

## MDIA 302 Television Narrative

### Trimester 2 2011

11 July to 12 November 2011

20 Points

“Whereas our ancestors used to listen to tall-tale spinners, read penny dreadfuls, tune in to radio dramas, or rush to the local bijou each Saturday, now we primarily satisfy our ever-constant yearning for stories by gathering around the flickering box in the living room. Television is the principal storyteller in contemporary...society.”

Sarah Kozloff



#### TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	11 July to 14 October 2011
Mid-trimester break:	22 August to 4 September 2011
Study week:	17 to 21 October 2011
Last piece of assessment due:	26 October 2011

**WITHDRAWAL DATES**

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

**NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS**

Staff	Email	Phone	Room	Office Hours
<b>Course Coordinator</b>				
Trisha Dunleavy	trisha.dunleavy@vuw.ac.nz	463 6843	Room 203, 81 Fairlie Terrace	TBC
<b>Tutor</b>				
Anna Currie	anna.currie@vuw.ac.nz	TBC	83 Fairlie Terrace	TBC

**CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS****Lectures**

Tuesdays 3-5pm MacLaurin Building LT102

**Tutorials**

Mondays 2-3pm, 3-4, and 4-5

Tuesdays 10-11am, 11-12 and 12-1

**COURSE DELIVERY**

Students should assume that the staff involved in this course will put maximum effort into teaching at a high level. To take full advantage of this commitment by staff, students are encouraged to actively engage with the material offered on MDIA 302. In addition to the minimum requirements for attending classes and completing assignments, an active engagement means reading the required items every week; viewing programme examples outside of classes; searching for more information about topics of special interest; participating in class discussions; and devoting a genuine intellectual energy to assessment tasks.

- Lectures are characterized by a teacher-lead approach, supported by powerpoint notes and indicative DVD clips. Course readings (published by Student Notes) provide essential support for each lecture and students are strongly advised to read as many as possible of the items related to the topic before each week's lecture. It is important to have completed this reading before the tutorial on each topic. The attendance threshold that applies to MDIA 302 lectures and tutorials recognizes that in this subject, students who miss a proportion of classes perform less well and require more individual assistance from staff than those who do attend a clear majority of classes.

- The tutorial schedule is designed so that tutorials follow the lecture topics by one week. Tutorials are highly interactive and are designed to incorporate considerable input from tutorial members. Students need to have prepared for tutorial discussions by completing the weekly readings before class.

### COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are two systems of course support outside of actual classes. Please use **S-Cubed** to sign up for tutorials. All other on-line course documentation (regarding lectures, assignments, additional reading suggestions, and any information about required changes) will be found on **Blackboard**.

### COURSE PRESCRIPTION

This course examines narrative strategies and tendencies in contemporary primetime television programming, both fictional and factual. Applying screen narrative theory and using textual analysis, we will examine what kinds of stories TV tells us and the narrative strategies it uses. Narrative forms to be studied include: series and serial drama, continuing soap opera, scripted (series) comedy, 'reality' game-doc and 'reality' docusoap.

### COURSE CONTENT

Lecture topics for this course are organised into three interrelated sections. These are: 1) narrative contexts, structures and theory; 2) narrative modes; and 3) case studies in narrative form and hybridity.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Understand key theoretical concepts in and formal approaches to TV narrative;
2. Be familiar with current academic research into the leading fictional and factual television forms;
3. Have the ability to analyse and evaluate narrative structures across factual as well as fictional TV programmes;
4. Understand some of the cultural appeals (both 'local' and 'universal') with which TV narratives are imbued; and
5. Draw linkages between the narrative forms that pervade primetime TV and the mix of cultural and institutional influences that inform and shape its programmes.

NB. Assessment items for this course are cumulatively designed to test student learning and understandings of *all* of the above aims and objectives. This coverage is ensured by the prohibition of any duplication of topics or material between assignment questions.

