

College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline

1. **COURSE ID:** FILM 145 **TITLE:** Watching Quality Television
Units: 4.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 64.0-72.0 Lecture hours; and 128.0-144.0 Homework hours
Method of Grading: Grade Option (Letter Grade or P/NP)
Recommended Preparation:
 Eligibility for ENGL 838 or ENGL 848

2. **COURSE DESIGNATION:**
Degree Credit
Transfer credit: CSU; UC
CSU GE:
 CSU GE Area C: ARTS AND HUMANITIES: C1 - Arts (Arts, Cinema, Dance, Music, Theater)
IGETC:
 IGETC Area 3: ARTS AND HUMANITIES: A: Arts

3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**
Catalog Description:
 Explores a variety of popular, critically acclaimed cable, satellite and network television programs from a cinematic perspective. Topics to include the history of quality television; the influence of filmmakers and film genres on quality TV; and cable and satellite broadcast as a venue for film style experimentation and social commentary.

4. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:
 1. identify key aesthetic and cultural relationships between film and television
 2. identify major historical development in film during the television age
 3. write critical commentary and essays explaining the interplay between film and television

5. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**
 Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:
 1. identify key aesthetic and cultural relationships between film and television
 2. identify major historical development in film during the television age
 3. write critical commentary and essays explaining the interplay between film and television

6. **COURSE CONTENT:**
Lecture Content:
 Overview of primary content themes:
 1. historical, cultural and aesthetic overview of film and television
 2. specific instances of film on television, and television on film
 3. focus on cable and satellite television as new venue for film art and experimentation
 4. survey of popular and important quality television programs
 5. social issues explored on quality television programs

 This course focuses on what has come to be termed “quality television.” Though it has its own history, television has always been a key component of film history and film art. In many ways, television grew out of film: before videotape, many early television programs were filmed; some major film studios began producing television right away, or later on; television actors, writers and directors moved into film, and vice versa; television began exhibiting films, and later influenced film style.

 With the recent flood of quality television since the mid-1990s, however, it becomes clear that mostly what is meant by “quality” is...cinematic. In other words, these quality television shows, mostly produced by or for cable networks--*The West Wing, The X-Files, Lost, The Sopranos, Six Feet Under, Breaking Bad, Deadwood, Girls, Sex in the City, The Wire, The Walking Dead, Mad Men*--are often described as achieving a level of sophistication equal, or superior, to film.

 This course critically surveys several of these quality TV shows for their cinematic influences, but also for how they are distinctly televisual. Cinematic influences covered include cinematography, editing, story structure, genres and tone. While the course situates quality TV in relation to film, it also examines how quality TV expands (and improves) the television horizon. Lastly, the course also addresses how these shows reflect, and comment upon, popular culture and other social trends and issues.

The Golden Age, Remixed
The Sopranos (1999-2007, credit sequence)
The Twilight Zone, season 1 (1959)

Auteur TV
Twin Peaks, pilot (1990)

Quality Network: Paranormal
The X-Files, season 1 (1993)

Quality Cable: HBO's Gangsters
The Sopranos
The Wire

Lord of the Rings for Grown-Ups
Game of Thrones (HBO, 2011-present)

Quality TV: Horror
True Blood (HBO, 2008-present)

1960s Nostalgia and Authenticity
Mad Men (AMC, 2007-present)

Quality Serial Killer TV
Dexter (Showtime, 2006-present)

Conclusion
Breaking Bad (AMC, 2008-present)

Lab Content:

None

TBA Hours Content:

None

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Critique
- C. Discussion
- D. Other (Specify): Screening, and class exercises. Film clips via video projection are used to illustrate concepts and elicit discussion. Students are asked to verbally apply film and television concepts to cable television episodes and sequences. Students are asked to write brief commentaries on specific film and television concepts, as preparation for midterms and final paper.

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

- A. journal on each cable television program
- B. brief outside research on production of programs
- C. in-class midterm
- D. in-class final
- E. term paper
- F. class presentation

Reading Assignments:

- A. readings in required textbooks on history and theory of film and television
- B. minimal outside research

Other Outside Assignments:

None

To be Arranged Assignments:

None

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Performance
- C. Class Work
- D. Exams/Tests
- E. Group Projects
- F. Homework
- G. Oral Presentation
- H. Papers
- I. Projects
- J. Quizzes
- K. Research Projects

10. REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):

Possible textbooks include:

- A. Defino, Dean. *The HBO Effect*, 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2013
- B. Martin, Brett. *Difficult Men*, 1st ed. New York: Penguin, 2013
- C. Mittell, Jason. *Complex TV*, ed. NYU press, 2015

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Course Originator: David Laderman