

**CTCS 191: Introduction to Television and Video**  
USC School of Cinematic Arts  
Spring 2008

Instructor: Dr. Miranda Banks  
Lecture: Wednesdays 2 p.m. – 4:50 p.m., Norris Aud.  
Section: 5 p.m. – 5:50 p.m. after lecture/screening  
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Office: Lucas 409 (213) 740-3334  
Office hours: Wednesdays 12:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

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**Required Texts:**

Butler, *Television: Critical Methods and Applications*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.  
Course Reader (CR): Available at Magic Machine.

**Optional Text:** Bernadette Casey et. al., *Television Studies: The Key Concepts*

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**Course Overview:**

This course examines the programming, industrial structure, audiences, and social and cultural significance of American television. Explicit in this approach is the belief that television form and television style matter. We will begin taking television seriously in an effort to become more critically aware viewers and consumers. You will be required to read challenging essays that explore television through a variety of critical lenses and approaches. Our focus will be on the fundamentals of television analysis and criticism: narrative structure; genre; representations of race, class, and gender; style and aesthetics; political economy; historical development; technological transformations; and the relationship of television to other media.

While this class is technically an introduction, it is quite challenging. Remember, while we are analyzing entertainment, this is an academic course. For this class you will be expected to produce persuasive, clearly argued, and insightful university-level papers. You will be engaging with complex ideas and sophisticated arguments, and you will necessarily refine your own critical thinking and writing skills in the process. Therefore, you must keep up with assignments and come prepared each week for lecture and section.

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<b>Grading Breakdown:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>	<b>Due Date:</b>
Participation	10%	
Essay One	15%	2/20
Midterm Exam	20%	3/12
Essay Two	25%	4/23 (topics due on 3/26)
Final Exam	30%	5/12

**All assignments and exams must be completed in order to receive a final grade in this course. Failure to do so will result in an F for the course.**

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## **Course Requirements:**

### Participation:

Participation comprises 10% of your course grade. You are *required* to be on time and in class for each lecture and section. Attendance will be taken every week in section, and if we see attendance slipping in lecture, we will take attendance. Excused absences are only those that are documented medical or family emergencies; all other absences will affect your participation grade as determined by your TA. This portion of your grade may also include quizzes depending on how well you are keeping up. Come each week ready to discuss the assigned readings and bring in any questions you may have related to the week's material.

### Essay Assignments:

All papers must be handed in on time. Late papers will only be accepted in cases of emergency or prolonged illness with official documentation. Late work without documentation will be penalized one-third of a grade each day beyond the deadline (i.e., an A paper turned in two days late would be given a B+). Paper topics and guidelines will be distributed in a separate handout.

#### Essay One: The Television Experience

This first paper will be an analysis of your observations taken from watching people watch television and of your interviews with people about their television viewing habits. You will compare and contrast your own observations and interviewing experiences to those assessments and arguments made about reception by the scholars we have been reading in class. This five-page paper must be a typed, double-spaced, analytical essay. **Due Week Six.**

#### Essay Two: Close Analysis

This essay will be more rigorous paper, which will analyze one of the course topics in-depth using the critical tools and approaches we have discussed this semester. Paper topics and guidelines will be distributed in a separate handout. You must have your paper topic approved by your section instructor. This seven page paper must be a typed, double-spaced, analytical term paper with a minimum of three references from the course readings. **Due Week Sixteen.**

### Midterm and Final Exam:

The midterm and final will be essay and identification questions relating to the readings, lectures and class screenings. The midterm will be held in class week nine and the final will be held on **May 12th**. **There are no make-up exams and there will be no incompletes given in this class.**

### Blackboard:

I will use the blackboard site (<https://www.blackboard.usc.edu>) for this class to post announcements, assignments, and articles that we will discuss in class. Please check it at least once a week and again on the day of class to be up to date on all course materials. We also use blackboard to post grades at the end of the semester. Be sure you have an email account linked up with blackboard so class emails will reach you.

### Attendance:

Because this course only meets once a week, it is required that you attend every course meeting. Please arrive on time and expect to stay for the entire class period. Attending class means that both your body and your mind are present: turn off your cell phones, do not disrupt other students' learning by talking needlessly to those around you, and do not play on your computers, listen to your iPod, etc. If you do any of these things, you will be asked to leave—and the incident will be noted by your TA and will be

reflected in your participation grade. If it is found that students are using computers for other activities besides note-taking, computers will be banned from lecture and/or section.

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### **Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism—derived from the Latin word for “kidnapper”—is more than simply taking the *words* of others and presenting them as your own; it is also taking the *ideas* of others and presenting them as your own. If you use another author’s words or ideas, you must cite them in proper MLA format. I will distribute a handout on how to properly cite another author’s work.

USC does not tolerate plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form. Plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one instructor or a paper authored by anyone other than yourself violates official policy. All suspected cases are automatically turned over to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action and can result in the failure of the course and/or dismissal from the University. Please consult your SCAMPUS for an outline of the rules and regulations regarding academic integrity.

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### **Students With Disabilities:**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services & Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered to the professor or the TA as early in the semester as possible. TAs will sign these forms for students to return to the DSP. **Late delivery of this information can prevent scheduling alternative locations for exams.** DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday—Friday. Their phone number is 740-0776.

