FMS 520 Cultural History of US Television: Theory & Method
http://www.asu.edu/courses/fms520bh/

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Office Hours: By Appointment

I. DESCRIPTION:
This course is designed to engage both the theory and methods of cultural studies as implemented in the study of US television (from the 1940s to the present). While television programming will be “read” in terms of genre as well as its historical and industrial context, the cultural studies focus of the class requires that televisual texts be examined as cultural artifacts that reflect and refract issues of class, gender, nation, race, region and sexual orientation.

FMS 520 will be conducted as an online seminar with lectures on the Cultural History of US Television informing the discussion. The online seminar replicates a campus seminar experience by the use of an electronic forum with the discussion leader role being shared by the instructor and students (on a rotating basis). All students are required to participate in the e-board discussion sessions, act as the discussion leader and to schedule a minimum of two individual Skype, phone or online chat appointments with the instructor per semester. The Skype sessions enable students to directly engage the instructor—whether to discuss the abstract for their discussion lead, to narrow the focus of their prospectus or just to talk about “reading” television and “reading” culture. In addition, there will be opportunities to “Ask Dr. Bambi” to answer questions in a weekly podcast designed to respond to your queries.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. To provide advanced study of television programming as products of cultural, industrial and commercial agendas.
2. To understand how the methods and theories of cultural studies, which incorporate communication, cultural, media and social theory, are applied to the analysis of US television.
3. To explore the critical strategies that can be employed to analyze the aesthetic, cultural and industrial relationships between television and other media (radio, film and digital media/internet).
4. To hone students’ skills in performing textual analysis in order to stimulate original and critical thought on television and culture.
5. To develop students’ facility for supporting and contextualizing academic arguments with social, cultural, historical and industrial research in television and culture.
6. To provide students with a nuanced understanding of cultural studies that can be applied to different media and subject areas in addition to television.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS:

U.S. Television & Cultural Studies is available for purchase at the ASU bookstore (An e-book version is available for purchase from both the bookstore and Pearson)

Readings assignments with an asterisk (*) on the class schedule will be available on the course website.
IV. CLASS POLICIES:

Disability Accommodations: Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hrs or by appt. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability info is confidential.

Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations: Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) should contact DRC immediately. Their office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. DRC staff can also be reached at: 480-965-1234 (V), 480-965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc. Their hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Academic Dishonesty: You are expected to turn in original work for this course. Quotations or ideas paraphrased from other work must be properly cited. Taking credit for another’s ideas or writing is plagiarism, which is a serious violation of the University’s Code of Academic Integrity. In the “Student Academic Integrity Policy” manual, ASU defines “‘Plagiarism’ [as] using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately.” Academic dishonesty, including inappropriate collaboration, will not be tolerated. There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing and any other form of dishonesty.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments
1) Abstracts (7 pts each/21 pts total): Students are required to write three 2-3-page abstracts, each of which must integrate concepts from the assigned reading for their chosen lessons. Students should submit one abstract during the week of their discussion leads and two others over the course of the 5-week session. The abstract should include: 1) a description of the scope of the material dealt with in the articles as well as its premise and/or research question; 2) an overview of the central assertions presented and 3) a critique of the closing arguments and their implications as suggested by the author and 4) their relationship screened as well as 3 discussion questions.

2) Discussion Lead (9 pts.): Each week, one student will post his/her abstract on the eBoard and moderate the discussion for that week along with the instructor. Functioning in much the same way as a discussion lead would in a brick and mortar seminar, the discussion leader formulates a list of questions to guide the discussion. The discussion leader will discuss both his/her abstract and discussion questions with the instructor (via Skype or email) before his/her abstract is posted on the eBoard.

3) Participation (20 pts.): Students are required to post responses (500-word min.) to the eBoard (discussion) questions raised for each lesson for a given week. In addition to posting once to address one of the questions raised by the discussion leader and/or instructor for each lesson, students are also expected to comment upon the responses made by one of his/her classmates.

4) Prospectus (10 pts.): The prospectus is a 4-5 page proposal for the final research paper which includes: A) 1-2 paragraphs outlining the research question and the thesis; B) a survey of the “visual texts,” archival work and/or primary sources that will be analyzed to support your assertions; C) an indication of the theoretical orientation you will apply to the works under analysis; and D) a rationale for the project that references other work done in the area, and/or the need for the proposed project. [Skype conferences with each student will take place during Week 3 before the prospectus is due by the
beginning of week 4.]
5) Research Paper (40 pts.):
Students are required to complete a 15-20-page research paper based upon the prospectus that was submitted and approved (Week 4). The paper is due on the last day of classes.

FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS

1. Please save your paper as follows: Last name, First Name – Name of Assignment.doc (example: Haggins, Bambi—Prospectus.doc)
2. When submitting your paper via email, it must be in Word. You should turn on “Read Receipt” to ensure that we received your paper. Double check to make sure you actually attached the correct paper in the correct format.
3. We do not accept excuses for missed deadlines or papers sent in the wrong format.

VI. GRADING:

Grade Point Breakdown
Abstracts (7 for 3 pts. each) 21 pts.
Discussion Lead 9 pts.
Participation/ 20 pts.
Prospectus 10 pts.
Final Paper 40 pts.
Total Pts. Possible: 100 pts.
Schedule of Classes

Week 1

Lesson 01  Reading Television, Reading Culture (due Tue, 6/1)
Reading: R. Hammer & D. Kellner, “From Communication & Media Studies Through Critical Studies” MCS
L. Spigel, “Installing the Television Set” *
Lecture: Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 01
Clips: Texaco Star Theater Starring Milton Berle
The Honeymooners “TV or not TV”
The George Burns & Gracie Allen Show
Screening Sheet: Screening Sheet for Lesson 01
eBoard: Instructor Lead & Discussion Questions

Lesson 02  Back When Ethnic Was Funny, Part 1 (due Wed, 6/2)
Reading: C. Rojek, “Stuart Hall on Representation and Ideology” MCS
G. Lipsitz, “The Meaning of Memory”
Recommended Reading: T. Cripps, “Amos ‘n’ Andy and the Debate Over American Racial Integration”
Lecture: Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 02
Clips: Beulah
Molly
Amos ‘n’ Andy
Screening Sheet: Screening Sheet for Lesson 02
eBoard: Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 1

Lesson 03  Constructing Femininity in the Post War Era (due Fri, 6/4)
Reading: Mann, “Spectacularization of Everyday Life”
B. Friedan, “The Feminine Mystique”
C. E. Clark Jr., “Ranch House Suburbia” *
Recommended Reading: M. Harolovich, “Sitcoms & Suburbs” *
Lecture: Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 03
Clips: The Martha Raye Show
Queen for a Day
I Love Lucy “Lucy Does A Commercial”
The Donna Reed Show
Screening Sheet: Screening Sheet for Lesson 03
eBoard: Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 2

Week 2

Lesson 04  Liveness, Spectatorship & Commerce in The First Golden Age of TV (due Mon, 6/7)
Reading: C. Anderson, “Disneyland”
Optional Read: “Sid Caesar” Encyclopedia of Television
Lecture: Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 04
Clips: Marty
The Disneyland Story
Your Show of Shows
Screening Sheet: Screening Sheet for Lesson 04
eBoard: Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 3
Lesson 05  The Creeping Red Menace & The Electronic Hearth  (due Wed, 6/9)
Reading:  T. Leab, “See It Now”
M. McLuhan, “The Medium Is the Message”
McCarthy’s Reply [Transcripts] *
Red Channels *
Lecture:  Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 4
Clips:  Good Night & Good Luck (Clooney, 2005) [Available on Netflix]
Scnring Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 05
eBoard:  Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 4

Lesson 06  Transforming the Wasteland, Transforming the Country  (due Fri, 6/11)
Reading:  Excerpts from Newton Minow’s “Vast Wasteland” Speech *
White, “Ideological Analysis” *
Williams, “Flow…”
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 06
Clips:  Kennedy/Nixon Debate
A White House tour w/ Mrs. John F. Kennedy
Atomic Café
Harvest of Shame
Scnring Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 06
eBoard:  Instructor Lead & Discussion Questions

Week 3

PROSPECTUS DAYS:  WRITING CONFERENCES VIA SKYPE THIS WEEK
PROSPECTUS DUE:  SATURDAY, JUNE 19 AT 11PM (end of week 3)

Lesson 07  Cold Warrior TV/Camelot TV (Part 1)  (due Mon, 6/14)
Reading:  D. Bernardi, “Star Trek in the Sixties”
S. Hall, “Encoding, Decoding”
Recommended Reading:  Seonce, “Outer Limits…”
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 07
Clips:  The Twilight Zone “The Shelter”
Outer Limits “The Bellero Shield”
Star Trek “Let This Be Your Last Battlefield”
Scnring Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 07
eBoard:  Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 5

