"If you want to use television to teach somebody, you must first teach them how to use television.”
- Umberto Eco

In this course, we will examine the history, medium, and contemporary viewership of American television through a variety of critical lenses. We will screen a range of television genres and styles, employing a diverse range of perspectives to analyze the ways television speaks for and to American culture. In other words, we will think critically about the ways in which television both reflects and shapes representations of American identity. What does television tell us about our history? Our hopes? Our anxieties? Our values? How is television changing today and why? **This course fulfills the GEC Second Writing Course and Social Diversity requirements.**

**LEARNING GOALS:**

1. Students will examine how television shows are created and produced, the social context within which audiences gather, and the role that television plays within American culture.

2. Students will gain a deeper understanding of how Americans have regarded themselves in the past, and how current images projected through television help to shape our perceptions of our place in American society.

3. Students will develop and use critical tools for thinking about diversity, entertainment, and power relations between historically dominant and marginalized groups in the United States.

4. Students will develop and refine writing techniques and skills.

**GENERAL EDUCATION:**

*Social Diversity in the United States*

**GOALS:** Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

**Expected Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students describe and evaluate the roles of such categories as race, gender and sexuality, disability, class, ethnicity and religion in the pluralistic institutions and cultures of the United States.

2. Students recognize the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values regarding appreciation, tolerance, and equality of others.
Writing and Communication 2

GOALS: Students are skilled in written communication and expression, reading, critical thinking, oral expression and visual expression.

Expected Learning Outcomes:
1. Through critical analysis, discussion, and writing, students extend the ability to read carefully and express ideas effectively.
2. Students apply written, oral, and visual communication skills and conventions of academic discourse to the challenges of a specific discipline.
3. Students access and use information critically and analytically.

TEACHING METHOD: This course will include lecture, discussions, in-class activities, and television viewing.

REQUIRED TEXTS: (available through all campus bookstores or for purchase online)
- Streaming subscriptions for Netflix and Hulu.
- All additional assigned reading will be available via Carmen.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: Attendance and Active Participation are required. Each unexcused absence will result in the loss of attendance and participation points for the day. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in an additional deduction of a third of a letter grade [a B+ would become a B, a B would become a B-]. In order to earn full participation points, come to class on time, stay engaged, ask questions, offer your perspective, and participate fully in discussions and collaborative assignments. Examples of behavior that will negatively impact your grade: sleeping, wearing headphones, texting/using social media (yes, I see you), doing homework for other classes.

LAPTOP AND MOBILE DEVICE POLICY: Practice professional courtesy and silence cell phones during class. If you need to keep your phone on for work or family reasons, just let me know. Because of the ease of distraction when using on laptops or tablets, I ask that you take notes for our class on paper.

LATE POLICY: Arriving after roll call is considered late. If you have an extenuating circumstance that you expect will impact your ability to arrive on time to class, let me know ahead of time so that we can discuss—this includes if your classes are tightly scheduled. If you arrive after attendance is taken, you are responsible for checking in with me after class to make sure your attendance is recorded. If you arrive after a pop quiz has been administered, you will not be allowed to make up the quiz without a legitimate excuse. Arriving more than 15 minutes late is considered absent.

LATE OR MAKE-UP WORK: Will not be accepted without documentation of a legitimate excuse (i.e. medical, family, military, academic event). Questions about what constitutes appropriate documentation should be directed toward the instructor.

COMMUNICATION: Each of us is responsible for checking and responding promptly to emails. Correspondence will be through your official OSU email account and/or announcements via Carmen. As members of a world-class university, each of us is expected to communicate with professionalism and respect amongst each other and with me. For tips on writing stellar emails to your professors, check here: http://bit.ly/2hYtT5F

In the unlikely event of class cancellation due to emergency, I will contact you via e-mail and request that a note on be placed on the door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.
ASSIGNMENTS:
ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED, 12 POINT TIMES NEW ROMAN, WITH 1-INCH MARGINS, AND FOLLOW MLA STYLE GUIDELINES. UNLESS NOTED, WORK IS DUE VIA CARMEN BY THE START OF CLASS.

Pop quizzes: Over the course of the semester, there will be pop quizzes based on your assigned reading/viewings. Tips: Read for the big ideas, central points, and perspectives. Be an active viewer. Take notes.

