MST 428 – TOPICS IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA: SITCOMS

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

MST 428 Topics in Electronic Media: Sitcoms
Study of selected topics in fictive or non-fictive programming for the electronic media including genres, delivery systems, or other emphasis.

FOR WHOM THIS COURSE IS INTENDED

This course is an option for one of the eight additional courses beyond the core of the Media Studies major at UNC Greensboro. It is an option course for students in other majors who wish to minor in either Media Studies at UNCG. It does NOT satisfy any of the GEC or GEC plus CAR requirements.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through the work in this course, the student will

1. acquire a working knowledge of the history of the genre of situation comedy and how it has shaped television situation comedies today

2. be able to understand the mechanics of the situation comedy form.

3. be able to understand television situation comedies as a reflector, interpreter, and shaper of American society.

This is primarily a viewing course with class discussion an integral part of the class format.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Classroom & Time: The course will meet in Carmichael Building, Room 002, Monday and Wednesday from 9:30 AM to 10:45 AM.

Instructor: The instructor for the course is Frank Donaldson, whose office is located in Room 211, Brown Building. His office hours are Monday and Wednesday from 8:00 A.M. to 9:15 A.M. and by appointment. Office phone: 334-4146 Email: Frank_Donaldson@uncg.edu

Attendance: Each student is responsible for knowing and adhering to the schedule as herein outlined. All of the content of the course will be developed in class sessions. Attendance, therefore, is strictly required. You will be allowed TWO absences for whatever reason – illness, University approved function, or just to cut.

(NOTE: THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES! YOU ARE EITHER PRESENT OR YOU ARE NOT!) Beyond those two absences each absence will reduce your grade by one-third a letter grade. This grade adjustment will be made at the time when a final letter grade has been assigned for the course. (e.g. if you have a final grade average which is an A- and you have four absences, your final letter grade will be a B+).

If you exceed four absences, on your fifth absence you will be withdrawn from the course, no matter at what point in the semester it occurs.
Be sure and sign the roll that will be circulated at the start of class. **Failure to sign the roll will result in your being counted absent. LEAVING THE CLASS EARLY FOR ANY REASON WILL RESULT IN AN ABSENCE.**

**Do NOT schedule appointments during class time.** Leaving early because you scheduled an appointment is not a valid excuse.

**SOMEONE ELSE SIGNING THE ROLL FOR YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED AN HONOR CODE VIOLATION AND RESULT IN YOU BEING DROPPED FROM THE COURSE.**

Tardiness is unacceptable for this class. The name of students who arrive at class later than 1:10 will be noted. **You will be charged one absence for each two tardys.**

**IMPORTANT REMINDERS:** Media Studies majors and minors must pass this course with at least a grade of “C” or better.

**Adverse Weather:** Typically, January and February are months when the University may be forced to delay or close owing to adverse weather conditions. The best way to find out about closings and delays is to go to the University homepage where any changes in schedule owing to weather conditions will be posted. You can also find out through the usual media outlets or you can call 334-5000 and there will be a recorded message. This class will meet based on the schedule decided upon by the University. Decisions on University classes are usually made and announced around 6 to 6:30 AM. I will post an announcement on Canvas, should I need to deviate from the University’s decision.

**Text:** Notes about each days content may be found in the Module Section of Canvas under the Course Schedule link.

**Grading:** This semester there will be FIVE quizzes and a final examination. The average of the five quizzes will constitute **70%** of the course grade and the final **comprehensive** examination will count **30%** of the course grade. Each quiz will cover only the material presented since the previous quiz. There will be **NO** optional examinations and **NO** extra credit papers to cover missed quizzes. Quizzes **MUST** be taken at the time scheduled or other arrangements must be made with the instructor **PRIOR TO** the quiz date. Once a quiz has been returned, the opportunity to make it up is lost. For approved health related or university absences on a quiz day, that quiz score may be dropped and not counted in the average. Students will be responsible for the content of the quiz on the final exam though. Such approvals must be formally accepted by the instructor **PRIOR TO** the quiz date. Should an unforeseen problem arise to prevent you taking a quiz, contact the instructor **IMMEDIATELY.** If you can take the quiz prior to my giving them back, you **MAY** be allowed to do so.

