Media Studies Programme

School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies

Te Kura Tānga Kōrero Ingarihi, Kiriata, Whakaari, Pāpāho

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA

UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

MDIA 302: Television Narrative

Trimester 2 2016

11 July to 13 November 2016

20 Points

Dexter (Showtime, 2006-13)

IMPORTANT DATES

Teaching dates: 11 July to 16 October 2016

Mid-trimester break: 22 August to 4 September 2016

Last assessment item due: 21 October 2016

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to

[www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)](www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Wednesday   10.00am-12noon   Kirk KKLT 301

Tutorials

Tutorials begin in WEEK 2. Please register for tutorials via myAllocator. Instructions can be found on the MDIA 302 site on Blackboard under "Tutorial instructions". Remember to record your tutorial time, day and room for future reference. Tutorial rooms will be listed on myAllocator, Blackboard and on the noticeboard outside the administration office at 83 Fairlie Terrace.

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator: Trisha Dunleavy

Email: trisha.dunleavy@vuw.ac.nz

Phone: 04 463 6843

Room: Room 203, 81 Fairlie Terrace

Office Hours: (TBA)

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 Course Programme (last pages of this document) for more detail about MDIA 302 lecture topics.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. Analyse key theoretical concepts and identify how different approaches to TV narrative are indicative of television form;

2. Demonstrate a functional familiarity with current academic research into 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 and identify some of the cultural appeals (local, transnational, and universal) with which TV narratives are imbued; and

5. Draw linkages between the narrative forms that constitute the current 'post-broadcast' era of television (including those produced for cable and internet networks) and the mix of cultural and institutional influences that inform and shape these.

ASSESSMENT

	Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	**First Essay – 2,600 words** Narrative Analysis of a TV Drama Series or Serial	35%	1, 2, 3	Monday 15 August, 5pm
2	**Tutorial Presentation** Topic sign up will occur in Week 3, Tutorial 2.	25%	1,2,3,4	These will begin in Week 5 and run every tutorial thereafter
3	**Final Essay – 3,000 words** Critical Analysis of a Television Series or Serial	40%	1,2,3,4 and 5	Friday 21 October, 5pm

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There is a mandatory attendance requirement in place for MDIA 302 and the reason for this is that attendance at lectures and tutorials is not only vital for successful individual progress (see CLOS 1,2,3,4, and 5) but is also vital to maximising the value of tutorial presentations and arising discussions in our class.

To gain a pass in MDIA 302 you must:
- Submit the two essays and presentation write-up by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work);
- Deliver a tutorial presentation on the set date for the topic that you sign up to present on;
- Attend a minimum of 7 two-hour lectures out of 12 in total; and
- Attend a minimum of 6 tutorials out of 10 in total.

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of these mandatory course requirements because of exceptional personal circumstances, should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All electronic course documentation and announcements (regarding updates, lectures, assignments, links to Talis course readings, and any other information) will be found on **Blackboard**.

WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20-point course is 200 hours over the trimester or 13 hours per teaching week. Assessment Criteria can be viewed in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

TEACHING FORMAT

Lectures are characterised by a teacher-led approach, supported by PowerPoint notes and indicative production clips. Readings for each topic, along with assignment due dates, are listed with lecture information (see last pages of this document). Note that for most topics just one reading is identified as priority which means that your completion of that one reading is expected at tutorials. There is no printed Course Reader for 2016. Instead readings will be available on-line through Talis Aspire.

In MDIA 302 the tutorial schedule is deliberately designed so that tutorials follow the lecture topics by one week. This one-week time-lag is important in facilitating adequate preparation time for the tutorial seminars (we will aim to start these in Week 5 and these will continue until Week 12). Tutorials are highly interactive and are designed to incorporate considerable input from tutorial members. 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.

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 item/s 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.

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. Assignments for MDIA 302 will be submitted in two ways: 1) as a hard copy; and 2) as an electronic submission to Turnitin.

Hardcopy assignments are submitted in the drop slot outside the administration office: **83 Fairlie Terrace**. Attach an assignment cover sheet found on Blackboard or outside the administration office. Remember to fill in your tutor's name. Please do not use plastic folders.

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.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

Extensions

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. To apply for an extension, email your Course Coordinator before the assignment is due. If granted, your Course Coordinator will inform you of the new due date. Tutors cannot grant extensions. **No assignment with or without an extension will be accepted after Friday 4 November 2016.**

Penalties

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.

SET TEXTS

No set texts. Please see weekly readings which are listed in the Course Programme and are available online through Talis Aspire.