Spotlight Presentation: In groups of 3-4, each student will develop and present a historical and cultural research project on an assigned television show over the course of the semester. Each member of the group must contribute equally to the project, which includes: 1) Production history, 2) Social/historical context, 3) Themes/style, 4) Influence on television and culture, 5) A 3-5 minute clip from the show that offers the class a good example of the show’s style and significance, 6) 1-page polished hand-out including a Works Cited in MLA format (3-5 sources, not including Wikipedia; must have at least two sources found through University library resources), and 7) a well-designed PowerPoint with minimal text. The total presentation should last between 20-25 minutes, including the clip. I will offer an in-class demo, template, and grading rubric.

- Paper 1: Formal analysis (500 words). Select a show of your choice and watch one episode. Write an essay about how the formal choices—the show’s use of sound and image—inform the mood and tone of the episode. This is not a report, but a persuasive essay. Assume your reader is not familiar with the show: Your first paragraph should introduce the subject or main themes of the show, and include the case you are making for how form supports the mood and tone (i.e., a thesis statement). The body of the essay should use the vocabulary from class/reading to describe the show’s techniques, supporting your argument. Include at least three specific examples from your chosen episode to illustrate these points. End with a conclusion paragraph. For tips on writing a good conclusion, look here: http://bit.ly/1GhmSgu

- Paper 2: Critical analysis (750 words). Now expand beyond form to write your critical take on an episode of a show we’ve watched in class. This essay must consider the form, narrative structure, character types, and genre expectations that are used to convey meaning. What message do you think this episode is sending? How do the different components we’ve studied help to do this—or not? (Are there any conflicting signals being sent?) Get below the surface. Consider what the sum of the many parts of the episode have to communicate. Your essay must include in-depth analysis of at least 3 important dramatic or audio/visual moments in the episode.

- Midterm: Written take-home; will open one week in advance.

- Final Exam: Online. Short answer/multiple choice/short essay.

FINAL PAPER PROJECT: You will write a 1900-2100 word paper analyzing and assessing an aspect of American culture as represented on television. This paper must include:

1) deployment of two critical lenses (form, narrative, genre, rhetoric, culture);

2) analysis of one or more key categories of identity (race/ethnicity; gender; sexuality; class; religion; [dis]ability);

3) a minimum of two sources that further, challenge, and/or expand your point, or can be used to set up your own perspective (academic journals, quality journalism or reviews, historical research, Nielsen ratings, census data/demographics, published interviews, meaningful trends on social media, etc.);
4) a close reading of sections of one or two episodes from a television show (or shows) that allow you to demonstrate your analysis. These must be episodes not already covered in class;

5) an original point and/or observation. Remember that there are almost always MORE than two perspectives on any issue.

- Rough Draft pt 1: Write a minimum of 500 words towards your final paper. This draft should offer a clear focus, sense of organization/structure, and a methodology. (Example thesis: “In this paper, I will compare episodes of the police procedural drama Law & Order to news coverage in order to consider the surprising nuance with which scripted television represented the reality of urban violence in the early 1990s.”)

- Rough Draft pt 2: Revise and expand your rough draft to 1000 words using feedback from me and further developing your ideas.

- Final Draft: Revise your second draft using feedback from your instructor and further development of your ideas. All required elements of this assignment (see above) must be present in order to receive full credit. See final paper rubric for evaluation criteria for this assignment. This paper must be 1900-2100 words in length and be formatted using guidelines as listed in syllabus.

GRADING:

Attendance + Participation ......................... 10pts
Pop Quizzes .............................................. 10pts
Spotlight Presentation .................................. 10pts
Paper 1 ....................................................... 5pts
Paper 2 ....................................................... 10pts
Rough Draft pt 1 ......................................... 5pts
Rough Draft pt 2 ......................................... 10pts
Final Paper ............................................... 20pts
Midterm ..................................................... 10pts
Final Exam ................................................ 10pts
Total ...................................................... 100pts

Grading Breakdown:
A  94-100  B  84-86.9  C  74-76.9  D  64-66.9
A-  90-93.9  B-  80-83.9  C-  70-73.9  D-  60-63.9
B+  87-89.9  C+  77-79.9  D+  67-69.9  E  0-59.9

Grading Criteria:
Core criteria for the evaluation of written work in the course include:
- Insight and quality of ideas: scope and depth of analysis; persuasive support and development of argument.
- Thoroughness: depth of research and evaluation of findings.
- Basic clarity: grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, proofreading.

