

MDIA 302 Television Narrative

Trimester 2 2013

15 July to 17 November 2013

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:	15 July to 18 October 2013
Mid-trimester break:	26 August to 8 September 2013
Last piece of assessment due:	18 October 2013

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination (aegrotats), refer to

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Monday 12noon – 1.50pm HMLT002

Tutorials

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via the MDIA 302 site on Blackboard: go to “Tutorials” and then follow the instructions under the “S-Cubed - Tutorial Enrolment Instructions” link. Please read the instructions carefully. Tutorial rooms will be listed on S-Cubed, Blackboard and on the bulletin board outside the administration office, 83 Fairlie Terrace. Do not sign up for **more than one** tutorial.

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Staff	Email	Phone	Room	Office Hours
Trisha Dunleavy	trisha.dunleavy@vuw.ac.nz	04 463 6843	203, 81 Fairlie Terrace	Tuesday 2.00-3.00pm
Jonathan McLeod	jono.mcleod@vuw.ac.nz			
Fairooz Samy	fairooz.samy@vuw.ac.nz			

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 online course documentation (regarding lectures, assignments, additional reading suggestions, and any information about required changes) will be found on **Blackboard**.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

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:

- Narrative contexts, structures and theory;
- Narrative modes; and
- Case studies in narrative form, genre and institutional approach.

Please see the list of lectures (last page of this outline) for more detail about the nature and order of MDIA 302 lecture topics.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass MDIA 302 will be able to:

1. Understand key theoretical concepts and how different approaches to TV narrative are indicative of television form;
2. Develop a functional familiarity with current academic research into the leading fictional and factual television genres;
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 ('local', transnational, and 'universal') with which TV narratives are imbued; and
5. Draw linkages between the narrative forms that pervade primetime television (including in 'premium cable' channel contexts) 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.

TEACHING FORMAT

Lectures are characterised by a teacher-led approach, supported by powerpoint notes and indicative DVD clips. 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. One or two items will be identified as priority and it is important to have completed your reading of these before the tutorial on each topic. The attendance threshold that applies to MDIA 302 lectures and tutorials recognises 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 deliberately designed so that tutorials follow the lecture topics by one week. This one-week time-lag gains additional importance once tutorial seminars begin (from Tuesday, August 13, Week 5). 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 weekly readings before class. NB. Because several readings per topic have been included in the reader, a list of priority readings (1-2) per topic will be given to you (and also posted on Blackboard) at the first lecture.

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 in MDIA 302. In addition to the minimum requirements for attending classes and completing assignments, an active engagement means reading the required academic 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.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

As noted above, there is a mandatory lecture attendance requirement in place for MDIA 302 and the reason for this is that attendance at lectures is not only vital for successful in individual progress but is also vital to maximising the value of tutorial presentations and arising discussions in our class. In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Attend a minimum of 7 two-hour lectures out of 12 in total
- Attend a minimum of 7 tutorials out of 11 in total
- 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.

NB. In this course records of attendance are kept for each lecture as well as for each tutorial. At the lecture you must place **your full signature** next to your name on one of the 9 sets of student names that are handed around at each lecture. Rolls will be taken **by your tutor** at the beginning of each tutorial.

WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours over the year or 13 hours per teaching week.

ASSESSMENT

This course is internally assessed. There are three items, all of which must be attempted and submitted, in addition to your fulfilment of the mandatory attendance requirements, to qualify for course completion and a pass grade.

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	First Essay – 2600 words Narrative Analysis of a TV Drama Series or Serial	35%	1, 2, 3	Monday 26 August by 5pm
2	Tutorial Presentation and Write-Up Topic sign up will occur in Week 3, Tutorial 2.	25%	1,2,3,4	Week 5 to 12
3	Final Essay – 3000 words Critical Analysis of a Television Series or Serial	40%	1,2,3,4 and 5	Friday 18 October by 5pm

SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Work provided for assessment in this course will be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin. Follow the instructions provided in the “Assignments and Turnitin” section of Blackboard.