**EXPECTED WORKLOAD**

This course is designed on the assumption that students will be able to commit up to 18 hours a week, including attending lectures and tutorials, and completing course-related reading, research, writing and viewing.

**READINGS**

**Set Text**            *MDIA 302 Readings 2011*

This reader contains *required readings* to support lectures and tutorials which form a solid conceptual or theoretical basis for assignment work. In preparing assignments, students should begin by consulting all of the relevant readings before moving on to the list of *further readings* which will be included in the powerpoint notes for each lecture topic and can be found either on library shelves or in library databases.

**Recommended General Texts**

The books below are available in the library. Whilst most of them will be consulted by MDIA 302 students during the course, it is not expected that you will purchase these texts.

- Glen Creeber, *Serial Television: Big Drama on the Small Screen*, British Film Institute: London, 2005
- Trisha Dunleavy, *Television Drama: Form, Agency, Innovation*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2009
- 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
- Annette Hill, *Restyling Factual TV: Audiences and News, Documentary and Reality Genres*, Routledge: London and New York, 2007
- Annette Hill, *Reality TV: Audiences and Popular Factual Television*, Routledge: London and New York, 2005
- Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (ed.) *Understanding Reality Television* Routledge: London and New York, 2004
- Misha Kavka *Reality Television Affect and Intimacy: Reality Matters*, Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, 2008 (On Order)
- Richard Kilborn and John Ozod, *An Introduction to Television Documentary: Confronting Reality*, Manchester University Press: Manchester and New York, 1997
- Marc Leverette, Brian L Ott, Cara Louise Buckley (eds.), *It's Not TV: Watching HBO in the Post-Television Era*, New York and London: Routledge, 2008
- Robin Nelson, *State of Play: Contemporary "High-End" TV Drama*, Manchester University Press: Manchester and New York, 2007

- Jason Mittell, *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture*, Routledge: London and New York, 2004
- Carol A. Stabile and Mark Harrison (eds.) *Prime Time Animation: Television Animation and American Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003

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](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto: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. There are three items, all of which must be attempted and submitted in order to qualify for course completion and a pass grade.

- First Essay – 2600 words – 35 %  
Due: Monday 5 September, 5pm
- Tutorial presentation – 25 %  
Presentations occur in your regular tutorial class, from Week 4 to Week 12. Each student's presentation will be followed by the submission of a written summary. Marks will be divided equally between the *presentation* and the *summary* to determine the grade for this piece of assessment.
- Final Essay – 3000 words – 40 %  
Due: Wednesday 26 October, 5pm

### ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the SEFTMS Admin Office, 83 Fairlie Terrace. Remember to fill in your tutor's name.

### EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

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. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

### MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To gain a pass in MDIA 302 you must:

- Attend a minimum of 7 two-hour lectures
- Attend a minimum of 7 tutorials
- Submit all three pieces of written work specified for this course, by the set deadline dates or by those for which an extension has been arranged

### CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

### 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. Where handwritten work is required you are expected to write clearly. If this is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

### 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>

#### WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study).

Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic).

**Course Programme**

Week 1	12 July	Contexts and Approaches
Week 2	19 July	Narrative Theory
Week 3	26 July	Series and Serial Form
Week 4	2 August	Realism
Week 5	9 August	Melodrama
Week 6	16 August	Intertextuality
<b>Mid-Trimester Break: Monday 22 August to Sunday 4 September 2011</b>		
Week 7	6 September	Comedy
Week 8	13 September	Narratives of Crime
Week 9	20 September	Narrative Complexity in Series and Serial Drama
Week 10	27 September	Narratives of Competition: the Game -Doc
Week 11	4 October	Case Studies in Generic Mixing: Docusoap
Week 12	11 October	Case Studies in Generic Mixing: Comedy Verité

**Study Week:** Monday 17 October to Friday 21 October 2011

**Examination Period:** Friday 21 October to Saturday 12 November 2011

**Essay Due Dates:** Essay One Monday 5 September 2011

Essay Two Wednesday 26 October 2011