TFM 430 – HISTORY OF PRIME-TIME TV  
COURSE SYLLABUS/CALENDAR – SPRING 2017

Instructor: Stuart Voytilla  
Classroom & Meetings: HH-130, 4:00-6:40 pm Tuesdays  
Office/Hours: DA-203, Mon 10:00-11:30 am, Tues 10:00-11:30 am, and by appointment  
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TFM 430 GA: Mike Jeffs

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

The course will function as a 14-week survey class designed to give students an historical perspective of television’s first 60 years of programming while providing an in-depth look behind the pixel curtain that is prime-time television today. The course chronicles the story of television from its 19th Century roots, through its invention, promotion and growth through the 20th Century... and now into the digital-driven 21st Century as well. From NBC’s first scheduled broadcast in 1941, through the next seven decades of boob tube mania in all its incantations, we’ll study the technological breakthroughs that fueled the medium and the visionaries who kept it afloat. Using visual excerpts from acclaimed TV episodes, we’ll move decade by decade through television history exploring 60 years of episodic dramas and situation comedies to come up with the best week of primetime programming ever!

HOW WE GET THERE:

1. Through lectures and Power Point visuals highlighting a historical treasure trove of TV moments taken from the Tube’s first half-century of life.
2. Through textual reading providing the fundamentals and key components to how TV works, including genre formation, sponsors and advertising, Nielsen ratings, the ins and outs of series programming.
3. Through in-class and online “home” screenings geared to support lectures.
4. Through group discussion and personal reflection in class and on Blackboard using online blogs.
5. Through completion of your own “FALL LINE-UP.”

CLASS REQUIREMENTS:

1. Active Participation –
   a. Willingness to exchange ideas during lectures, after video/DVD screenings, and online.
   b. Ability to thrive in a team atmosphere.
2. Keeping Up with Reading Assignments. Reading assignments and due dates are listed on the Calendar at the end of this Syllabus.
3. Exams: 2 Midterms and Final Exam (multiple choice & true/false) covering the course material including reading assignments, in-class and online/home screenings. Exams require Red ParScore Form (F-289-PAR-L; “Thin”/half-page form). Make-up tests only given for academically excused absences.
4. Class Attendance: Class attendance is essential for student success in this course. Students earn attendance points through the CourseKey web source. Classes begin promptly at 4:00 pm, and students log in to CourseKey before 4:10 pm for attendance credit. Attendance is tracked again later in the same class session; these are unscheduled and at the discretion of the instructor. Attendance points cannot be made up.
5. Class Participation: Class Participation is based on in-class discussions, and CourseKey “assessments” and written “flash” responses to class screenings. These are unscheduled and will not be pre-announced. These assessments and responses cannot be made up except for academically excused absences.
6. Blog Project: Two personal blog entries (and responses to peer blogs) based upon instructor prompts.
CLASS REQUIREMENTS (CONT’D):

7. **Completion of Semester Project.** You and your “network team” will create your very own FALL LINE-UP on your very own network.

8. **Participation Day.** WEEK 12 (4/18)... Mark it down. Attendance is required for reasons you and your team will come to appreciate and will help you earn a better grade in the course. Failure to attend Participation Day will result in a 10% drop in your grade.

GRADING WEIGHTS:

1. Midterm Exam #1 15%
2. Midterm Exam #2 15%
3. Participation Day 10%
4. Class Responses/Online Blogs/Attendance 15%
5. Fall Line-Up Power Point Design 10%
6. Project Presentation Pitch 15%
7. Final Exam 20%

**TOTAL:** 100%

READING/ONLINE MATERIALS:

REQUIRED:

1) **The History of Prime Time Television...** George Lee Marshall. A chronicle of the history of American television depicting how commercial TV has both helped shape and been shaped by American culture.

2) **CourseKey (through www.thecoursekey.com).** CourseKey is a classroom engagement software designed to increase lecture interaction and facilitate peer-2-peer learning. CourseKey allows your instructor to ask questions, take polls, give quizzes, and get feedback from you during class. CourseKey is a bring-your-own-device system, which means that you can use any web-enabled device (laptops, tablets, smart-phones) to participate. It combines features that help the professor more efficiently manage the class and allows students to connect more effectively inside and outside of class. **Instructions/links to create and register your CourseKey account are posted on Blackboard (see “Syllabus” link).**

SUPPLEMENTAL:

1) **Guide To TV...** TV Guide. Encyclopedia of 20th Century Television (available in our Blackboard Course, in “Assignments”). We’ll be using this resource for the FALL LINE-UP group project.