Hard-copy assignments are submitted in the drop slot outside the administration office: 83 Fairlie Terrace. Attach an assignment cover sheet or extension form, found on Blackboard or outside the administration office. Remember to fill in your tutor’s name.

Essays submitted for assessment on this course will be manually checked for academic integrity. This method will uncover instances of plagiarism or of inappropriate referencing. Both of these things will incur penalties and these will be calculated in relation to each instance that is found in the essay. It is likely that essays bearing these kinds of flaws will return a failed mark. Accordingly, if you are unsure about what

constitutes plagiarism (which is considered a serious breach of academic integrity), please follow the link on page six of this document and ask your tutor for further information about this before you submit your assignment.

Your marked assignment will be handed back by your tutor in tutorials or during their office hours. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the Administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the Administration office.

PENALTIES

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

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. 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.

SET TEXTS

MDIA 302 Student Notes 2013

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.

This comprehensive *Student Notes* reader contains at least three key readings per lecture topic, to support lectures, tutorials, and assignment work. In preparing assignments, students should begin by consulting these *Student Notes* items (which have been selected on the basis of their suitability to the foci and aims of this course) before moving on to additional readings, recommendations about which can be found in the lecture slides for each topic.

RECOMMENDED READING

The books below are available in the library, most of them in multiple at 3 day loan. Whilst most of them will be consulted by MDIA 302 students at some point during the course, it is not expected that you will purchase these texts.

- Glen Creeber (2005) *Serial Television: Big Drama on the Small Screen*, British Film Institute: London
- Trisha Dunleavy (2009) *Television Drama: Form, Agency, Innovation*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke
- Gary R. Edgerton and Brian G Rose eds. (2005) *Thinking Outside the Box: A Contemporary Television Genre Reader*, The University Press of Kentucky: Kentucky
- Jonathan Gray (2006) *Watching With The Simpsons: Television, Parody and Intertextuality*, Routledge: New York and London
- Annette Hill, *Restyling Factual TV: Audiences and News, Documentary and Reality Genres*, Routledge: London and New York

- Annette Hill (2005) *Reality TV: Audiences and Popular Factual Television*, Routledge: London and New York
- Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn ed. (2004) *Understanding Reality Television* Routledge: London and New York
- Misha Kavka (2008) *Reality Television Affect and Intimacy: Reality Matters*, Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke
- Richard Kilborn and John Izod (1997) *An Introduction to Television Documentary: Confronting Reality*, Manchester University Press: Manchester and New York
- Marc Leverette, Brian L. Ott, Cara Louise Buckley eds. (2008) *It's Not TV: Watching HBO in the Post-Television Era*, New York and London: Routledge
- Jason Mittell (2004) *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture*, Routledge: London and New York
- Carol A. Stabile and Mark Harrison eds. (2003) *Prime Time Animation: Television Animation and American Culture*, London and New York: Routledge

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

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.

You may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and email address for this course:

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/dates

- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/grades
- Resolving academic issues:
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#grievances
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/publications2#specialpass
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute:
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-service
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/viclife/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/enrol/studentcontract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz
- School website: www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	15 July	Contexts and Approaches (No Tutorial)
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Week 2	22 July	Narrative Theory
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Week 3	29 July	Series and Serial Form
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Week 4	5 August	Realism
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Week 5	12 August	Intertextuality
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Week 6	19 August	Melodrama
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Mid Trimester Break: Monday 26 August to Sunday 8 September 2013

Week 7	9 Sept	Narratives of Crime
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Week 8	16 Sept	Narrating Humour: Continuity and Change in Scripted Sitcom
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Week 9	23 Sept	Narrative Complexity in Series and Serial Drama
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Week 10	30 Sept	TV Narrative and Format Adaptation
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Week 11	7 Oct	Case Studies in Generic Mixing: Docusoap and Comedy Verité
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Week 12	14 Oct	Narratives of Competition: the 'Reality' Game-Doc
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- **First Essay – 2600 words – 35%**

Due: Monday 26 August, 5pm

- **Final Essay – 3000 words – 40%**

Due: Friday 18 October, 5pm

- **Tutorial Presentations**

Begin in Week 5, on Tuesday 13 August and run every tutorial thereafter