Grades will be curved so that the highest raw score equals 100 on the following scale:

- A+ = 99-100
- A = 95-98
- A- = 93-94
- B+ = 91-92
- B = 85-90
- B- = 83-84
- C+ = 81-82
- C = 75-80
- C- = 73-74
- D+ = 71-72
- D = 65-70
- D- = 63-64
- F = 62 and below

Attendance will be considered, as previously noted, in determining a student’s final grade average for the course. Please review the quiz and final examination dates and make arrangements with the instructor in advance of any problems.
Extra Credit: Participation in class discussions may provide you with the opportunity to add up to five points to your course average. The course instructor will keep records of participants and provide a scale of number of days participating and points earned for each.

Class Decorum: Turn off/mute ALL electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, laptops, etc.) before class. No wearing of headphones during class or quizzes. Students found using social media during class will receive one warning. On the second offense the device will be confiscated for the remainder of the class period. On the third occasion the student will be kicked out of class and counted absent.

Subsequent infractions will result in five points being subtracted from the final grade in addition to the absence. Please observe appropriate conduct in class. Students carrying on private conversations will be asked to leave resulting in a class absence. Students sleeping in class will be asked to leave resulting in a class absence.

Honor Policy: Students are expected to know and abide by the UNCG Academic Honor Policy. On all the quizzes and the final examination for this course each student must sign the following statement:

“I have abided by the UNCG Academic Honor Policy on this examination.”

COURSE OUTLINE

This outline is subject to change based on how much progress we are able to make each day in covering the content. Every effort will be made to adhere to this schedule and an attempt will be made to NOT change any of the quiz dates. If a quiz date must be changed, accommodation will be made by the course instructor for students who suffer a hardship as a result. NOTES FOR EACH DAY WILL BE FOUND ON THE CANVAS MENU LINK CLASS SCHEDULE IN THE MODULES.

Wed., Jan. 18: WELCOME TO THE COURSE
Mon., Jan. 23: SITUATION COMEDIES: THEY STARTED IN RADIO
Mon., Jan. 30: EARLY SITCOM CONTROVERSY: AMOS ‘N ANDY
THE LIFE OF RILEY
Mon., Feb. 6: 1950’S FAMILY SITCOMS: FATHER KNOWS BEST
LEAVE IT TO BEAVER
Wed., Feb. 8: QUIZ ONE
THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW
Wed., Feb. 15: 1960’S GROUND BREAKING SITCOM: JULIA
RURAL COMEDY: THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES
Mon., Feb. 20: 1960’S ESCAPIST SITCOMS: BEWITCHED
GET SMART
M*A*S*H

                  CHICO AND THE MAN

Mon., March 6: 1970'S NOSTALGIA COMEDY: HAPPY DAYS
                  THE PARODY SITCOM: SOAP

Wed., March 8: QUIZ TWO

Mon., March 13: NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

Wed., March 15: NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

                  ROSEANNE

                  1980'S ENSEMBLE COMEDY: CHEERS

Mon., March 27: 1990'S: A SHOW ABOUT NOTHING: SEINFELD

                  1990'S: FEMALE EMPOWERMENT: MURPHY BROWN

Mon., April 3: QUIZ THREE

                  2000'S: MEDICAL SITCOM: SCRUBS

                  2000'S: PARODY SITCOM: 30 ROCK


Mon., April 17: 2000'S: A NEW TYPE FAMILY SITCOM: MODERN FAMILY
                  2000'S: A NEW TYPE FAMILY SITCOM: BLACK-ISH


Mon., April 24: QUIZ FOUR

Wed., April 26: THE COURSE IN REVIEW

Mon., May 1: FINAL EXAMINATION (at regular class time)