

BUTTE COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

RTVF 13 - Exploring Contemporary Television

3 Unit(s)

Prerequisite(s): NONE

Recommended Prep: Reading Level IV; English Level IV

Transfer Status: CSU

51 hours Lecture

The course introduces students to contemporary American television (TV) programming including daytime drama, situation comedy, westerns, police and mystery, medical/legal and advertising. TV content will be looked at from a variety of perspectives including social, cultural, political, historical, and economic to explore how television impacts culture and the individual.

II. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Describe the economic structure of commercial broadcasting in the United States.
- B. Recognize and describe the various types of programs including their similarities and differences.
- C. Categorize a TV series into its genre based on the characteristics including its format, characters, length and plot structure.
- D. Analyze a TV program to determine how well it reflects the characteristics of its genre.
- E. Critique the role TV plays promoting gender and ethnic stereotyping.
- F. Describe the depiction of sexuality and violence in contemporary American TV programming as it reflects changing social and cultural values since TV's start in the late 1940s.

III. COURSE CONTENT

A. Unit Titles/Suggested Time Schedule

Lecture	
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Hours</u>
1. Course Introduction	3.00
2. Business of TV	6.00
3. Sitcom Genre	3.00
4. The Western Genre	3.00
5. The Private Detective/Police Genre	3.00
6. Medical/Legal Genre	3.00
7. Action-Adventure Genre	3.00
8. Day-Time Drama (Soap Opera) Genre	3.00
9. The Acceleration of TV Presentation and Content	6.00
10. Sex and Violence on TV	6.00
11. Gender and Ethnicity on TV	6.00
12. The History of TV Advertising	6.00
Total Hours	51.00

IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Lecture
- B. Collaborative Group Work
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- D. Discussion
- E. Reading Assignments
- F. Multimedia Presentations

V. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Homework
- B. Written Assignments
- C. Mid-term and final examinations
- D. Essays and research papers
- E. The course includes a 1500 word writing requirement. The writing requirement may be fulfilled by any combination of essay or paragraph-length exam questions, formal essays or research papers, and/or in-class or out-of-class writing activities.

VI. EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Reading Assignments
 - 1. Read the chapter in the class text on the characteristics of the situation comedy genre. After viewing a selected TV situation comedy, be prepared to analyze its structure and content to determine which genre characteristics are present.
 - 2. Read the chapter in the class text on the business structure of American broadcasting. Be prepared to discuss the relationship between program ratings and advertising revenue and how ratings performance influences program scheduling.
- B. Writing Assignments
 - 1. Read the textbook chapter on sex and violence in American TV programming. View three hours of prime time TV programming (8-11pm) on one of the assigned networks. Write a 2-3 page essay analyzing the use of sexual situations and dialog in the programs, product commercials and network program promotions.
 - 2. After reading the chapter in the class text on the portrayal of minority groups and values on American TV, write a 2-3 page comparing the racial images on American TV from the 1950s to contemporary presentations of race and ethnicity.
- C. Out-of-Class Assignments
 - 1. You have been given the task of designing a three hour prime time TV program schedule for an American TV network to attract a target audience of 18-24 year old men. You will choose a minimum of six half hour series from the provided program list based on the criteria in the class text. You will also indicate the time of each program and the reasons for your choice of series and time of broadcast.
 - 2. You will watch one of the TV programs on the supplied list with special emphasis on the commercials that are broadcast during the program. You will name and describe each commercial in terms of the product being sold; the various emotional appeals used to attract potential consumers and the assumed age and gender of the target audience.

VII. RECOMMENDED MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION

Textbooks:

- A. Castlemon, H.. Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television. 1st Edition. Syracuse Univ. Press, 2010.
- B. Butler, J. G. . B. Television: Critical Methods and Applications. 4th Edition. Routledge

Publishers, 2011.

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