responses: 15%. You will be given a prompt and will write and bring on a notecard.
- Weekly Quizzes: 10%. Due before first class of the week, via Blackboard.

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

**Overview of Assignments:**

**Paper #1: (1500-2000 words)**
**Narrative Structure/Thematic Content:** Describe the narrative strategies of a series and how its thematic content is articulated.

or

**TV Style:** Describe what is distinctive about a particular series approach to visual style and use of sound and how this suits its content.

(continued)

**Paper #2: (1500-2000 words)**
**Nonfiction TV:** Describe strategies used by the show to transform “news” and social issues into television entertainment.

or

**Relevant TV:** Critically describe and assess how a program represents a social issue or identity politics.

**Multimedia Paper Option:** For one of the papers, you may choose to instead do a multimedia blog combining text, images, and video. The text can instead be 1000-1500 words and your visual components should communicate essential information about your analysis.

**Optional Final Project:** Choose one of your papers and revise and further develop it to be approximately 2000-2500. Or similarly revise and develop your multimedia paper. Either way, you must meet with me to discuss how to appropriately approach this revision. Replaces the grade for the paper.
Optional Final Exam: Comprehensive exam that replaces your overall quiz grade.

Other Course Policies

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory. One absence is 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.edu/guides/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

THIS IS AN ONLILINE COURSE. THIS SCHEDULE WILL BE LARGELY TRANSFORMED PRIOR TO THE START OF THE COURSE. BE SURE TO GET AN UPDATED SYLLABUS.

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.

Unit 1: Introduction to the Course & TV History and Structure
READING: Mittell: Chapter 1, H2WTV: Introduction
Screenings: Examples of early TV + Modern Family
COLUMN 1 DUE FRIDAY AT 3

Unit 2: Programming Development and Strategies
9/16: Mittell: Chapter 2, H2WTV: Jenkins, Thompson, Sandler
Netflix Screenings: Walking Dead “Pilot”
Mittell: Chapter 3, H2WTV: Petersen, Holt, Johnson
Screenings: Orange is the New Black “Pilot”
COLUMN 2 DUE FRIDAY AT 3

Unit 3: Transmedia Strategies
Reserve: Brooker, H2WTV: Scott, Gurney, Stein

Unit 4: News & Citizenship
Mittell: Chapter 4, H2WTV: Jones, Baym & Gottert, Murray
Screenings: 30 Days 2.1 “Immigration”
COLUMN 3 DUE FRIDAY AT 3

Unit 5: Modes of Production and TV Style
Mittell: Chapter 5, H2WTV: Butler
Screenings: Mad Men 1.6 “Babylon”
H2WTV: Aslinger, Ahn
Screenings: Nip/Tuck “Pilot”, Samurai Champloo “Tempestuous Temperaments”
COLUMN 4 DUE FRIDAY AT 3

Unit 6: Narrative Structures
Mittell, Chapter 6 pp. 213-234, Reserve: Newman, O'Sullivan, Lotz
Screenings: Friday Night Lights “Pilot,” Malcolm in the Middle 2.20 “Bowling”

Mittell, Chapter 6 pp. 234-267, H2WTV: Mittell, Marcus, Sconce
Screenings: Dick Van Dyke Show 2.25 “I'm No Henry Walden”, The Wonder Years “Pilot”, Arrested Development 2.15 “Sword of Destiny”

PAPER 1 DUE BY MONDAY 3 PM
Unit 7: Culture & Politics: 1
Mittell: Chapter 7, H2WTV: Hendershot, Marx, Pearson
Mittell: Chapter 8, pp. 305-329, H2WTV: Acham, Asultany, Amaya
Screenings: 24 4.1 “7 am – 8 am”

Unit 8: Culture & Politics: 2
Screenings: *Glee* “Pilot”, *America’s Top Model*

July 3: **PAPER 2 DUE**