

AMERICAN TELEVISION and CULTURE
FILM 2153B

COURSE TEXTS

1. Jeremy Butler, (5th Edition)
2. Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine,
3. coursepack of additional readings (via OWL) [OWL]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Class Attendance and Participation [10%]
- ! Reading Quizzes [10% total]
- Screening Journals [500 words each] [20% total]
- Midterm Exam [20%]
- Final Paper/Series Analysis [1500 words] [20%]
- Final Exam [20%]

Attendance and Participation: You are required to attend all class meetings and screenings for the full duration. Attendance will be taken regularly. Be sure to come to class fully prepared, having read all of the weekly reading assignments, and with your course books and readings in hand. Lateness, early departures, or other disruptive behavior will adversely affect your participation grade. More than **THREE** absences will result in a zero for your final participation grade. Only documented medical emergencies—verified through your home faculty (see below)—will be considered for paper extensions or exam rescheduling.

Quizzes and Exams: There will be two reading quizzes during the term (Week 3 and Week 11). The quizzes will be given during the Thursday lecture/discussion sessions at the beginning of class. You will have approximately 20 minutes for each quiz, and the quizzes will be based on major concepts from the course readings. The quizzes are meant to be a warm-up for the midterm and final exams. Make-up quizzes will typically only be granted in the case of documented medical emergencies. The midterm exam will cover all of the course readings, screenings, and lectures through Week 8 of the course. The final exam is comprehensive, but it will be weighted towards the material from the second half of the course. Exams will feature fill-in-the-blank and multiple choice questions, an identification section (key concepts/terms/theories), and short answer/essay questions. The short essay questions may also involve in-class analysis of screening clips. No notes or laptops/tablets/phones will be allowed during quizzes and exams.

Paper Assignments: Building on the close analysis of TV programs that you will be doing in class, your final paper project will require you to analyze episodes from a recent television series. The paper will focus on close formal, narrative, and ideological analysis

Screening Journals: As preparation for your final paper assignment, you will also turn in two screening journals during the term. The first journal assignment will be based on the close analysis of a key scene (or scenes) from a single episode of your chosen series. The second journal assignment will examine an additional episode and present a more developed argument about the series that will then be expanded upon in your final paper. The journal assignments will not only help you hone your skills of TV analysis, but they will also provide an opportunity for helpful feedback on your project before you turn in your final paper.

Late Work: Course papers must be turned in complete and on time. In order to be fair to the entire class, I will not grant individual extensions on paper assignments, so be sure to budget your time accordingly. Late papers will be penalized 5% points per day late (including weekends), except in the case of medical emergencies or illnesses (see below).

Laptops, Tablets, Cell Phones: Laptops/tablets/cell phones are to be used during screenings. You will need to take notes using paper and pens, so be sure to bring these materials to class. Exceptions be granted in the case of students with special needs, but this will only come with official approval from the Dean's office. Laptops/tablets will be permitted during lecture, but only on a probationary basis: if the instructor is distracted two times during the semester by non-note-taking/internet laptop use, the instructor will ban ALL use of laptops/tablets for the remainder of the year. In addition, be sure to turn off cell phones and refrain from text messaging during class. This counts as disruptive behavior and will lower your final participation grade.

Note on Screenings: You are to attend weekly screenings on Tuesday afternoons (attendance will be taken). Be sure to arrive to the screenings on time and to follow traditional screening etiquette (turn off cell phones and laptops, no talking, etc.). If you are ill or have a legitimate excuse, you should set up an appointment to view the episodes in the Film Studies Study Center [UC-1126] before Thursday's lecture. You may contact the Film Library Assistant, Rachel Gunn (rgunn4@uwo.ca) (Phone: x85730), to do so. The Study Center hours are Monday-Thursday 11am-4pm and Friday 11am-3pm.

