

MDIA 404 Television Drama

Trimester 2 2009

30 Points

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	13 July to 16 October 2009
Study week:	19 to 23 October 2009
Examination/Assessment period:	27 October to 15 November 2009
Last piece of assessment due:	19 October 2009

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Dr. Trisha Dunleavy

Room 206, 42-44 Kelburn Parade

Tel.: 463 6843

Email: Trisha.Dunleavy@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours to be confirmed. Trisha Dunleavy will be available at set times of the week, and the details of these will be posted on her office door by Week 2. Any advice or consultation that is needed outside of these times is ideally pre-arranged. For a more immediate response, students are welcome to email the above address.

CLASS TIMES, LOCATIONS AND COURSE DELIVERY

Lectures for 404 will occur weekly, Monday 1-4pm in 42KP 101. Students are expected to prepare for each lecture by reading the most relevant essays or extracts in the MDIA 404 Course Reader.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any additional information will be communicated to students using the MDIA 404 Blackboard site.

COURSE CONTENT

MDIA 404 Television Drama is an ideal course for anyone interested in television cultures, industries, and creativity. It offers an in-depth critical examination of a pivotal meta-genre of television and consideration of its generic forms, aesthetic approaches, institutional and cultural objectives and creative contexts.

Although a far broader field is available for student research, the course focuses on influential British and American TV drama paradigms and the key fiction forms that have characterized them – anthology dramas, ‘high-end’ series and serials, and sitcoms. The course also investigates drama’s influence on generic hybridity through three additional genres: docudrama, comedy verité and docusoap.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course students will:

1. Be knowledgeable about a range of television drama forms and be able to contextualise these within the broader evolution of American, British and New Zealand television;
2. Have read and applied relevant television and genre theory, and have engaged with institutional or policy issues of importance to television drama;
3. Understand the range of institutional, industrial and cultural influences shaping drama programmes. Observing the relationships between national television culture, television institutions, production funding systems and drama output will allow an appreciation of drama as a genre that responds to, and is able to reflect, prevailing institutional, industrial and cultural conditions.
4. Have demonstrated their research experience and critical understandings of some of the following: 1) a context, policy issue, or academic debate of importance to TV drama or its production; 2) a key movement or moment in British, American or New Zealand drama’s development over the last five decades; 3) a particularly innovative or influential drama production; 4) the contribution of a key drama sub-genre, narrative or stylistic approach, or instance of hybridisation; and 5) an aspect of drama’s consumption or reception by audiences.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

This course is designed on the assumption that students will be able to commit up to 24 hours a week, including attending 404 lectures and completing course-related academic reading, research, writing and viewing. Video and DVD copies of drama productions held at the Kelburn library (Floor 9 AV Suite) may need to be booked in advance.

READINGS

These readings offer only a starting point in terms of possible coverage of these topics at Honours level. When preparing for assignments you will need to augment the relevant readings below with additional items cited in lectures and/or included in the full MDIA 404 course reading list.

Set Text

MDIA 404 Course Reader (2009) from Student Notes Distribution Centre.

Recommended Texts

- John Caughie, *Television Drama: Realism, Modernism and British Culture*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2000.
- Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama – A History*, British Film Institute: London, 2003.
- Glen Creeber, *Serial Television: Big Drama on the Small Screen*, British Film Institute: London, 2004.
- Trisha Dunleavy, *Television Drama: Form, Agency, Innovation*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2009.
- Trisha Dunleavy, *Ourselves in Primetime: A History of New Zealand Television Drama*, Auckland University Press: Auckland, 2005.
- Gary Edgerton, and Jeffrey P. Jones (eds.) *The Essential HBO Reader*, The University Press of Kentucky: Kentucky, 2008.
- Gary R. Edgerton and Brian G Rose (eds.) *Thinking Outside the Box: A Contemporary Television Genre Reader*, The University Press of Kentucky: Kentucky, 2005.
- Jonathan Gray, *Watching With The Simpsons: Television, Parody and Intertextuality*, Routledge: New York and London, 2006.
- Michael Hammond and Lucy Mazdon (eds.) *The Contemporary Television Series*, Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2005.
- Jason Mittell, *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture*, Routledge: London and New York, 2004.
- Robin Nelson, *State of Play: Contemporary “High-End” TV Drama*, Manchester University Press: Manchester and New York, 2007.
- Robin Nelson, *Television Drama in Transition: Forms, Values and Cultural Change*, Macmillan: Basingstoke, 1997.

For the first two weeks of trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of VicBooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two all undergraduate textbooks will be sold from VicBooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building. You can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to you or they can be picked up from the shop. You will be contacted when they are available.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

This course is internally assessed and there are three coursework components, all of which must be completed in order for you to qualify for a final grade. In choosing assignment topics, you must ensure two

things. First, that your coursework adheres to broad research objectives outlined on page 2 of this document. Second, that there is no more than a minor element of repetition (of either topic or content) between the two essays for MDIA 404 and between essays produced for 404 and those produced for other courses that form part of your chosen BA Hons programme of study.

1. Essay One (24 August)

3000 words, worth 35%. Deadline: Monday 24 August.

2. Student Seminar (Monday, Week 12)

An individual presentation of 15-20 minutes duration, worth 25%, which uses material from one or other of the two essay topics. Presentations to be given to the class in the lecture slot Week 12 (12 October). Written summary of presentation (with bibliography) is due to be submitted on that same day.

3. Essay Two (19 Oct)

3000-3500 words, worth 40%. Deadline: Monday Oct 19.

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Programme office. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

PENALTIES AND EXTENSIONS

Assignments submitted after the deadline without a written extension will be penalised at a rate of 2% (out of a total of 100) per working day. In other words, if you get 50% for an assignment, after one day your grade will drop to 48%, then 46% the following day etc. Late assignments are likely to receive limited feedback. The weekend counts for one day (i.e. an assignment due on Friday that is submitted on Monday will receive a 2% penalty). Please ensure that you are aware of the time that your assignment is due, as well as the date, as this is the cut-off time utilised in calculating lateness penalties.

Extensions

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Extension requests must be submitted to the Course Co-ordinator. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To gain a pass in this course you must:

- Submit the work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)

STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

The following text must be included in all course outlines.

You should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to

the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC (Academic) website also provides information in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcademic/Publications.aspx>

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	13 Jul.	TV Drama: Forms and Contexts
Week 2	20 Jul.	TV Drama and Narrative
Week 3	27 Jul.	TV Drama Aesthetics Part One: Naturalism and Realism
Week 4	3 Aug.	TV Drama Aesthetics Part Two: Modernism and Postmodernism
Week 5	9 Aug.	'Seriousness' and 'Authorship' in TV Drama
Week 6	17 Aug.	'Quality TV': the American Paradigm
Mid Trimester Break:	Monday 24 August– Friday 4 September 2009	
Week 7	7 Sep.	New Zealand TV Drama– An Institutional and Cultural Case Study
Week 8	14 Sep.	Fiction Meets Factual: the Docudrama
Week 9	21 Sep.	Innovations at the 'High-End': Contemporary Series and Serials
Week 10	28 Sep.	Sitcom: 'Traditional' vs. Animated Approaches
Week 11	5 Oct.	Generic Hybridity: Comedy Verité and Docusoap
Week 12	12 Oct.	Student Seminar Presentations + Written Summary
Study Period:	Monday 19 to Friday 23 October 2009	
Examination Period:	Tuesday 27 October – Sunday 15 November 2009	