**CTCS 191: Introduction to Television and Video**

USC School of Cinematic Arts

Monday 2:00-5:50

Mandatory Discussion Sections

Spring 2021

Instructor: Professor Ellen Seiter, Nenno Chair in Television Studies

Office Hours: Tuesdays 6:00-7:00; Wednesdays 12:30­–2:00; and by appointment

**Email**: [seiter@usc.edu](mailto:seiter@usc.edu)

Messages and to reserve time in office hours (213) 740-3334.

**Course Overview:**

Will streaming platforms profit or suffer as the co-vid quarantine continues and licensing arrangements cause upheaval industry?  Or does the need for more local and national news as well as declining income promise a resurgence in broadcast TV?  This course introduces students to the study of television as unique dramatic form with a history of business and creative practices that both overlap and diverge from that of feature film.  We will focus on the business of television distribution and on the genres of comedy, science fiction/fantasy, true crime, and anthology series.  Screenings include: Game of Thrones, The Office (lecture by Ken Kwapis), Fargo, The Comeback, I Will Destroy You, Twilight Zone, and Parks and Rec.

TA contact information:

Jackie Johnson (Lead), (jej76852@usc.edu)

Laboni Bhattacharya, 2 sections ([labonibh@usc.edu](mailto:labonibh@usc.edu)); Tuesday at 11 and 12

Feyza Safoglu, 2 sections ([safoglu@usc.edu](mailto:safoglu@usc.edu)); Weds at 12 and Thursday at 11

Emma Hughes, 1 section ([efhughes@usc.edu](mailto:efhughes@usc.edu)); Thursday at 5

Tianhui Huang, 1 section ([tianhuih@usc.edu](mailto:tianhuih@usc.edu)); Weds at 5

Lead TA: Jacqueline Johnson

Feyza: 10-12 Wednesday

Emma: 3-4 Wednesday

Tianhui: 6-7pm Wednesday

Laboni: 9-11 Tuesday

Me: 11-1 Monday

Feyza: Wed at 12pm and Thurs at 11am / 18068 and 18064

Tianhui: Wed at 5pm / 18065

Emma: Thurs at 5pm / 18066

Laboni: Tues at 11 and 12 / 18062 and 18063

**Books**

**One *Required* Paperback; Two *Recommended* Paperbacks. Most readings available on Blackboard (including from these books); Books requested to be placed on reserve.**

Kirkpatrick, Scott. Introduction to Media Distribution. New York: Routledge,

2018.

*note: Available as paperback, Kindle, ebook, or ebook rental. Chapters will be posted on Blackboard.*

Kwapis, Ken. But What I Really Want to do is Direct. New York: St Martins Press 2020 (recommended)

Thompson and Jason Mittell. How to Watch TV. New York: NYU Press, 2020. (recommended)

**Assignments:**

First midterm take home exam 20%

8 page research paper (prompt included at end of syllabus) 30%

Take home final exam (due May 10; 2PM) 20%

Powerpoint presentation in section. 20%

Pop quizzes and participation. 10%

**Take home finals may be submitted electronically May 1- May 10 2PM to Turnitin.**

* **Final is optional- you may count your midterm grade twice and skip the final;**
* **You may take the final and have it entered as 40%, dropping the midterm grade.**

**Course Expectations:**

All assignments must be handed in on time; exceptions will be made only with official documentation. Attendance is required at lecture and discussion. Except for pop quizzes all assignments for the course must be completed in order to earn a passing grade in the course.

The take home final will ask you to write a comparison of two series screened in class. The take home final will be 5 pages and a prompt will be provided at the last lecture. Early finals are accepted but all finals must be handed in by 10AM on May. 11.

**Regarding Medical Emergencies** during the midterm and final exam, please note that the USC Student Health Center no longer offers appropriate documentation to students who visit their premises for treatment, as their services were apparently widely misused. We remain sympathetic to students who are unable to take their final exams due to genuine medical emergencies and suggest one of two courses. Under both circumstances, you will need a formal letter from a doctor on official letterhead to document your illness. There will be no exceptions to this requirement. You may request an “Incomplete” on your course, provide your TA/Professor with appropriate documentation prior to the end of term, and make arrangements to complete the final assignment by a date set by your TA and Professor. Alternatively, you may fax a copy of your doctor’s letter to the Division of Cinema & Media Studies at (213) 740-9471 after informing your TA and Professor, and sit for a make-up exam (if offered) on the date set by your TA and Professor.

**Student Conduct**:

Turn off your cell phones during lecture, screenings and discussion section.

Use laptops for note-taking only. Close laptops during screenings. Do not exit through the side doors in Norris Theater. Only bottled water is allowed inside the auditorium.

**Plagiarism** in any form will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, can result in the failure of the course, and may lead to dismissal from the University. Please consult your *SCAMPUS* for an outline of the rules and regulations regarding academic integrity. Assignments will be submitted using Turnitin.

