COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:
Since television burst on the American scene in the mid twentieth century, it has arguably been the defining medium of its day. It was embraced with remarkable rapidity by the populace, now defined as viewers, who found themselves spending a huge amount of time in front of their sets. As television captivated the public's imagination, it had tremendous effects on almost every aspect of American life, from politics to sports, from journalism to entertainment. It forced the American people to redefine who they were.

And from the beginning this medium was dominated by the television networks that created broadcasting as a centralized system beaming out programs in a one-to-many model that survives to this day. Television’s consumers had their choice of what was offered to them when it was offered, from a very limited number of gatekeepers.

For many years now that broadcasting model has been threatened by new developments in technology and delivery systems. As early as the 1970s, the networks were regarded in some quarters as dinosaurs whose time was quickly passing. And change has been a staple of the television scene. The coming of cable networks, VCRs, satellite TV, video games, DVDs, VOD, DVRs and other threatening sets of initials all made their marks on the ways that viewers received and interacted with television. And towards the end of the century, many thought the knock-out blow for the networks and the old model was at hand. The digital age appeared poised to supplant the old media model, with the internet displacing broadcasting, and for some, good riddance.

Now we are a little ways into a new millennium, and that has not happened.

In the world of television, these are head-spinning times. For big media companies, things are great. Media ownership is more concentrated than ever, and the big guys
cannot wait to get their content onto every conceivable media platform. Dollars should be flowing in from everywhere. But. For big media companies, things are awful. More than ever, the internet model has the aura of inevitability, and everyone is desperate to figure out how to make money in an internet-centric, viewer-more-in-control world. Content may be king, as so many proclaim, but who is going to pay for it—and how?

Broadcasters need not look far to see other content kings whose kingdoms are in full retreat.

Television on the Brink will look at the historical model for television broadcasting, and consider how it has survived to this day. **This overview will incorporate one of the most surprising facts of all—that even in this age of surfing and gaming, facebook and tweeting, people are watching more television than ever.**

And then this course will step up to the present and explore the myriad ways that television is trying to reinvent itself, at a time when radical change seems potentially more imminent than ever before. With input from industry professionals, we will look for a way forward for this remarkably resilient medium that to this day plays a very big part in the lives of so many of its viewers. How and where will programs/content be made available? How much control will content consumers, as opposed to big media, have as they schedule their viewing? How will dollars flow upstream to keep the professionally-produced content coming for the fans who crave it? And amidst constantly shifting alliances, and new developments announced almost daily, who will be making the decisions that will ultimately answer these questions?

**ABOUT THE PROFESSORS:**
Lisa Vebber currently serves as Senior Vice President of Primetime Scheduling at the NBC television network. In that capacity, she also has responsibilities in the area of program acquisitions across multiple platforms within the NBC Universal family of channels. Previously she has held positions in programming, planning and research at G4, Disney, Sony, and Warner Brothers. Lisa did her undergraduate studies at Pepperdine University, and she holds an MA in Communications from the Annenberg School at USC.

Ted Frank is also a veteran of the television wars, having recently completed 34 years with NBC. During his tenure with the network, he has been head of program research, scheduling and current scripted programs. In 2004 he was named Executive Vice President Current Series, and the next year became EVP Entertainment Strategy and Programs. Ted did his undergraduate studies at Princeton University, and he holds an MA in Communications from the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania.

With over 50 years of combined television industry experience, these grizzled veterans will share their insights of the past, present and future of television.
GRADING:
Class Participation 10%
Group Project & Presentation 25%
Individual Paper (4-5 pages) 15%
Case Study Paper #1 (1-2 pages) 10%
Case Study Paper #2 (1-2 pages) 10%
Case Study Paper #3 (1-2 pages) 10%
Take Home Exam 20%

ASSIGNMENTS:

Group Project: Broadcast Network Upfront
- Each group will be assigned a broadcast network, and will create and present a Fall 2012 primetime schedule based on parameters provided by the Professors. Some class time will be allocated for groups to work together on their presentations.

Individual paper: After the group presentations have been completed, each student will submit a 4-5 page paper either critiquing one of the other group’s scheduling decisions, or if they did not agree with their own group’s final decisions – they may provide their personal opinion of what choices they would have made.

3 Case Study Assignments: The Professors will provide questions with each case study. Students will answer in 1-2 pages and e-mail papers to the Professors by 6pm on the due date. We will discuss the case studies in class, so no late papers will be accepted. Case Studies will be provided in the Course Reader.

