MST 226: TELEVISION APPRECIATION (GFA)
Tu, Th 3:30 (Sullivan 200)

Course Description: Analysis of the cultural and artistic significance of selected television programs. MST 226 explores contemporary television as an art form. It satisfies UNCG’s General Education Fine Arts (GFA) requirement. Students will: (a) develop an analytic framework for evaluating the artistic properties of TV and interpreting its messages; and (b) apply this framework to evaluate, interpret, and, hence, “appreciate” television.

Course Student Learning Outcomes¹: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Describe the visual, aesthetic, and narrative methods that television uses to communicate [SLO 1]
2. Interpret the meanings of and values expressed in television “texts” [SLO 2, SLO 3]
3. Evaluate the aesthetic qualities of television works [SLO 2]
4. Identify television’s role as a social critic and/or philosopher [SLO 2, SLO 3]
5. Converse in the lexicon of television artistry and production [SLO 1]

Teaching Methods and Assignments for Achieving Learning Outcomes: (a) viewings of television “texts”; (b) readings; (c) producer commentaries/ podcasts; (d) lectures; (e) discussion; (f) short-answer exercises; (g) multiple-choice and short-answer tests

Opportunities for Evaluation and Grading:

30% = Multiple Choice Test– in-class multiple choice test
The Test will require you to analyze the artistic qualities/ components of television text, and apply concepts covered in both class and the assigned readings. It will focus on portions of Breaking Bad and The Walking Dead as well as all content covered up to this point

15% = Technical Viewing Exercise (test) – in-class viewing of television episode, analysis of shots/camera-work/meaning; short answer

20% = Written Take-home Assignment – short-answer/ short essay assignment (based on readings and independent viewing)

35% = Final Exam – in 200 Sullivan, as per University Exam Schedule.
The Final will require you to analyze the philosophical meanings of television texts, the ways television functions as a cultural and social critic, and how it communicates its messages and themes. The FINAL is weighted toward material covered from Oct-Nov, but includes all material covered during the course.

Extra Credit (In-class) Exercises:
There will be at least 1 in-class extra credit exercise. It must be completed in class and will NOT be announced in advance. If you miss class, you cannot do it later, on your own, outside of class. Students who sufficiently participate in and complete the extra credit exercise will earn +1/3 point on the 20% Written Take-home Assignment. (So an A - → A).

¹ By achieving the Course SLOs, students will achieve the University’s GFA SLOs. Hence, students will be able to:
1. Describe the aims and methods of aesthetic and intellectual expression in the creative arts
2. Describe and interpret art forms in relation to cultural values
3. Identify the fundamental roles of artistic expression in personal or collective experience
Reasonable accommodations will be made for students who suffer a prolonged illness +/- or disability or significant personal hardship. Students should first contact the Office of Disability Services, Student Success Center, or the appropriate Student Affairs liaison, and we will work together to craft a solution.

**Materials:** (1) readings (on Blackboard), (2) TV shows available on Netflix streaming (therefore you must subscribe or purchase episodes), (3) podcasts

**Available on Netflix Streaming:**

**Breaking Bad**
- By the Multiple Choice Test complete: Season 1, ep# 1-3, 6-7; Season 2, ep# 1, 2, 4-7, 10-13;
  Season 3, ep# 1, 3-9, 10-13
- By the Final Exam complete: Season 4

**The Walking Dead**
- By the Multiple Choice Test complete: Season 1, ep# 1, 2; Season 2, ep# 1-7 ("Pretty Much Dead Already" a/k/a “barnageddon”)
- By the Final Exam complete: remainder of Season 2; Season 3 (episodes TBA), Season 4 A (ep #1-5, 8), Season 4 B ep #14 "The Grove” ... Please Note: season 4B (through March 2014) may not be on Netflix, so you will need to buy or watch "Flowers" on amazonpime, vudu, etc

**The Writers’ Room**  ep # 1 Breaking Bad, Ep #2 Dexter

**Dexter** S 1, ep #1, S ep #4 (episodes TBA in class)

**Sherlock** Series 1, Series 2

**Unlocking Sherlock** (Netflix classifies this as a movie)

**Lost** pilot

**Community** portions of Seasons 1, 2, 3, 4 (shown or excerpted in class)

Podcasts, available online (itunes, podbay)

**The Official Breaking Bad podcast** (hosted by Kelly Dixon), podcast to S #3, ep 12, 13

**Nerdist, The Writers’ Room podcast** (Carlton Cuse, 7/2014, and other TBA)

**TOPICAL OUTLINE & SCHEDULE**

This is a general outline of TOPICS; some TV viewing assignments will be added and adjusted in class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>To be completed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aug 19-21</strong></td>
<td>“This ain’t chemistry – this is art; Cooking is ‘Art.’”</td>
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<td><strong>Television’s Aesthetic Methods of Communication</strong></td>
<td><strong>WATCH</strong> Br Bad ep #1-3</td>
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<td><strong>Visual Language; Color as Meaning; Light and lighting</strong></td>
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| **Aug 26-28** | Construction of character: Writers portrayal: Actors |
| **WATCH** Br Bad ep 6, 7; Br Bad Season 2, ep #1-2, 4-7, 10-13 |

| **Sep 2-4** | Set Design, locations, Art direction, effects |
| **READ** The Walking Dead _Book.ch_ (re: characters, character-driven drama), |

| **Sep 9: NO CLASS (catch up on viewing)** |
| **Sep 11** | **WATCH** The Walking Dead: S 1 ep #1-2 |
Sep 16-18
Camerawork and Production
The Lexicon and Anatomy of the Visual

READ KP_Camera Visual Storytelling, CAMERA- Shot-by-shot

Sep 23-25
Tu 9/23= Test prep (Community, Paintball)

Th 9/25 Technical Viewing Test

Sep 30-Oct 2
Representations of time, flashbacks/ flashforwards

WATCH Br Bad Season 3, ep# 1, 3-9, 10-13; The Walking Dead: S 2 ep #1-7

Oct 7-9
Tu 10/7= Test prep

Th 10/9= Multiple Choice Test
covers all assigned reading, content discussed, and
Br Bad: Season 1 ep #1-3, 6-7; Season 2, ep# 1, 2, 4-7, 10-13;
Season 3, ep# 1, 3-9, 10-13; Walking Dead: S 1 ep#1-2; S 2 ep #1-7

Oct 16-20
Genre
Television “conventions”
Intertextuality, postmodernism

WATCH Sherlock, Series 1 and 2; Unlocking Sherlock

Oct 23-30
Th 10/30 = DUE: Written Take-home Assignment
a/k/a/ Sherlock viewing assignment (directions on Blackboard)
It must be typed and handed in at the end of class

READ Dexter_openings, Bignell Ch (Television Texts and TV Narratives)

WATCH prior to class!! Dexter ep #1, The Writers’ Room ep # Dexter

READ Editing Powerpoint (optional), The Walking Dead – comic-to-TV

WATCH Walking Dead Season 2, 3 (TBA)

Nov 4-6
TV as Philosophy
Heroes, Good vs. Evil, Nature v. Nurture

WATCH Lost: pilot,
The Walking Dead Season 4 A (ep #1-5, 8), Season 4 B, ep #14 “The Grove”

Nov 11-13
Editing, montage
Adaptations

Nov 13- end
Narrative Complexity
TV as Literature;
TV as Cultural Critic, Social Commentary

WATCH by Final Exam: remaining
Breaking Bad

Thur Nov. 20 Last Day of Class
Thur Dec 4, 3:30 = FINAL EXAM