COURSE COMPLETION – WHAT WILL WE ACCOMPLISH?

1) Examine 60 years of American television history and to develop familiarity with television media’s aesthetic and other value systems and their impact on American culture.

2) Document how Cable programming cut into Broadcast TV.

3) Examine how Reality Television changed the paradigm of TV watching.

4) Compare the 1st and 2nd “Golden” ages of Television, and assess why the 2000s can be considered a 3rd Golden Age

5) Understand how the convergence of old and new media has transformed the landscape of television broadcasting and ways audiences engage in and interact with television.

6) Describe Prime-Time Network/Cable programming strategies including the influence of Nielsen Ratings, Demographics, and Sponsors/Advertising.
7) Demonstrate the ability to approach television analysis from a variety of angles, including questions of narrative, ideology, semiotics, genre, formalism and realism, spectatorship, and production/development.

8) Evaluate and contribute to debates on the social relevance and impact of television entertainment and media criticism.

9) Create a “Fall Line-Up” using any show or series in TV history to do it!

BLOG PROJECT:

Students are required to create/maintain a personal blog (within our Blackboard course). Blog entries will be based upon two (2) instructor prompts presented during the course of the semester. Specific guidelines will be posted on Blackboard. To complete each Blog prompt, students are required to post a personal blog and post responses to two peer blogs. Your blogs (and responses) should be thoughtful, well-written and reflect your understanding of the topic and course material, and your engagement with the media text(s) presented in class. You are free to use any resource you like but please cite your sources; do not plagiarize (even a peer’s work), as it is grounds for failing this course. Please proofread your work for grammar and spelling. Responses will be graded based on content and on form.

THE FALL LINE-UP PROJECT:

Imagine a perfect week of prime-time television—each and every night a celebration of the creativity, history and future of Network TV. And you will make the call. Your SEMESTER PROJECT demands nothing less, as it invites you and your team to program a Television Network, plucking shows and series from TV history to fill your weekly slate.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR:

If there is a question (not answered by this syllabus), email the instructor at svoytilla@mail.sdsu.edu. If the email requires a detailed response, visit the instructor during office hours (or arrange an appointment outside office hours). Allow 24 hours for email responses from the instructor during weekdays (allow 48 hours for emails sent over the weekend). When emailing instructor, you must include “TFM 430” in the subject heading.

COURSEKEY TECHNICAL SUPPORT:

Should you require assistance with CourseKey at any time, CourseKey will likely require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues. Please contact THEIR Support Team directly by way of email (support@coursekey.com) or by using any of the tools found in the app itself under the “Support” button.

IMPROPER BEHAVIOR:

Cheating on exams, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are completely unacceptable. The first incident will cause the student to fail that assignment. A second incident will cause the student to receive a failing grade for the entire course. All cheating will be reported to the dean of student affairs.
Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. If you are removed from the classroom, the incident will be reported and I reserve the right to drop you from the course.

TECHNOLOGY IN CLASS:

Please set Cell Phones to silent mode before each class. Aside from CourseKey participation, do not text during class, especially during screenings. Using laptops during class screenings is also unacceptable. Whether it is a laptop or a cell phone, glowing screens all over the room are simply too distracting for your classmates. Please, no talking during screenings. Students unable to follow these guidelines may be asked to leave the class session.

SCREENINGS:

Because of the course objectives, media screenings (in-class and online/home) are given the same weight as required textbook readings. If you miss a screening, it’s your responsibility to view it on your own. Although in-class writing responses cannot be made up, the questions will be available for review as the material and details of the screening may be covered on exams.
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TFM 430 – HISTORY OF PRIME-TIME TV
COURSE CALENDAR – SPRING 2017

USING THIS CALENDAR: All assignments (course reading and online viewing) are due by the date listed. For example, Week 4 (February 14) reading (“Marshall pp. 99-121”) and online viewing is due before the Week 4 class session. In-class and online screenings may change depending upon the needs of the class. Links for online viewing are available on Blackboard (See “Assignments”/ “Links for Class Screenings”).