THE WRITING CENTER offers these free services to members of the OSU community:
- Help with any assignment (ranging from lab reports to dissertations) at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming, thesis development, revising, etc.).
- Face-to-face, 50 minute tutorials by appointment at their main location in 4120A Smith Labs, Monday through Friday!
- Online tutoring sessions via CarmenConnect by appointment.
• Walk in appointments at two satellite locations:
  • Smith-Steeb dorms, Monday-Wednesday, 7-9PM.
  • Thompson library 1st floor, Monday-Thursday, 11AM-3PM and 5-7PM.
• Online appointment scheduling, available 24/7: visit [http://cstw.osu.edu](http://cstw.osu.edu) or call 688-4291

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc](http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc)).

Students with documented disabilities who have registered with the **Office of Student Life Disability Services** will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. SLDS is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave; Tel.: 614-292-3307; VRS: 614-429-1334; Email: slds@osu.edu; Web: slds.osu.edu.

**TITLE IX POLICY:** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race, sexual orientation). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at [http://titleix.osu.edu](http://titleix.osu.edu) or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu.

It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, please know that in my role at OSU I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct with the University’s Title IX Office.

If I can be of assistance in helping you to make a report and/or in finding campus and community resources, please let me know. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting Counseling & Consultation Services at (614) 292-5766 or the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio’s (SARNCO) 24-hour helpline at (614) 267-7020.

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY:** The OSU Safe Ride Program is available after 7PM by dialing 292-3322.

**FEELING STRESSED? NEED HELP OR SOMEONE TO TALK TO?**
Here are some resources available on campus:
- OSU Counseling & Consultation Services: Younkin Success Center (4th floor), 614-292-4527
- OSU Student Wellness: RM B130 RPAC, 614-292-4527
- OSU Student Advocacy: 1120 Lincoln Tower, 614-292-4527
And finally...  **A NOTE ON CONTENT:** Some material in this course may be sensitive or even offensive to individuals in this class. Our job as scholars and thinkers is to challenge ourselves with complex content while being mindful of the experiences of others. To this end, we will approach all material with care and respect, while thinking critically about the ways in which Americans tell stories on television.

Some contents of this course may involve media that may be triggering to some students due to descriptions of and/or scenes depicting acts of violence, acts of war, or sexual violence and its aftermath. If needed, please know that you can speak with me privately, step out of the classroom for a moment, debrief with a friend, contact Counseling and Consultation Services (614-292-5766), or contact Student Life Disability Services (614-292-3307).

While it is inherently impossible to make any public space completely “safe,” there are things we can commit to in order to best care for our classroom and campus communities. Working towards safety does not mean that we aren’t interested in engaging with difficult, complex material or that we are afraid to talk with depth and authenticity as we develop our thinking around tough topics. Working towards safety does mean that we create an environment in which we’ve made it possible to lean into complexity and to be intellectually and creatively daring because we’ve committed to looking out for one another in our shared communal space of learning. A “safe” classroom won’t always be an easy classroom, but it should be a place where we model respect, generosity of spirit, and curiosity about different perspectives and experiences. I encourage you to look for opportunities to learn, to speak with both care and confidence, and to imagine one another complexly.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Readings and viewings should be completed prior to class meeting.

University calendar: [http://registrar.osu.edu/staff/bigcalsem.asp](http://registrar.osu.edu/staff/bigcalsem.asp)

*The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments/changes to the syllabus as needed throughout the semester. Notice will be given and any changes will be made to benefit students.*

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**Week 1**

**Tues, Aug, 21**
Introduction to class; syllabus.

**Thurs, Aug. 23**
The Work of the Critic: Making TV strange

*Podcast due: [This American Life, “What I Learned from Television,” ep 328, 59min.](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/content/episode/328)*

*Reading due: O’Donnell: Introduction & ch 1 (pp 1-7; 11-25)*

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**Week 2**

**Tues, Aug 28**
A Brief (very) History of Television

*Reading due: They Say/I Say: “They Say: Starting with What Others Are Saying” (Carmen)*

*Spotlight example: TBA ASSIGN SPOTLIGHT #1 PRESENTATION*

**Thurs, Aug 30**
The Formal Techniques of Television: Creating mood and tone

*Viewing due: How I Met Your Mother [S1, E4; Hulu ] + Louie [S3, E4; Carmen]*

*Reading due: O’Donnell ch 3 (pp 57-75)
**Week 3**

**Tues. Sept. 4**
The Basics of Representation
Reading due: O'Donnell ch 7 (pp 157-174)
**ASSIGN SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #2**
Viewing due: Friday Night Lights [S1, E4, Netflix]
**ASSIGN SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #2**
Assignment due: Paper 1