Most screenings will run between 2-2.5 hours, so be prepared. Please note that weekly screening titles may be changed from time to time, depending on the particular needs of the course. You should also be aware that the quality of programs will vary some shows will be taped from the original broadcasts (with advertisements). Specific information about each screening (episode title, date, etc.) will be available on the OWL course page.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

- www.routledge.com/cw/butler [Butler's companion website for course textbook]

WEEK 4—Jan. 29-31—IMMIGRANTS and IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Screening: ; ;

Reading: Lipsitz, “The Meaning of Memory” [OWL]

WEEK 5—Feb. 5-7—RACE and REPRESENTATION

Screening: ;

Reading: Butler, Ch-14 (pgs. 352-361)
& Gray, “The Politics of Representation in Network Television” [OWL]
& Doane, “Shades of Colorblindness”
& Beltran, “Meaningful Diversity” [OWL]

WEEK 6—Feb. 12-14—CITIZENSHIP and SPECTACLE: Reality TV

Screening:

Reading: Butler, Ch-5 (pgs. 89-102)
& Weber, “Into the Makeover Maze” [OWL]
& Monbiot, “Neoliberalism” [OWL]

WEEK 7—Feb. 19-21—READING WEEK

WEEK 8—Feb. 26-28—MEDIATING the NEWS

Screening: ; ; (excerpts)

Reading: Butler, Ch-5 (pgs. 102-109) & Ch-6 (pgs. 131-159)
& Ch-14 (pgs. 349-352)
& Baym, “ ” [OWL]

WEEK 9—March 5-7—QUALITY and RELEVANCE

Screening: ;

Reading: Newman/Levine, Ch.3171 139.04cm BT 50 0 0 5oTT3 2 BT 50 0cm BT 50 0 0 5e41 97

WEEK 10—March 12-14—CABLE TV and HBO

Screening: ; ;

Reading: Newman/Levine, Ch-2 (pgs. 30-37) & Ch-3 & Ch-5
& Nussbaum, “Difficult Women” [OWL]

WEEK 11—March 19-21—TV for KIDS: NICKELODEON

Screening: ;

Reading: Anderson, “Watching Children Watch Television...” [OWL]
& Banet-Weiser, “The Nickelodeon Brand” [OWL]

POLICIES and REGULATIONS

A (80 to 89):

Argument: The writer has taken risks and most of them succeed. Clear development of a specific and challenging thesis, with proper paragraphs. Detailed reference to appropriate texts, with evidence of individual response. Ability not only to expound subject but to see it around—subtleties and ambiguities, qualifications and concessions, relations to other subjects, etc.

Presentation, structure: Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. Almost no typographical errors.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, with full range of sentence types (compound, complex, and compound-complex), with full range of punctuation (including semicolons, colons, dashes, parentheses). Graceful style, neither pompous nor breezy, and few errors.

Research/scholarship: Evidence of effective and independent research, with proper documentation of sources. Quotations used appropriately and purposively.

B (70 to 79):

Argument: Clear development of a specific thesis, with proper paragraphs. Adequately detailed reference to texts. Ability to expound reasonably sophisticated ideas with clarity.

Presentation/structure: Quotations well integrated into text. Proper paragraphs. A few typographical errors.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, with reasonable range of sentence types and full range of punctuation. Style not too wordy, with errors relatively few and minor.

Research Scholarship: Evidence of adequate research, with proper documentation of sources.

C (60 to 69):

Argument: Reasonably clear development of a thesis, with proper paragraphs. Basic ability to expound ideas, whose development might be rather thin. Effort to support points with references to the text. Tendency to replace analysis with descriptive retelling of plot.

Presentation/structure: Presentation showing lapses in tidiness and/or proofreading. Poor use of paragraphs.

Language Skills: Sentence structure correct, but perhaps overly simple, with tendency to avoid punctuation besides period and comma. Errors relatively few, but occasionally serious, with evident misunderstanding of some point of elementary grammar (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

D (50 to 59):

Argument: Difficulty with paragraphing or consecutive thought. Ideas inchoate but clouded by weak expression. Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or examples that run to lengthy paraphrase, with little or no analysis.

Presentation/Structure: Very poor to non-existent use of paragraphs. Inadequate and inaccurate documentation. Multiple typographical errors.

Language Skills: Errors of grammar or diction frequent enough to interfere with understanding.

Research/Scholarship: Little serious effort to research the topic.

F (49 and below):

Argument: Ideas too simple for level of course. Argument completely incoherent. Erroneous content showing little or no understanding of subject.

Presentation/Structure: Very sloppy proof-reading. Documentation virtually non-existent.

Language Skills: writing frequently ungrammatical.

Research/Scholarship: Non-existent. Content largely “borrowed” from sources with no individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive. Failure to follow the course assignment and guidelines.

0 (Report to Department)

Plagiarism with intent to deceive