

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

433.32 Television

3 credit hours

Fall 2010

Dr. Nicholas P. Greco

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Tuesday, 3:20-4:35; Friday, 3:20-4:35.

Office Hours: Tuesday, 8:30-11:00; Friday, 8:30-11:00 or by appointment.

SYLLABUS

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The main objective of this course is to critically explore the medium and content of television. This course is built on the basic assumption that television is a distinctive visual medium, one that is different from cinema and photography. The analysis of televisual media, as well as issues which arise from it, will make up the bulk of this course.

Over the course of the semester, we will watch a variety of television shows. Note that some might contain scenes of violence, language and scenes of sexuality, which some might find offensive. This course is not meant to be an exercise in polemics, but rather an opportunity to develop a sense of critical consumption.

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through participation in lectures, classroom discussion and completion of the course requirements:

1. The student will begin to understand the cultural role which television holds in Western society;
2. The student will learn basic theoretical tools with which to engage with the various types of television programming;
3. The student will understand consumers' viewing practices, or how an audience responds to the medium and content of television.

C. COURSE TEXTS

Required: *Television: The Critical View*. 7th Edition. Edited by Horace Newcombe. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2006.

D. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance, participation and reading of the course texts: It is only in the best interest of the student if he or she attends each class and, in fact, consistent attendance is required. Each student will be expected to read the assigned course texts and be prepared to contribute to a meaningful discussion based on those readings. It is on this participation that a portion of the final grade is based. Each student is expected to arrive to class promptly for its beginning.
2. Discussion Papers: Each student is required to write 1-page discussion papers on the television programs that will be shown in class. Each student must submit 10 of a possible 11 discussion papers, due at the beginning of the following class.
3. Group Project: Students will be divided into groups and required to film, edit and author a 30-second recruitment television commercial for Providence College. The advertisement must be submitted as a computer file (mpeg-4 preferred). The group must also present the advertisement to the class, accompanied by a short oral presentation detailing what was done and why. The group should also be prepared to enter into a discussion about their advertisement.
4. Major Paper: The major paper consists of an analysis of any television program that a student wishes, using a method, viewpoint or theoretical framework presented in the course. Papers which suggest “effects” of television will not be accepted. The paper should be 8 - 10 pages in length.
5. Final Exam: The final exam will consist of essay questions covering all of the material presented in the course from its beginning.

E. GRADING SUMMARY

Attendance/Participation:	10%
Discussion papers:	20%
Group Project:	20%
Major Paper:	20%
Final Exam:	30%

Excellent	A+	4.0	91-100	Satisfactory	C+	2.5	67-69	
	A		85-90		Adequate		C	63-66
	A-		80-84				C-	60-62
Very Good	B+	3.5	77-79	Marginal	D+	1.0	57-59	
	B		73-76				D	53-56
Good	B-	3.0	70-72		D-	0.0	50-52	
				Failure	F	0.0	<50	

F. COURSE POLICIES

Full text to the academic policies, procedures and regulations of Providence College can be found online in the Student Handbook (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/) and the College Academic Calendar (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/programs/registrars_office/calendar/).

1. Assignment Formatting: All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, using Times New Roman font (12-point only), with 1-inch margins on all four sides of the page. In addition, the text must be left-justified. Proper page numbering must be indicated on each page. Written assignments may be double-sided. The text should also be free of errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The paper should be stapled together at the top left corner, without any type of plastic or paper binding. **Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a loss of marks.**

2. Class Attendance Policy: Attendance is mandatory. Missing more than 5 classes **for any reason** will result in a failing grade in the course.

3. Late Assignment Policy: Assignments are due immediately at the beginning of class on the date on which they are due. Assignments not remitted at that time will be accepted by hand or in my mailbox with a 10% penalty only until 4:30pm on the day that the assignment is due. Any assignments turned in after 4:30pm of the due day will be accepted but will receive a grade of 0. As there will be no extensions granted for any assignments, please note their due dates.

4. Plagiarism: Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the Providence College document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing," in the Providence College Academic Formation Guide available in the Bookstore.

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5. Final Exam Policy: All requests to have a final exam rescheduled must be approved by the Academic Committee in accordance with the Examination General Regulations (available in the College Academic Calendar at http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/programs/registrar_office/calendar/).

6. Information and Communication Technologies in the Classroom: **Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to give their total attention to class activities.** Use of cell-phones or iPods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

This is a Communications and Media class. As such, the exploration of new communication technologies is encouraged. However, unauthorized use of laptops and other information and communication technologies in this class will not be tolerated.

G. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory <<http://www.jcrt.org>>

Journal of Religion and Popular Culture <<http://www.usask.ca/relst/jrpc/>>

Stream: Culture/Politics/Technology - A Graduate Journal of Communication
<<http://www.streamjournal.org/index.php/stream>>

Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies <<http://www.yorku.ca/topia/>>

H. COURSE OUTLINE

September 10:

Introduction; Television

Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip, Episode 1

History

September 14:

Horace Newcombe, "Television and the Present Climate of Criticism," 1-10.

