

CMS275 Race Sex Violence and Power: 1970-Present Film/TV Analysis

Instructor: Tamara Cooper
M/W 12:30-2:20

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MGH 295

Office meeting by appointment Padelford 534B, Wednesdays after 4:30pm preferred
Sept 27 – Dec 6, 2017 **Grades due: December 19**

C Lit 275 is designed as an introductory film analysis course, which includes audience and filmic interactions with other forms of public media. While we examine the impact of market and technological innovation on public media in the forms of TV and film, not surprisingly we will focus primarily on themes of representations of sex, race and violence in the context multiple negotiations of power. It may seem like a catchy course title, but in the increasingly varied forms representations of these three demonstrate major changes in contemporary media, shifting social mores and consumer demands for both quality and reality-based or more relatable programming.

Through humour, 1970s shows like - *All in the Family*, and *M*A*S*H* supplanted an accepted popular version of the so-called all-American family who lived in the mythic 'good old days', while films like *Dirty Harry* and *Marathon Man* challenged those same ideas through extreme violence. In the 1980s family sitcoms are essentially less challenging, police and hospital dramas delve into the grit of everyday lives and *Dallas* offers a fantasy-driven peek into the world of dominant power, money and corruption.

By the 1980/1990s American independent cinema experiences a renewed surge and reflects a new ethics against sexism, racism and homophobia. Just as stand-up comics dominate the stage with explicit hard-hitting humour, in the 1990s they begin to write a whole new form of humour aimed at altering the sitcom format; the big three networks – ABC, NBC and CBS – adapt yet again, faced with the spread of cable TV. Just as we are now going through a TV viewing revolution of sorts, the decades between 1970 and 2000 mark a coming-of-age for American TV viewers and American TV.

Where are we now and what in the last 15-20 years has spurred on yet another change in viewing dynamics? It seems clear up until the 2000s, Film and TV may have been called upon to both help us connect to larger social issues and help us to distance ourselves completely from our lived realities by delving into those of others. Are we still reality obsessed? Are we savvy or jaded viewers? As we head toward the 2020s, reflect on our current viewing interests, desires, and collective fantasies; compare them to the materials we view throughout the class. The purpose of this class is ultimately twofold. 1. Students will understand and be able to mobilize the basics of film and televisual analyses. 2. Students will develop an enhanced sense of the interactions between concepts of ability, gender, race, class, power, violence and themselves; they will understand the ways those impact our viewing experiences.

Assignments:

- 1. In class and Group Participation – 15%**
- 2. Group Research and Analysis - 15%** Based on group analysis and research of Netflix mini-series
- 3. Online Responses - 10%**
 - * Due by Sunday 9pm of each week
 - * In response to screenings/ readings in preparation for Mon/Wed's classes
 - * 200/300 words including 2 critical analysis questions
 - * Please bring your critical analysis questions to Wednesday classes
- 4. Short Answer and Multiple Choice Test x 2 60%**

The Online Post is a space for critical analysis. You are welcome to combine your commentary to include the relationship between film, TV and reading or to record your critical responses to each separately **as long as they are in line with the guiding question or topic of the week.**

Please refrain from stating whether or not the viewing and/or reading was 'good' or 'bad/' 'worthwhile' or 'worthless'. Please also refrain from judging the quality of each other's posts.

It is expected, once you have posted your critical response by the Sunday of each week, that you will also read and respond to at least one of your colleague's posts by Wednesday morning before class. Only a few sentences in response to your colleague are necessary.

Schedule – Subject to change based on availability of some shows

September 27 – Introduction – Atlanta 1:1

Link to Glover and Handmaid's Tale Emmy Winners

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/tv/la-et-emmys-2017-69th-emmy-awards-live-donald-glover-just-made-1505695933-htm1story.html>

Link to History in the making:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/pop-culture/awards/lena-waithe-donald-glover-make-history-emmys-n802221>

Unit 1 – Estranged Heroes: Gender and Generations in Crisis 1970s

1 Oct 2-4

Viewing: Empire – Pilot Amazon/ *All in the Family*

https://youtu.be/m6ev_kqWGBs

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M Intro – Keep in mind 'Love Sex and Violence' can occur all at once – put another way – what is violence?

W Language of Film and TV – some vocab and concepts we will cover

2 Oct 9-11

Viewing: *Marathon Man* - Canvas / *In the Heat of the Night* – Amazon/Canvas

Reading: Masculinity and Heroes

M Cold War Films

W The Slap Heard Around the World

3 Oct 16-18

Viewing: Luke Cage 1:4 Jessica Jones 1:6/ Daredevil 1:2 - Netflix

Reading: What is TV Studies?

M The Masculine, The Feminine and Heroes continued

W Review for Test

Unit 2 Bodily Harm: Comedy, Horror, Crime and Drama

4 Oct 23-25

Viewing: *Flip Wilson's Geraldine* <https://youtu.be/Sho-f0QGejc>

<https://youtu.be/tcBn0K84ZdE> / *M*A*S*H* Canvas (The TV show) *The Cosby Show*

<https://youtu.be/hlIEPPym9xQ>

Reading: Quality Television and Consensus Narratives

M Brief short answer test

W New ways of Laughing

5 Nov 30- 1

Viewing: W: *Apocalypse Now* – Canvas / *American Horror Story 5:5 Room Service*

Reading: New Hollywood and Its Influences

M Shaping the uncanny

W War, malaise and paranoia compared to *M*A*S*H*

6 Nov 6-8

Viewing: *Hill Street Blues* - <https://youtu.be/Z5hIXJ9H8gl> Soap - Canvas

Dynasty https://youtu.be/IN-ut_5i_Bw / <https://youtu.be/aaX43ebVdc0>

Reading: Night Time Soaps and The Return to the Real? Confusion or Complexity

M True Grit – Restoring the Role of Masculinity

W Shoulder Pads, Power Suits and Pearls (*Soap* – the sitcom)

Unit 3 Freedom or Free for All?

7 Nov 13-15

Viewing: *The L Word* – Netflix Pilot 1&2 / *Transparent* 1:1 – Amazon Prime

Reading: Prep for analysis test

M Short analysis test

W Who is playing what roles?

8 Nov 20-22

Viewing: M: *Richard Pryor* / *Eddie Murphy Raw* / *Chappelle* - Netflix

Reading: Stand-Up Generations

M “Cocaine is a hell-uv-a drug”

W What can be said (and what cannot)

9 Nov 27-29 _____

Viewing: *Your presentations*

M How might we define this era?

W Your presentations

10 Dec 4-6 _____

Your presentations

List of Possible Choices

American Mini-Series

House of Cards 2016 - Netflix

Bates Motel 2016 - A&E via Netflix

Stranger Things 2016 - Netflix

Breaking Bad 2013 - AMC via Netflix

American Horror Story 2016 - Netflix

Black Mirror 2016 - Netflix

British Mini-Series

The House of Cards Trilogy 1995 Netflix

Top of the Lake 2013 - BBC (New Zealand/ Britain/ America) Jane Campion Netflix

Broadchurch 2015 - ITV/ BBC -Netflix

The Fall 2016 - BBC (Northern Ireland) Netflix

Happy Valley 2016 - BBC Netflix

Wallander 2014 (Britain) BBC Netflix