RECOMMENDED READING

The books below are available in the library, some in multiple copy and others as electronic items. 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

- Glen Creeber (2013) *Small Screen Aesthetics: from Television to the Internet*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke

- Trisha Dunleavy (2009) *Television Drama: Form, Agency, Innovation*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke

- Gary R. Edgerton and Brian G Rose eds. (2008) *The Essential HBO Reader*, The University Press of Kentucky: Kentucky

- Jonathan Gray (2006) *Watching With The Simpsons: Television, Parody and Intertextuality*, Routledge: New York and London

- 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

- Carol A. Stabile and Mark Harrison eds. (2003) *Prime Time Animation: Television Animation and American Culture*, London and New York: Routledge

- Jason Mittell (2015) *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary TV Storytelling*, New York: New York University Press

- Koos Zwaan and Joost de Bruin eds. (2012) *Adapting Idols: Authenticity, Identity and Performance in a Global TV Format*, Ashgate

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

STUDENT FEEDBACK

The narrative focus of this course is relevant to all TV programming regardless of what kind of media institution (TV or internet) created it. MDIA 302 has received very favourable assessments from students each time it has been taught, this feedback most frequently involving qualitative end of course evaluations but also extending to the (qualitative) comments that students make either on feedback forms or to the course coordinator by email. In qualitative feedback received to date, students have underlined that they find this course invaluable and accessible, this same outcome occurs whether or not they have completed other MDIA courses involving a focus on TV texts.

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/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism*

- *Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progess (including restrictions and non-engagement)*

- *Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates*

- *FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin*

- *Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades*

- *Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy*

- *Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support*

- *Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability*

- *Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter*

- *Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract*

- *Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin*

- *University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure*

- *Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile*

- *VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz*

COURSE PROGRAMME

Week 1	13 Jul	**Changing Contexts for TV Creation** (No tutorial)

Amanda D. Lotz (2007) "Television Storytelling Possibilities at the Beginning of the Post-Network Era", Chapter 7 in Lotz's *The Television Will Be Revolutionised*, New York and London: New York University Press, pp. 215-240. **PRIORITY READING**

Roberta Pearson (2005) "The Writer/Producer in Contemporary American Television", Chapter 1 in Michael Hammond and Lucy Mazdon (eds.) *The Contemporary Television Series*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 11-26.

Mark C. Rogers, Michael M. Epstein, and Jimmie L. Reeves (2002) "*The Sopranos* as HBO Brand Equity: The Art of Commerce in An Age of Digital Reproduction", Chapter Six in David Lavery (ed.) *This Thing of Ours: Investigating The Sopranos*, Wallflower Press and Columbia University Press: New York, pp. 42-57.

Week 2	20 Jul	**Narrative Theory** (First tutorial)

Sarah Kozloff (1995) "Narrative Theory and Television", Chapter 2 in Robert C. Allen (ed.), *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled*, Second Edition, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 67-97. **PRIORITY READING**

Jostein Gripsruid (2002) "Narratology: The Forms and Functions of Stories", in Gripsruid, *Understanding Media Culture*, London: Arnold, pp. 191-223.

Week 3	27 Jul	**Series and Serial Forms**

Trisha Dunleavy (2009) "Dominant Narrative Forms: The Series and the Serial", Chapter 2 in Dunleavy, *Television Drama: Form, Agency, Innovation*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, pp. 38-66. **PRIORITY READING**

Michael J. Porter, Deborah L. Larson, Allison Harthcock and Kelly Berg Nellis (2002) "Redefining Narrative Events: Examining Television Narrative Structure", *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, Washington DC: Heldref Publications, Spring, 30:1, pp. 23-30.

Week 4	3 Aug	**Realism**

Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis (1992) "From Realism to Intertextuality", Chapter 5 in Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis, *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*, London: Routledge, pp. 184-221.

Richard Kilborn and John Izod (1997) "How Real Can You Get? Realism and Documentary", Chapter 2 in Kilborn and Izod, *An Introduction to Television Documentary: Confronting Reality*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 27-54. **PRIORITY READING**

John Corner (2000) "Civic Visions: Forms of Documentary", in Horace Newcomb (ed.) *Television: the Critical View*, Sixth Edition, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 207-236.

Week 5	10 Aug	**Melodrama** (First tutorial presentations)

Christine Geraghty (1991) "The Aesthetic Experience", Chapter 2 in Geraghty *Women and the Soap Opera: A Study of Primetime Soaps*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 25-38.

Ien Ang (1989) "*Dallas* and the Melodramatic Imagination", Chapter 2 in Ang, *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 51-85.

Jason Mittell (2015) "Serial Melodrama", Chapter 7 in Mittell, *Complex TV: the Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, New York University Press, New York and London, pp. 233-260. **PRIORITY READING**

Week 6	17 Aug	**Intertextuality**

John Fiske (1987) "Intertextuality", Chapter 7 in Fiske *Television Culture*, London: Routledge, pp. 108-127.

Jonathan Gray (2006) "Intertextuality and the Study of Texts", Chapter 1 in Gray, *Watching with The Simpsons*: *Television, Parody, and Intertextuality*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 19-40.

