

## MSTU2008 FIRST ASSESSMENT: SHORT ESSAY

LENGTH: 1000-1500 WORDS

WEIGHTING: 40%

DEADLINE: 4PM THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2024

SUBMIT VIA TURNITIN

### Essay Guide

This assessment gives you the opportunity to explore the topics, issues and television shows that we addressed in the early weeks of the course. The point of this part of the course is to explore the connections between television as it was and as it is now, and many of the topics below engage with that. This is a short research essay so although you will need to do some reading and some viewing, make sure that you concentrate on only one or two key debates or issues rather than attempting write a comprehensive view. Use examples that will carry the burden of representation: a part that stands for the whole. So, for example, in thinking about changes to the medium, concentrate on a show, a channel or a nation in order to focus your attention. Try using a television show, or a genre as a means of unpacking an issue, say, about audiences or public service broadcasting or technology. When writing a history try to enliven it with dates and a sense of direction.

Word count does not include references or bibliography.

Use Chicago as your referencing system. Look at published material in books and journals to see how it is done properly.

Italicise the titles of books, journals, films and television shows but not episodes or chapters.

For example, 'Meadowlands,' *The Sopranos* (1:4): this means episode 4 of season 1 of *The Sopranos* – the episode is in quotes and the title of the show is in italics. You also need to indicate the original channel and broadcast dates in the bibliography so in this case it would be, *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999-2007) for the entire show – you can mention the original date of transmission of particular episodes in the main text if it is important to your argument.

As a guide the essay ought to include a minimum of 3-4 references to scholarly work; do not use online journalism, AI generated material, or social media of any kind.

Double space the essay.

Be clear as to which nation your are writing about in terms of the history of regulation, technology, practice and television culture.

Please remember to type out the topic you are answering at the start of your essay. Do NOT make up your own essay titles.

Choose ONE topic from the following:

1. How would you characterise television as a medium? What are its most important features and which ones have persisted or faded over time?

2. Distracted attention, interruption and the glance are the key characteristics of television viewing. Discuss.
3. Explore the critical developments, as they pertain to television's history, of ONE of the following topics: Audience/Technology/Institutions/Regulation.
4. Discuss the assertion that it is the technology that delivers and distributes it that determines the nature and address of television's content.
5. Explore the ways in which the national character of the television audience has been transformed by the advent of streaming television.
6. The history of television's institutions is at least as important as the history of its programs. Discuss.
7. To what extent does public service broadcasting continue to have value in the age of streaming and digital platforms?
8. Which values of public service broadcasting do you think are important to preserve for the future?
9. Is the notion of 'televisuality' relevant for our understanding of television in the age of streaming? Give reasons for your answer.
10. Choose TWO key moments in the history of Netflix and explore their significance as drivers of the age of streaming.
11. Explore the validity of the assertion that Netflix provides the television audience with control that was not available to them previously.
12. Is 'quality television' still a relevant category in the age of streaming?
13. Choose a show and discuss the ways in which it is or is not an example of 'quality television'. Is there a better way to articulate its value?
14. To what extent has television ceased to be a distinct medium and now operates within a constellation of platforms that deliver content to users?
15. 'The differences between traditional television and streaming television are more significant than the differences between film and television.' Discuss.
16. To what extent does our conceptualisation of the television audience shape our understanding of the medium?
17. Provide an account of TWO or THREE significant changes in the regulation of television over its history.
18. Explore the role of television as an aspect of modernity.

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