Take Home Exam: Students will have one week to complete a take home exam consisting of essay questions. Plan on 4-5 pages total.

COURSE MATERIALS:
Required Books:
CMGT 574 Course Reader


Lotz, Amanda  The Television Will Be Revolutionized (2007)

Other recommended reading:
Carter, Bill  Desperate Networks (2006)
Various media websites, current articles, etc. as discussed, recommended or assigned in class
Late assignments/Emergencies: No late assignments will be accepted. If you have a legitimate and verifiable emergency that makes it impossible to turn in your assignment on time you must: (1) email us before the beginning of class the day the assignment is due to notify us of your emergency, (2) provide official proof (doctor’s note or other evidence) and (3) arrange to email the assignment at a time to be determined.

Statement for Students with disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to us as early in the semester as possible. DSP can be found in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity
USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11:00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/.

All work you submit must be your own and you may not inappropriately assist other students in their work beyond the confines of a particular assignment. There is a no-tolerance policy for academic misconduct in this course! The minimum penalty for academic misconduct will be a failing grade (F) for the course – further academic and disciplinary penalties may be assessed.

Class Schedule:

Classes will consist of lectures, discussions and appearances by guest speakers. Because of the need for flexibility in scheduling of guest speakers, there will be some fluidity in the class schedule. The schedule provided below will provide you with an approximation of the layout of the class. Names of guest speakers are not included at this time; previous classes have featured speakers like Kelly Kahl, Senior Executive Vice President, Primetime, CBS; Marc Graboff, President of West Coast Operations, NBC Universal; John Landgraf, President FX Network, and Cindy Holland, Vice President, Content Acquisition for Netflix.
Week 1 (January 11): Course Overview; Background on Broadcast, Cable & Satellite TV; Big Media Companies

Reading: Business of TV, Intro, Chapters 1-4; Chapters 18-20

Week 2 (January 18): Discussion of the “Upfront” Assignment which will be due in the final weeks of the course; Establishment of groups for the assignment; the Programming business; Cable vs. Broadcast

Reading: Business of TV: Chapters 16-17, 28, 30-31, 37-40

Week 3 (January 25): Screening of a sample “Upfront” presentation; Audience Measurement and Scheduling 101

Reading: Business of TV: Chapters 9-13, 21, 50

Week 4 (February 1): CW Case Study; the CW perspective; CW/Netflix deal; GUEST SPEAKER TBD

Reading: CW Case Study

**First Case Study paper due**

Week 5 (February 8): The Program Executive perspective; what program executives do; GUEST SPEAKER TBD

Reading: Lotz: Intro, Chapters 1-3

Week 6 (February 15): The Big Cable perspective; Cord-cutting; the alternatives as a threat to cable and satellite; VOD; TV Everywhere; GUEST SPEAKER TBD

Reading: Lotz: Chapters 4-6

Week 7 (February 22): The Broadcast Network perspective; business affairs, deals; the daunting economics; GUEST SPEAKER TBD

Reading: Lotz: Chapter 7, Conclusion

Week 8 (February 29): Netflix Case Study/TIVO Case Study; Premium Cable vs. Netflix; the Pay Cable Perspective; controlling content; GUEST SPEAKER TBD

Reading: Netflix and TIVO Case Studies

**Second Case Study paper due**
Week 9 (March 7): Fox Entertainment President Kevin Reilly Case Study (no paper due on this case study); the FOX perspective; GUEST SPEAKER—Kevin Reilly (exception to the no-guest-speaker-names-in-the-schedule policy…)

Reading: Kevin Reilly Case Study

March 14—SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (March 21): HULU Case Study/YouTube Case Study; The Other Guys perspective; competitors for Netflix; the Long Tail; GUEST SPEAKER TBD

Reading: HULU and YouTube Case Studies

Third Case Study paper due

Week 11 (March 28): The Basic Cable Network Perspective; Cable scheduling, acquisitions and branding; GUEST SPEAKER TBD

Reading: None

Week 12 (April 4): UPFRONT PRESENTATIONS

Week 13 (April 11): Upfront Presentations (make-up if necessary); the Marketing Perspective; GUEST SPEAKER TBD

Week 14 (April 18): Classroom discussion of the upfronts, group by group; Overview discussion

Upfront Individual papers due

Week 15 (April 25): The Future of Content; the Future of us all; The Career Perspective; GUEST SPEAKERS TBD

Final exam distributed