**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 that the letter is delivered to the Professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 am-5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**\*Note: Screenings are subject to change WITHOUT notice. It is your responsibility to know the series titles and episode names for your exams and quizzes.**

**(1/25): Introduction to the Course: The Pilot Episode  
Read**: Introduction: “An Owner’s Manual for Television” from *How to Watch Television*. (Bb) Jaramillo: “Rethinking Television A Critical Symposium” on (Bb) **Screening*: Fargo pilots Season1 & Season 3***

**(2/1): Sitcoms and Cringe Comedy**

**Screening**: ***The Comeback*** Season 1 eps 1,2,3,

**Read**: Kirkpatrick, “Windowing Rights” Ch 5

**(2/8): Directing TV: Guest Ken Kwapis**

**Screening**: ***The Office*** “Casino Night”; “Pilot “***The Bernie Mac Show***”

**Read**: Kwapis

**(2/15) No lecture- Presidents’ Day**

**(2/22) The Impact of Game of Thrones How *The Sopranos* Changed Everything**

**Screening***:* ***GOT*** *Season 1 ep. 1; Season 2 ep. 10.*

**(3/2): Rod Serling’s TV career and The Twilight Zone**

**Screening**: Season 5, Ep.25 "The Masks"; Season 3 ep. 26 “Little Girl Lost,” ep 10 “The Midnight Sun”; ep. 9 “Deaths-Head Revisited”

**(3/8) Serling/Twilight Zone (cont.)**

Read: Boddy on Twilight Zone; Derek Kompare, “*The Twilight Zone*. Landmark Television” 299-307 (Bb)

No screening

(3/15) Wrongful Conviction and Documentary Resurgence

**Screening:** ***Trial Four*** (HBO Max)

**Midterm Exam due to Turnitin @ 2PM**

(3/22) Copyright for Streaming/ Processing Trauma

Read: Seiter & Seiter The Creative Artists’ Legal Guide chapter 1; Articles on Michaela Coel on Bb

**Screening:** ***I May Destroy You***

Guest lecture: Jacqueline Johnson

**(3/29) Dragnet’s influence on the Crime TV Genre**

# **Read:** Jacqui Shine “The Long, Hot Summer” on “Dragnet”

# ***Dragnet* (1968), Season 2, Episode 28 "The Big Problem;"**

**4/5): 60s Television**

**Read:** Bodrogkhozy, excerpts from Groove Tube.

***The Dick Van Dyke Show***, Season 4, Episode 5 "The Man from Emperor;" Season 4, Episode 9 "Three Letters from One Wife;" ***Beverly Hillbillies*** (Pilot)

**DRAFT of research papers due in section**

**(4/12) Space Opera**

**Read:** Suzanne Scott “Fans and Ancillary Content” in How to Watch TV second edition and Selznick on Syfy branding on Bb

***Battlestar Galactica* (Miniseries Pilot) (2004); Episode 8 "Flesh and Bone"**

**(4/19): Cult favorites/ Stand-up**

**Read:** Heather Hendershot on P&R as Cultural Forum and Ritesh Mehta on MoN “Negotiated Decoding” in How to Watch TV second edition and Bb;

Ritesh Mehta

***Parks and Recreation***, Season 3, Episode 2 "Flu Season;"Episode 3 "Time Capsule;"

***Master of None***, Season 2, Episode 9 "Amarsi Un Po;" Episode 10 "Buona Notte"

***Final draft of research papers due in section.***

**(4/27) TBA. Class choice.**

**Take home finals due on May 10, 2:00 pm**

ScreeningChart

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| Fargo, Season 1, Episode 1 (Pilot) "The Crocodile's Dilemma;" | 1/25/2021 |
| Fargo Season 3, Episode 1 (Pilot) | 1/25/2021 |

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| The Comeback Season One Episodes 1,2,3 | 2/1/2021 |

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| The Office Season 2, Episode22 "Casino Night" | 2/8/2021 |

"The Bernie Mac Show (Pilot) 2/8/2021

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| Game of Thrones, Season 1, Episode 1 | 2/22/2021 |
| Game of Thrones, Season 2, Episode 10 | 2/22/2021 |
| The Twilight Zone, Season 3, Episode 9 | 3/1/2021 |
| The Twilight Zone, Season 3, Episode 26 "Little Girl Lost;" | 3/1/2021 |
| The Twilight Zone, Season 3, Episode 10 "The Midnight Sun;" | 3/1/2021 |
| The Twilight Zone, Season 5, Episode 25 "The Masks" | 3/1/2021 |
| Trial 4 (HBO MAX) | 3/15/2021 |

Trial 4 3/15/2021

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| I May Destroy You (HBO MAX) | 3/22/2021 |
| Dragnet (1968), Season 2, Episode 28 "The Big Problem;" | 3/29/2021 |

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| The Big Crime (1954 episode 3) | 3/29/2021 |
| Dragnet (1951), Season 1, Episode 13 "The Big Casing" | 3/29/2021 |
| The Dick Van Dyke Show, Season 4, Episode 5 "The Man from Emperor;" | 4/5/2021 |
| The Dick Van Dyke Show, Season 4, Episode 9 "Three Letters from One Wife;" | 4/5/2021 |
| Beverly Hillbillies (Pilot) | 4/5/2021 |
| Battlestar Galactica (Pilot) (2004) | 4/12/2021 |
| Battlestar Galactica Episode 8 "Flesh and Bone" | 4/12/2021 |
| Parks and Recreation, Season 3, Episode 2 "Flu Season;" | 4/19/2021 |
| Parks and Recreation, Season 3, Episode 3 "Time Capsule;" | 4/19/2021 |
| Master of None, Season 2, Episode 9 "Amarsi Un Po;" | 4/19/2021 |
| Master of None, Season 2, Episode 10 "Buona Notte" | 4/19/2021 |
| TBA | 4/26/2021 |