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. Analyze critical essays and identify argument, use of evidence, and stylistic strategies.
3. Create critical commentary about TV content and style.

Required Course Texts & Materials:


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 and discussion and analysis of critical essays. Detailed descriptions of the assignments are included in the individual units.

- Columns: 5 @ 100 points each (500 total points total, 50% of grade). About 700 - 1000 words each, with instructions on each in the units. You will be allowed to rewrite one column to turn in at the end of the semester for reggrading. (However, you can’t “rewrite” a column that you didn’t turn in when it was originally due.)
• Discussions (10 points each, 150 points total, 15% of grade)
• In-Class Attendance & Participation (150 points total, 15% of grade)
• Quizzes: 10 points each (150 points total, 15% of grade)
• Peer Review Assignments: (50 points total, 5% of grade)

Course Point Totals and Grades
900 - 1000 points = A
800 - 899 = B
700 - 799 = C
600 – 699 = D
599 and under = F

Blackboard will keep a running total of your percentage of points so you will know where you stand during the course. The same basic grade scale applies: A = 100-90%, B = 89-80%, C = 79-70%, D = 69-60%, F = 59% and under.

E-Communication Policy:
• CONTACT ME THROUGH BLACKBOARD MESSAGES FOR THIS COURSE.
• I will respond to messages within 24 hours (usually sooner), except for Friday at 3 pm until Monday at 9 am.
• 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!

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. More than five unexcused absences will result in automatically failing the class.

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. **Complete readings and assignments as assigned.** All assignments must be turned in on time; exceptions will be made only for extraordinary cases and official documentation is needed.
2. **Proofread all work before turning it in.** Really.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **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.
Course Schedule

For each week:
- All quizzes due Friday at noon.
- All first comments on discussion forums due by Wednesday.
- All final comments on discussion forums due by Friday noon.
- Other assignments as noted.

WEEK 1 (1/20)
Unit X: Introduction
Read the Introduction to How to Watch Television
Assessments:
- Syllabus Quiz (Blackboard)

WEEK 2 (1/25 & 1/27)
Unit 1: TV History and Structure
WED: Read: Mittell: Chapter One; How to Watch Television: 1. Banks, I Love Lucy; 2. Kompare, The Twilight Zone
Assessments:
- Quiz on Chapter 1 (Blackboard)
- Discussion: TV Auteurs

WEEK 3 (2/1 & 2/3)
Unit 2: Programming Strategies “On TV”
MON: Read: Mittell, Chapter Two
WED: Read How to Watch Television: 1. Holt, NYPD Blue
Assessments:
- Quiz on Chapter 2 (Blackboard)
- Discussion: NYPD Blue

WEEK 4 (2/8 & 2/10)
Unit 3: Programming Strategies “Post TV”
MON: Read: How to Watch Television: Thompson, Onion News Network
WED: Read: How to Watch Television: Sandler, Modern Family
Assessments:
- Discussion: Blurred Lines
- COLUMN DUE BY FRIDAY 12 NOON: Scheduling

WEEK 5 (2/15 & 2/17)
Unit 4: Nonfiction Transformations
MON: Read: Mittell: Chapter Three
Assessments:
- Quiz on Chapter 3 (Blackboard)
- Discussion: MNF

WEEK 6 (2/22 & 2/24)
**Unit 5: News**
MON: Read: Mittell: Chapter Four
WED: Read: *How to Watch Television*: Jones, Fox & Friends
Assessments:
- Quiz on Chapter 4 (Blackboard)
- Discussion: Jones on Fox
- COLUMN DUE BY FRIDAY 12 NOON: 30 Days

WEEK 7 (2/29 & 3/2)
**Unit 6: Cultural Criticism**
MON: Read: Mittell, Chapter Seven, *How to Watch Television*: Hendershot, Parks and Recreation
WED: Read: *How to Watch Television*: 1. Pearson, Star Trek, 2. Gray, Amazing Race
Assessments:
- Close Reading Quiz: Hendershot (Blackboard)
- Discussion: TV as Cultural Forum

WEEK 8 (3/7 & 3/9)
**Unit 7.1: Narrative Strategies (Pilot)**
MON: Read: Mittell, Chapter 6 to page 234; Peer Review: 30 Days
WED: Read: Blackboard Reserve: Sconce, “Repetition with Difference”
Assessments:
- Quiz on Chapter 6 part one (Blackboard)
- Discussion: Building a Series

WEEK 9 (3/21 & 3/23)
**Unit 7.2: Narrative Strategies (Drama Series)**
MON: Read: *How to Watch Television*: 1. Lotz, House
WED: Read: *How to Watch Television*: 1. Haggins, Homicide; 2. O’Sullivan, Sopranos
Assessments:
- Discussion: Complex Dramas
- COLUMN DUE BY FRIDAY 12 NOON: Drama Pilot

WEEK 10 (3/28 & 3/30)
**Unit 8: Narrative Strategies (Comedy)**
MON: Read: Mittell, Chapter 6, pp. 234-267; How to Watch Television: Mittell, Phineas & Ferb
WED: Read: *How to Watch Television*: 1. Marcus, The Wonder Years; 2. Sconce, Tim & Eric; Peer Review: Drama Pilot

Assessments:
- Quiz on Chapter 6 part two (Blackboard)
- Discussion: Stupid Comedy
- Close-Reading Quiz: Marcus (Blackboard)

WEEK 11 (4/4 & 4/6)

**Unit 9: Modes of Production and Meaning**
MON: Read: Mittell: Chapter Five; How to Watch Television: Butler, Mad Men

Assessments:
- Quiz on Chapter 5 (Blackboard)
- Discussion: TV Style
- Close-Reading Quiz: Butler on Visual Style (Blackboard)

WEEK 12 (4/11 & 4/13)

**Unit 10: Race and Nation**
MON: Read: Mittell, Chapter 8, pp. 305-329; How to Watch Television: Acham, The Cosby Show
WED: Read: How to Watch Television: Asultany, 24

Assessments:
- Quiz on chapter 8 part one (Blackboard)
- Close-Reading Quiz: Acham on Cosby Show (Blackboard)
- Discussion: Limits of Representation
- **COLUMN DUE BY FRIDAY 12 NOON: TV Series, Style, Theme**

WEEK 13 (4/18 & 4/20)

**Unit 11: Gender**
MON: Read: Mittell: Chapter 8, 329-344; *How to Watch Television*: Levine, Grey's Anatomy

Assessment:
- Discussion: TV Fantasies (Douglas, Levine, Amaya)

WEEK 14 (4/25 & 4/27)

**Unit 12: Sexuality**
MON: Read: Mittell, Chapter 8, pp. 345-353; How to Watch Television: Becker, Glee/House Hunters
WED: Read: How to Watch Television: Miller, The Dick Van Dyke Show

Assessment:
• Quiz on chapter 8 part two (Blackboard)
• Discussion: Freaks and Geeks
• COLUMN DUE BY FRIDAY 12 NOON: Cultural Criticism

WEEK 15 (5/2)
Unit 13: Fans & Cult TV
MON: Read: How to Watch Television: 1. Scott, Battlestar Galactica; 2. Jenkins, Walking Dead
• Discussion: Fans and TV

COLUMN REWRITES DUE 5/11 11 am

*Notice to Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance 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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

*** Grade Appeal Process. Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.