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.

About the Professor: Ethan Thompson (Ph.D., University of Southern California) is the director of TV Family, a feature-length documentary, the author of Parody and Taste in Post-War American Television Culture, and the co-editor of the books Television History, The Peabody Archive, and Cultural Memory; How to Watch Television; and Satire TV: Politics and Comedy in the Post-Network Era. He spent the fall 2015 semester as a research and teaching fellow with the Peabody Awards program in Athens, Georgia.

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:

Also Required: One package of 3x5 notecards for essay & discussion responses.

Screenings: Our course time (12–1:50 MW) includes time for in-class screenings. You will need to draw upon additional screenings for course assignments. For this reason, subscription to Netflix and Hulu is recommended but not required. Also, be sure to sign up to be able to access Kanopy at tamu.ca. We will have a couple assigned screenings through this service free to students.

Evaluation: Since this is a criticism course, grades are primarily based on written assignments rather than exams. Detailed descriptions of the assignments will be given during the semester.

Columns: 4 @ 100 points each; 400 points total. About 700–1000 words each, with specific instructions for each.

- Column 1: (Re)Searching TV (100 points)
- Column 2: Pilot (100 points)
- Column 3: Style (100 points)
- Column 4: Cultural Criticism (100 points)


Quizzes: 10 points each: 100 points total, 10% of grade.

Peer review of columns: 100 points total, 10% of grade.

Essay Discussion Lead: 50 points, 5% of grade. Once during the semester you and a partner will be responsible for leading class discussion on an essay.

Essay Discussion Cards: 50 points total, 5% of grade. Respond to prompt and turn in card at beginning of class.

Attendance/Participation: 100 points total, 10% of grade.

Course Point Totals and Grades

900 – 1000 points = A
800 – 899 = B
700 – 799 = C
600 – 699 = D
599 and under = F

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!

Students are expected to:

- Take ownership of your education. It will not be handed to you. You must build it.
- 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.
- Come to class on-time. Do not get up and leave early.
- Participate in class discussions. In addition to the enlightening lectures, our goal during each class will be to have a lively, informed discussion.
- Be responsible for any information and materials missed when absent.
- 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.
- Proofread all work before turning it in. Really.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 to discuss their grades (good or bad) inside my classroom.
- 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

NOTE:
- All quizzes and final drafts of columns are due Friday before midnight unless otherwise noted.
- If we are constrained by time, I may require that you view lecture videos online prior to class.
- This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION TO TV STUDIES
1/14: First day of class
1/16: Read: *How to Watch Television*: Introduction
Assessment: Syllabus Quiz

WEEK 2: TV History & Structure
1/21: MLK Holiday
1/23: READ: Mittell Ch. 1
Assessment: Mittell Ch. 1 Quiz

WEEK 3 TV History & Structure, continued.
1/28: READ: *How to Watch Television*: Banks
1/30: READ: *How to Watch Television*: Kompere

WEEK 4 Programming Strategies
2/4 READ: Mittell, Ch. 2;
Assessments: Quiz: Mittell Ch. 2. COLUMN 1 DUE

WEEK 5 Cultural Criticism
2/11: READ: Mittell, Ch. 7
Assessment: Hendershot quiz

WEEK 6 Narrative Strategies (Pilot)
2/18: READ: Mittell, Ch. 6 to page 234
2/20: READ: Sconce, “Repetition with Difference” PDF
Assessments: Quiz: Mittell, Ch. 6 part one

**Week 7 Narrative Strategies (Drama Series)**
Assessments: COLUMN 2 DUE (Draft Wednesday, Final Friday)

**WEEK 8 Narrative Strategies (Comedy)**
3/4 READ: Mittell, Ch. 6, pp. 234–267; *How to Watch Television*: Mittell
3/6 READ: *How to Watch Television*: 1. Marcus, 2. Sconce
Assessments: Quiz: Mittell Ch. 6 part two

**WEEK 9 Modes of Production and Meaning**
3/18 READ: Mittell: Ch. 5; *How to Watch Television*: Butler
Assessments: Quiz: Mittell, Ch. 5

**WEEK 10 Nonfiction**
3/25 READ: Mittell: Ch. 3 & 4; *How to Watch Television*: 1. Baym & Gottert
Assessments: Quiz: Mittell Ch. 3 Quiz: Mittell Ch. 4, COLUMN 3 DUE (Draft Wednesday, Final Friday)

**WEEK 11 Race and Nation**
4/1 READ: Mittell, Ch. 8, pp. 305–329
Assessments: Quiz: Mittell, Ch. 8 part 1

**WEEK 12 Gender & Sexuality**
4/8 READ: Mittell: Ch. 8, 329–353; *How to Watch Television*: 1. Levine, 2. Amaya
Assessments: Quiz: Mittell Ch. 8 part 2

**WEEK 13 Fans & Cult TV**
4/17 COLUMN 4 PEER REVIEW
Assessments: COLUMN 4 DUE(Draft Wednesday, Final Friday)

**WEEK 14 Final Essay Preparation**
4/22: Essay Conferences
4/24: Essay Conferences
WEEK 15 Final Essay Peer Review
4/29 Draft of final essay due, peer review in class.
5/1 Peer review continued

Final Essay Due Day & Time of Final Exam

STATEMENTS:

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.

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.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. 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.

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.

Statement of Academic Continuity
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
Grade Appeals
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

Disabilities Accommodations
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.