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*NB: Schedule is subject to change pending availability of DVDs and videos. Students are responsible for keeping up with all schedule/assignment changes announced in class.*

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **PART ONE: SELLING AUDIENCES TO ADVERTISERS**

Week One: 1/16 Taking TV Seriously: Media Literacy and TV Criticism

Screenings: *Honeymooners, I Love Lucy, 30 Rock, Sports Night*

Week Two: 1/23 The Sponsor: TV Advertising & Programming Strategies

Screenings: *Queen for a Day, Queer Eye for the Straight Guy, Project Runway, Mad Men, commercials*

Readings: CR: Turow, “Targeting a New World”

CR: Boddy, “Redefining the Home Screen”

Butler: 363-412

Week Three: 1/30 Genre: From Melodrama to “Reality” TV

Guest Lecture: Mary Jeanne Wilson

Screenings: *Dallas, The O.C., 24, General Hospital*

Readings: CR: Raphael, “The Political Economics of Reali-TV”

CR: Thorburn, “Television Melodrama”

CR: Johnson, “Watching TV Makes You Smarter”

Butler: 33-47, 430-436



## **PART TWO: RECEPTION AND REPRESENTATION**

Week Four: 2/6 Reception at Home and Beyond  
Screenings: “The Remote Control”, *Oprah*, *The Daily Show*  
Readings: CR: Newcomb & Hirsch, “Television as a Cultural Forum”  
CR: Morley, “Television and Gender”  
Butler: 3-17

Week Five: 2/13 Demographics and Fan Communities  
Screenings: *Saturday Night Live*, Fan vids, *Powerpuff Girls*, *American Idol*  
Readings: CR: Hills, “Defining Cult TV”  
CR: Jenkins, “*Star Trek*: Rerun, Reread, Rewritten”



### **PAPER ONE DUE AT THE START OF CLASS WEEK SIX (2/20)**

Week Six: 2/20 Multiculturalism on TV – Race & Ethnicity  
Screenings: *Cosby Show*, *All in the Family*, *Survivor*, *30 Days*, *Color Adjustment*  
Readings: CR: Grey, “The Politics of Representation in Network Television”  
Butler: 459-462

Week Seven: 2/27 Gender and Sexuality  
Guest Lecturer: Candace Moore  
Screenings: *Bewitched*, *Mary Tyler Moore*, *Ellen*  
Readings: CR: McCarthy, “*Ellen*: Making Queer Television History”  
CR: Negra, “Quality Postfeminism? Sex and the Single Girl on HBO”  
Butler: 454-459

## **PART THREE: THE NATIONAL AND THE GLOBAL**

Week Eight: 3/5 Television News and Politics  
Screenings: *CNN Election 2000*, Watergate coverage, *Outfoxed*, *See it Now*, political ads  
Readings: CR: Aday, Livingston, and Hebert, “Embedding the Truth”  
Butler: 99-107

Week Nine: 3/12 **MIDTERM**

Week Ten: **SPRING BREAK!**

### **TOPICS FOR PAPER TWO DUE AT START OF CLASS WEEK ELEVEN (3/26)**

Week Eleven: 3/26 Global Television and the Nation  
Screenings: *The Office* (BBC & NBC), *Ugly Betty*, Globalization clips  
Readings: CR: Hilmes, “Cable, Satellite, and Digital Technologies”  
CR: Havens, “Globalization and the Generic Transformation of *Telenovelas*”  
CR: Ackass & McCabe, “Not So *Ugly*”

## **PART FOUR: PRODUCTION CULTURES AND PROGRAMMING**

### Week Twelve: 3/26 Regulation and Production – Government & Labor in TV Production

Screenings: *Next Top Model Strike, Who Needs Sleep trailer, Homicide, Anatomy of a Homicide*

Readings: CR: Holt, “Vertical Vision”

Butler: 195-202, 216-221

### Week Thirteen: 4/2 Authorship and Style on Television

Screenings: *Miami Vice, Pee-Wee’s Playhouse, Freaks and Geeks*

Readings: CR: Caldwell, “Excessive Style”

Butler: 429-430

### Week Fourteen: 4/9 The Network – Programming and Branding Strategies

Screenings: Network branding promos, *Seinfeld, The Sopranos*

Readings: CR: Sandler, “Synergy Nirvana”

CR: Anderson, “Creating the Twenty-First Century Television Network”

Butler: 273-275

## **PART FIVE: TELEVISION AFTER TV**

### Week Fifteen: 4/16 Genres Revisited

Screenings: *Cop Rock, Scrubs, Veronica Mars*

Readings: CR: Mittell, “Cartoon Realism”

CR: Newcomb, “This is Not *Al Dente*”

## **PAPER TWO DUE AT THE START OF CLASS WEEK SIXTEEN (2/23)**

### Week Sixteen: 4/23 The Future of Television – Where to do we go from here?

Screenings: *Al Jazeera, Arrested Development, 30 Rock*, Other shows to be determined...

Readings: CR: Spigel, “Entertainment Wars”

**FINAL EXAM: MONDAY MAY 12<sup>TH</sup> 2PM – 4PM**