Week 1: (1/24) Introduction of Class – Review Syllabus
Lecture: Genius, Deceit & the Birth of TV
Screening: Modern Marvels/Televison – Window to the World

Week 2: (1/31) Lecture: Invention Revisited: ‘50s TV/The Golden Age of Television
Assignment Due:
Marshall – pp. 1-47

Week 3: (2/7) Lecture: ‘Lucy, You Got Some ‘Esplainin’ To Do’
Serious Programming Begins with Comedy
Screening: I Love Lucy/Honeymooners/Dragnet

Assignment Due:
Marshall – pp. 49-98

Week 4: (2/14) Lecture: Just Sit Right Down and I’ll Tell You a Tale
Escaping Black & White TV
Screening: Bonanza/Gilligan’s Island/The Dick Van Dyke Show

Assignment Due:
Marshall – pp. 99-122
Review Midterm #1 Study Guide (BB)
Review Chronology – pp. 351-358 (Marshall)
Blog #1 Due (Guidelines posted on Blackboard)
Online Viewing: The Defenders, The Dick Van Dyke Show

Week 5: (2/21) Midterm Exam #1 (Bring Parscore and #2 Pencil)
Lecture: Best of Time/Worst of Time
The ‘60s – A Tale of Two Decades
Screening: Red Skelton / Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In / Star Trek

Assignment Due:
Study for MIDTERM/Use Study Guides in BB
Review Chronology – pp. 351-358 (Marshall)
Week 6: (2/28)  Lecture: New Global Audience & the Socially Aware Sitcoms of the ’70s
Screening:  Writer Speaks: Norman Lear / All in the Family / Mary Tyler Moore / M*A*S*H

ASSIGNMENT DUE:
Marshall – pp. 123-170
TV Guide – Peruse Fall Line-Up Program Grids
Online Viewing:  The Andy Griffith Show, That Girl

Week 7: (3/7)  Lecture: Those ’70s Shows – Drama/MOWs... & Roots
Screening: ’1968’/ Roots/ The Mod Squad

ASSIGNMENT DUE:
Marshall – pp. 171-198
Online Viewing:  Color Adjustment

Week 8: (3/14)  Lecture: The 80s – ‘The Miracle’ and TV’s 2nd Golden Age
Screening:  Hill Street Blues/Cagney & Lacey
Network Teams Chosen

ASSIGNMENT DUE:
Marshall – pp. 199-217
TV Guide – Begin Episodic Review of Fall Line-Ups (preparation for group projects)
Review Chronology – pp. 358-362 (Marshall)
BLOG #2 DUE (Guidelines posted on Blackboard)
Online Viewing:  Do You Believe in Miracles?

Week 9: (3/21)  Draw for Prime-Time Grid
MIDTERM EXAM #2 (BRING PARSCORE AND #2 PENCIL)
Lecture: Like Sands Through an Hour Glass – The Dayparts of Television Programming
Screening:  Best of Carson / SNL

ASSIGNMENT DUE:
Study for MIDTERM/Use Study Guides in BB
Review Chronology – pp. 358-362 (Marshall)

SPRING BREAK (3/27-3/31)  NO CLASS

Week 10: (4/4)  Submit: Original Program Grid
Lecture: Deregulation/Cable Upstarts & a Fourth Network
Screening:  Cosby / Cheers / Married with Children

ASSIGNMENT DUE:
** Copy Original Program Grid for Chosen Year
TV Guide – Continue Episodic Review
Marshall – pp. 219-250
Begin New Fall Line-up
Online Viewing:  Cosby Pilot, Roseanne, The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
Week 11: (4/11)  Lecture: Television from the ’90s into the 2000s – Freedom of Choice  
Screening: Seinfeld / C.S.I.
ASSIGNMENT DUE:  
Marshall – pp. 251-288  
Work on New Fall Line-up  
Online viewing: Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Desperate Housewives

Week 12: (4/18)  PARTICIPATION DAY!  
Submit New Fall Line Up Grid  
Lecture: A Platinum Age of Television?  
Screening: The Sopranos
ASSIGNMENT DUE:  
Marshall – pp. 291-346  
Continue Preparing Fall Line-Up & Pitch  
Online viewing: The West Wing, Scandal

Week 13: (4/25)  Team Pitch Presentations I  
ASSIGNMENT DUE:  
Presenting Teams turn in their Final Grids (hard copy and electronic)  
Assignment: Polish Pitch Presentation

Week 14: (5/2)  Team Pitch Presentations II  
ASSIGNMENT DUE:  
Presenting Teams turn in their Final Grids (hard copy and electronic)  
Study for Final  

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 9th 4-6 pm  (Bring PARSCORE and #2 Pencil)  
Study for Final  