Brian Ott and Cameron Walter (2000) "Intertextuality: Interpretive Practice and Textual Strategy", *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, London: Taylor and Francis, Vol. 17 No.4 December, pp. 429-446. **PRIORITY READING**

Mid-Trimester Break:	**22 August to 4 September**

Week 7	7 Sep	**Narratives of Crime**

Glen Creeber (2005) "Serial Killers: Murder, Masculinity and the Reinvention of the Crime Genre", Chapter 3 in *Serial Television. Big Drama on the Small Screen*, London: British Film Institute, pp. 78-112. **PRIORITY READING**

Richard Sparks (1993) "Inspector Morse: The Last Enemy (Peter Buckman)" Chapter 5 in G.W. Brandt British Television Drama in the 1980s, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 86-102.

Deborah Jermyn (2004) "This *Is* About Real People!": Video Technologies, Actuality and Affect in the Television Crime Appeal", Chapter 3 in Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (eds.), *Understanding Reality Television,* London: Routledge, pp. 71-90. **PRIORITY READING**

Week 8	14 Sep	**Narrative Complexity** (High-End Drama)

Robin Nelson (1997) "Flexi-Narrative from *Hill Street* to *Holby City*: Upping the Tempo; Raising the Temperature", Chapter 2 in Nelson, *TV Drama in Transition: Forms, Values and Cultural Change*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, pp. 30-49.

Jason Mittell (2006) "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television", *The Velvet Light Trap*, Texas: University of Texas Press, Number 58, Fall, pp. 29-40. **PRIORITY READING**

David Lavery (2005) "It's Not Television, its Magic Realism: the Mundane, the Grotesque, and the Fantastic in *Six Feet Under*", in Kim Akass and Janet MacCabe (eds.) *Reading Six Feet Under: TV to Die For*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, pp. 19-33.

Week 9	21 Sep	**Narrating Humour** (Scripted Comedy)

Barry Langford (2005) "'Our Usual Impasse': the Episodic Situation Comedy Revisited", Chapter 1 in Jonathan Bignell and Stephen Lacey (eds.) *Popular Television Drama: Critical Perspectives*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 15-33.

David Pierson (2005) "American Situation Comedies and the Modern Comedy of Manners", Chapter 3 in Mary M. Dalton and Laura R. Linder (eds.) *The Sitcom Reader: America Viewed and Skewed*, New York: State University of New York, pp. 35-46. **PRIORITY READING**

Wendy Hilton-Morrow and David McMahan (2003) "*The Flintstones* to *Futurama*: Networks and Prime Time Animation", Chapter 4 in Carol A. Stabile and Mark Harrison (eds.), *Prime Time Animation: Television Animation and American Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 74-88.

Week 10	28 Sep	**Narratives of Competition: the 'Reality' Game-Doc**

Jane Roscoe, (2004) "*Big Brother* in Australia: Performing the "Real" Twenty-Four-Seven", in Robert C. Allen and Annette Hill (eds.), *The TV Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 311-321.

Henry Jenkins (2006) "Buying into *American Idol*: How we are Being Sold on Reality Television", Chapter 2 in Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York University Press: New York and London, pp. 59-93.

Holmes, Su (2004) "Reality Goes Pop! Reality TV, Popular Music, and Narratives of Stardom in *Pop Idol*", *Television and New Media*, Vol.5, No. 2 May, pp. 147-172. **PRIORITY READING**

Week 11   5 Oct   **TV Narrative and Format Adaptation**

Jeanette Steemers (2004) "Process and Product: the Global Trade in Television Programmes", Chapter 2 in Steemers' *Selling Television: British Television in the Global Marketplace*, British Film Institute, pp. 22-48.

Scott-Robert Olsen (2004) Hollywood Planet: Global Media and the Competitive Advantage of Narrative Transparency" in Robert C. Allen and Annette Hill (eds.) *The Television Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 111-129. **PRIORITY READING**

Alexandra Beeden and Joost de Bruin (2010) "*The Office*: Articulations of National Identity in Television Format Adaptation" in *Television and New Media*, Sage Publications, Vol. 11 No.1, pp.3-19.

Week 12   12 Oct   **Mixed Genre Narration: Docusoap and Comedy Verité** (Last tutorial presentations)

Annette Hill (2005) "The Rise of Reality TV", Chapter 2 in Hill, *Reality TV: Audiences and Popular Factual Television*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 14-40.

Jon Dovey (2000) "McDox 'R'Us – Docu-soap and the Triumph of Trivia", Chapter 6 in Dovey, *Freakshow: First Person Media and Factual Television*, London: Pluto Press, pp. 133-153.

Keith Beattie (2004) "Up Close and Personal: Popular Factual Entertainment", Chapter 10 in Beattie, *Documentary Screens: Nonfiction Film and Television*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 182-203.

Brett Mills (2004) "Comedy Verité: Contemporary Sitcom Form", *Screen* 45:1, Spring 2004, pp. 63-78. **PRIORITY READING**

Ethan Thompson (2007) "Comedy Verité? The Observational Documentary Meets the Televisual Sitcom", *The Velvet Light Trap*, No. 60 Fall, Texas: University of Texas Press, pp. 63-72.