Mark Alvey, "'Too Many Kids & Old Ladies': Quality Demographics and 1960s U.S. Television," 15-36.

September 17:

Aniko Bodroghkozy, "Negotiating Civil Rights in Prime Time: A Production & Reception History of CBS's *East Side/West Side*," 37-59.

Max Headroom, Episode 1 - "Blipverts"

September 21:

Marsha Casidy and Mimi White, "Innovating Women's Television in Local and National Networks: Ruth Lyons and Arlene Francis," 60-84.

Susan Murray, "Ethnic Masculinity and Early Television's Vaudeo Star," 85-105.

September 24:

Nathan Godfried, "Identity, Power, and Local Television: African Americans, Organized Labor, and UHF-TV in Chicago, 1962-1968," 106-127.

Felicity, Episode 1

Production

September 28:

Elana Levine, "Toward a Paradigm for Media Production Research: Behind the Scenes at *General Hospital*," 133-149.

Caroline-Isabelle Caron, "Translating Trek: Rewriting an American Icon in a Francophone Context," 150-184.

October 1:

Greg Siegel, "Double Vision: Large-Screen Video Display and Live Sports Spectacle," 185-206.
Arrested Development, Episodes 1 & 2

October 5:

Yeidy M. Rivero, "Erasing Blackness: The Media Construction of 'Race' in *Mi Familia*, the First Puerto Rican Situation Comedy with a Black Family," 207-222.

Amanda D. Lotz, "Textual (Im)Possibilities in the U.S. Post-Network Era: Negotiating Production and Promotion Processes on Lifetime's *Any Day Now*," 223-244.

October 8: **NO CLASSES - THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Programming

October 12:

Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed, "'Ah, Yes, I Remember it Well': Memory and Queer Culture in *Will and Grace*," 249-271.

Jason Mittell, "Cartoon Realism: Genre Mixing and the Cultural Life of *The Simpsons*," 272-291.

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October 15: **NO CLASS**

October 19:

Trevor Parry-Giles & Shawn J. Parry-Giles, “*The West Wing’s* Prime-Time Presidentiality: Mimesis & Catharsis in a Postmodern Romance,” 292-314.

Jane Arthurs, “Sex and the City and Consumer Culture: Remediating Postfeminist Drama,” 315-331.

October 22:

Sarah Banet-Weiser, “Girls Rule!: Gender, Feminism, and Nickelodeon,” 332-352.

Firefly, Episode 8 - “Out of Gas”

October 26:

Sheldon H. Lu, “Soap Opera in China: The Transnational Politics of Visuality, Sexuality, and Masculinity,” 353-374.

Silvio Waisbord, “McTV: Understanding the Global Popularity of Television Formats,” 375-396.

October 29:

John Corner, “Sounds Real: Music and Documentary,” 397-407.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Season 6, Episode 7 - “Once More, With Feeling”

Audiences

November 2:

Ron Lembo, “Components of a Viewing Culture,” 455-470.

Annette Hill, “Big Brother: The Real Audience,” 471-485.

November 5:

Matthew P. McAllister, “Television Advertising as Textual and Economic Systems,” *A Companion to Television*, Janet Wasko, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 217-237. **[ON RESERVE]**

Friends, Pilot and Season 3, Episode 2 - “The One Where No One’s Ready.”

November 9:

Antonio C. LaPastina, “Telenovela Reception in Rural Brazil: Gendered Readings and Sexual Mores,” 486-506.

Jocelyn Cullity and Prakash Younger, “Sex Appeal and Cultural Liberty: A Feminist Inquiry into MTV India,” 507-529.

November 12:

Kim Bjarkman, "To Have and To Hold: The Video Collector's Relationship with an Ethereal Medium," 530-555.

Lost, Episode 1

November 16:

David Buckingham, "A Special Audience? Children and Television," *A Companion to Television*, Janet Wasko, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 468-486. **[ON RESERVE]**

Horace Newcomb, "'This Is Not Al Dente': *The Sopranos* and the New Meaning of 'Television,'" 561-578.

Considering Television

November 19:

Deborah L. Jaramillo, "The Family Racket: AOL Time Warner, HBO, *The Sopranos*, and the Construction of a Quality Brand," 579-594.

Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog

MAJOR PAPER DUE

November 23: **FACULTY FORUM**

November 26:

John Hartley, "Television as Transmodern Teaching," 595-604.

Dateline Disneyland (excerpt)

November 30:

Elizabeth Jacka, "'Democracy as Defeat': The Impotence of Arguments for Public Service Broadcasting," 605-617.

Nicholas Garnham, "A Response to Elizabeth Jacka's 'Democracy as Defeat,'" 618-624.

December 3: **GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

December 7:

Roger Silverstone, "Regulation, Media Literacy, and Media Civics," 654-665.

Fawlty Towers, Episodes 1 & 2.

December 10:

Conclusions