**Thurs. Sept 6**
NO CLASS MEETING

**Week 4**

**Tues. Sept. 11**
Narrative Structures + Meanings
Reading due: O'Donnell ch 4 (pp 77-89)
**SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #1 DUE**
Viewing due: Friends [S1, E3, Netflix]; Fargo [S1, E1, Hulu]
**ASSIGN SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #3**

**Thurs. Sept. 13**
Character Types and Archetypes
Reading due: Parker, “The Ninja Cure for Anxiety”
O'Donnell ch 4 (pp 89-98)
Viewing due: American Grit [S1, E1, D/L ]; Strong [clips: “The First Challenge: Picking a Trainer” and “Heavy Competition,” Hulu];

**Week 5**

**Tues. Sept. 18**
Genre, Hybrids, and the Power of Formula
Reading due: O'Donnell ch 5 (pp. 99-129)
**SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #2 DUE**
Cobb, “Working-Class Heroes”
**ASSIGN SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #4**
Tillet, “What TV Says About Race and Money”
Viewing due: All in the Family [S1, E12, YouTube]; TBA

**Thurs. Sept. 20**
Cross-Genre study
Viewing due: Monk S2, E6 [Carmen] _The Joel McHale Show_ Ep TBA [Netflex]

**Week 6**

**Tues. Sept. 25**
Introduction to Rhetoric
Reading Due: O'Donnell 1st half of ch 6 (pp. 133-143)
**SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #3 DUE**
Hopkins, “How a TV Sitcom Triggered the Downfall of Western Civilization”
**ASSIGN SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #5**
Satire and its discontents

**Paper 2**

Revisionist History, “The Satire Paradox,” episode 10 (37min)

*Saturday Night Live [S41, E4 + clips: “Donald Trump vs. Hillary Clinton Debate Cold Open,” Police Squad [S1, E1 & 2, Youtube]*

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**Week 7**

**Tues. Oct 2**

Introduction to Cultural Studies: Power, Ideology, Encoding/Decoding

*MIDTERM OPENS 2:05PM*

Reading Due:

O’Donnell 2nd half ch 6 (143-153)

Viewing due:

Black Mirror [S3, E1, Netflix]

**Thurs. Oct 4**

In-class analysis: The Good Place

Viewing due:

The Good Place [S1, E1 & 2, Hulu]

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**Week 8**

**Tues Oct 9**

*MIDTERM CLOSES 2:05PM*

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**THURSDAY OCT. 11 - AUTUMN BREAK - NO CLASS**

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**Week 9**

**Tues. Oct 16**

Patriarchy and the Feminist Lens

Reading due:

hooks, Feminism is for Everyone, chapters 1, 3, 11, 12 (Carmen)

Viewing due:

Orange is the New Black [S1, E1 & 2, Netflix]

**Thurs. Oct 18**

Sexual Identities

Reading due:

Marcus, “Queer Theory for Everyone” (Carmen)

Viewing due:

Glee [S2, E15, Netflix]; How to Get Away with Murder [S1, E2, Netflix]

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**Week 10**

**Tues. Oct 23**

Assignment due: Rough draft pt 1: 2 pages

Rough draft meetings

**Thurs. Oct 25**

Rough draft meetings
Week 11

Tues. Oct 30
Understanding Postmodernism

SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #6 DUE
ASSIGN SPOTLIGHT #8 PRESENTATION

Reading due: O’Donnell ch 8 (pp 177-189)
Viewing due: Jane the Virgin [S1, E6, Netflix]

Thurs. Nov. 1
Case Study: Science Fiction on TV
Star Trek [S1, E12 & 13, Netflix]

Week 12

Tues. Nov 6
Assignment due: Rough Draft Pt 2: development
Rough Draft Pt 2 Meetings

Thurs. Nov. 8
Rough Draft Pt 2 Meetings

Week 13:

Tues. Nov 13
Case Study: The Classic American Sitcom
I Love Lucy [S2, E4, Hulu]; The Dick Van Dyke Show [S1, E20, Netflix]
The Mary Tyler Moore Show [S6, E7, Dailymotion]

SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #7 DUE

Thurs. Nov. 15
Case study: The Iconography of America
Route 66 [S1, E1, Hulu]; Dragnet [S1, E1, Hulu]

SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATION #8 DUE

Week 14

Tues. Nov 20
Final Paper Ongoing Guidance Meeting (by request only)

11/22 THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASS

Week 15

Tues. Nov 27
TV's Identity Crisis: Robocop, Television, and Subjectivity

Thurs. Nov 29
The Future of Television
Assignment due: Final Paper

Week 16

Tues Dec 4
Class Wrap-up/Review - Evaluations

CLASS FINAL: TBA