Lesson 08  Cold Warrior TV/Camelot TV (Part 2)  (due Wed, 6/16)
Reading:  Hall, “Encoding/Decoding”
M. Harolovich, “I-Spy’s Living Postcards…”
A. Bodroghozy, “Is This What You Mean By Color TV?”
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 08
Clips:  I-Spy, “It’s All Done With Mirrors”
Julia, “The Unloneliest Night of the Year”
Scnring Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 08
eBoard:  Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 6
Lesson 09  Counter Culture & Containment  (due Fri, 6/18)
Reading:  A. Bodroghozy, “We're the Young Generation” *
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 09
Clips:  
  - Laugh-In
  - Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour
  - The Mod Squad “A Short Course in War”
Screening Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 09
EBoard:  Instructor Lead & Discussion Questions

Prospectus
Due to your professor via email by Saturday, June 19, 2010 by 11pm.

Week 4
Lesson 10  Conflicting Object Lessons, Containing Relevancy & Jiggling All The Way  (due Mon, 6/21)
Reading:  Fishbein, “The Docudrama & the Interpretation of History”
         Mizejewski, “The Seventies: Title Seven And T&A” (p. 59-70) *
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 10
Clips:  
  - Get Christie Love
  - Police Woman
  - Charlie’s Angels “Blue Angels”
  - Color Adjustment
Screening Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 10
EBoard:  Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 7

Lesson 11  Welcome to the Social Sitcom  (due Wed, 6/23)
Reading:  G. Oguss, “Whos Barrio Is It?”
         M. Arlen, “The Media Dramas of Norman Lear”
         “The Mary Tyler Moore Show”
         “M*A*S*H”
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 11
Clips:  
  - All in the Family “Sammy’s Visit”
  - Good Times “Getting Up The Rent”
  - Chico & The Man “Pilot”
  - The Mary Tyler Moore Show “Love Is All Around”
  - M*A*S*H “Dear Dad”
Screening Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 11
EBoard:  Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 8

Lesson 12  The New Faces of Quality: Earnestness & Excess  (due Fri, 6/25)
Reading:  B. Haggins, “No Place Like Home”
         C. Deming, “Hill St Blues as Narrative” *
         J. Caldwell, “Excessive Style”
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 12
Clips:  
  - Hill Street Blues “Pilot”
  - The Cosby Show “Pilot”
  - Roseanne
  - The Simpsons “Behind the Laughter”
  - Northern Exposure “Aurora Borealis”
  - Dynasty “Enter Alexis”
  - Miami Vice “Smuggler’s Blues”
Screening Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 12
EBoard:  Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 9
Week 5

Lesson 13  Gender, Sexuality, Class & Race in the Post Network Era  (due Mon, 6/28)
Reading:  L.S. Kim, “Sex and the Single Girl,” *
          R. Becker, “Gay Themed Television…”
          A. McCarthy, “Ellen…” *
Optional Read:  A. Lotz, “In Ms. McBeal’s Defense”
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 13
Clips:  *Murphy Brown
         Ally McBeal “Cro-Magnon”
         Sex & the City “They Shoot Single People, Don't They?”
         Will & Grace
         Ellen “The Puppy Episode Parts 1 & 2”
Screening Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 13
eBoard:  Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 10

Lesson 14  What Is This Thing Called Reality?  (due Wed, 6/30)
Reading:  Mehl, “Chapter 3: The Public on the Television Screen” *
          Leistyna, “Social Class & Entertainment Television” MCS
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 14
Clips:  “Man in the Box – Reality TV”
         Charlie Brooker's Screenwipe, “Reality TV Editing”
         “The Moment of Truth”
Screening Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 14
eBoard:  Student Abstract & Discussion Lead 11

Week 15  What Is This Thing Called Quality? (The Comedic & Dramatic Versions)  (due Thu, 7/1)
Reading:  Haggins, “Dancing Like Nobody's Watching” *
          Feuer, “Quality TV & HBO”
Lecture:  Listen to the Lecture for Lesson 15
Clips:  The Richard Pryor Show
         In Living Color
         The Sopranos, “College”
         The Wire “The Target”
Screening Sheet:  Screening Sheet for Lesson 15
eBoard:  Instructor Lead & Discussion Questions

Research Paper  Due to your professor via email by Friday, July 2, 2010 by 11pm.