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# Montclair State University

School of Communication and Media

(University catalog description): "An inquiry into how video and televisuals work and what they communicate. The intent of the course is twofold: to help students understand how moving pictures themselves convey meaning and what kind of meanings these are, and how the commercial television industry predominantly offers a particular, limited version of the medium's possibilities in its news, information, and entertainment programming. This includes a component wherein students further their learning of these lessons through the creation of their own simple productions."

Zoom ID# 936 7650 7836

# The Language Of Television

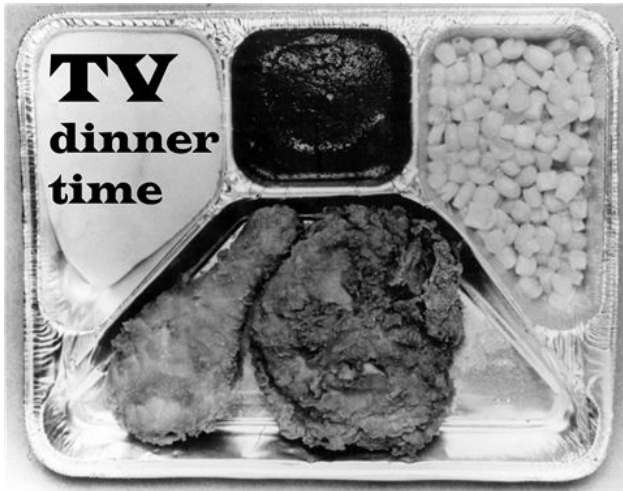
TVDM 201 | Fall 2020



## Course Description

Electronic television debuted at the 1939 World's Fair in New York as little more than an "oversized radio with a gray window in the front. Not only has television evolved as a technology, but it has also evolved as a medium for news, entertainment, storytelling, and even social change. Television is a major source of social understanding and a connection to lifestyles other than our own. In this sense, television is neither an enemy nor is it a neutral reflection of our culture. Television is an information environment that shapes what humans think, how humans think, and how humans behave.

As both consumers and creators of media content in this course, you will view a range of examples drawn from classical television, sitcoms, dramas, news programming and reality television. Through a variety of televisual texts you will learn the narrative, aesthetic, and stylistic principles that constitute the language of television. You will hone your television literacy skills and, more specifically, your ability to access, analyze, evaluate, produce, communicate, reflect and act with and across televisual platforms.



## Learning Outcomes

- **Access** a variety of TV programming and scholarly writings in the fields of television studies and critical media literacy.
- **Identify** the various social, political, and economic lenses that are used in analyzing the messages of TV programming.
- **Understand** and **engage in** the processes of critical thinking.
- **Summarize, analyze, and evaluate** examples of TV messages and audiences.
- **Produce** an original piece of television criticism using multimedia tools.
- **Communicate** your developing understanding of the various forms and functions of television within American culture.

## Essential Questions

- Why is television *literacy* important?
- What is the role of the TV critic?
- What theories can inform the study of television?
- How does the television industry actually work?
- What are the codes and conventions of television production?
- In what ways does television function as a storyteller?
- In what ways is television a "window to the world?"
- How is post-modernism relevant to the study of television?
- What are the rules for television criticism?
- What are the implications of streaming video on demand (SVOD)?
- How does television represent reality?
- Does television ever end?





## Required Course Materials

### **Reliable, high-speed internet access.**

You will need sufficient bandwidth to participate via Zoom audio/video. We will view media texts synchronously through Zoom, which requires up-to-date software and operating system specs. Check the Office of Information Technology web site for details.

### **Make arrangements to legally and lawfully rent, buy, or stream TV programming.**

If you do not have access to cable TV service, then a monthly subscription to Netflix is all you need for the assigned programming this semester. You are required to have continued access to various programming for use in your written assignments and projects for the duration of the semester. Ultimately you are 100 percent responsible for meeting this TV viewing requirement.

### **Respondus Lockdown Browser.**

This software is required to take the quizzes within Canvas. For instructions on how to install it and use it on your device, go to:

<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=879213189>

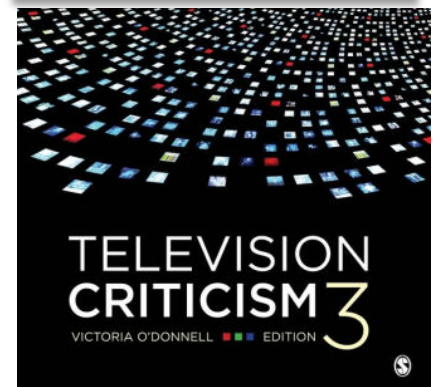
### **A working knowledge of Zoom.**

It is important for you to be able to navigate our online classroom environment (Zoom). I recommend this excellent 13-minute tutorial "Zoom for Students," whether you are using a desktop, laptop, and/or smart phone:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbnyQwsVbiY> See "Zoom Etiquette" on page 4.

The University has a **FREE laptop lending program**, and you are also encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office to receive support and advice. Go to: <https://www.montclair.edu/policies/all-policies/laptop-lending-policy/>

## Required Textbook



O'Donnell, V. (2017)  
*Television Criticism*  
(3rd edition only).  
Sage Publications.  
ISBN: 978-1-4833-7768-1





## Course Rhythm

- Complete the reading in the textbook *prior* to the session listed on the course calendar. Submit the weekly quiz prior to the deadline listed.
- Enter the Zoom classroom a few minutes before class begins. (Meeting ID + password)
- Mute your mic but activate your video camera. Participate in real time. Take notes, as needed.
- After the class session, review your notes and submit the Learning App for the week by the designated Canvas due date.
- Prepare for the next class session by reading the chapter designated on the course calendar
- Due to the vast number of students enrolled in this course, **no late assignments are permitted.**

## This course is offered in HawkSYNC mode.

HawkSYNC mode is fully online. This means that you will attend class sessions in real time via Zoom **Wednesdays 10:45am-1:15pm** and complete assignments asynchronously through Canvas.

Anticipate 2-3 hours of weekly workload beyond Zoom. To lighten the load, I have created *critic clouds* of groups of 3-4 students. There is one formal "cloud" assignment, but I strongly encourage you to band together for support to increase your chances of successfully completing (and enjoying) this course. You will find your cloud in Canvas > People >Groups

Note: Class sessions will **not** be recorded in HawkSYNC mode, so if you miss a class session, consult your cloud members for notes. Share freely.

## Zoom Etiquette

- Make sure you have a **recognizable head shot** in your Canvas and Zoom profiles.
- Your **video camera should be activated for the duration of the class session.**
- Given the length of our class session, pick a professional and comfortable sitting position.
- Use the signals/indicators in Zoom (e.g., raised hand, thumbs up, etc.) to interact in real time.



## Performance Expectations

**All written work should adhere to university standards for writing** (see specifics at <http://www.montclair.edu/dean-of-students/handbook/writing-standards/>). You are responsible for citing/attributing the source of all work (including quotes, videos, images, and logos) that you use as part of your work in this course. Consult the 7th edition of the APA Style Guide on how to produce college-level writing (Go to <http://www.apastyle.org>).

**I expect you to do your own work for this course, work independently, and give credit for all materials used in your research.** As a university student, digital citizen, and a future professional in the workplace, you are responsible for knowing and adhering to the university policies on academic honesty. All students who engage in dishonest acts such as cheating and/or plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary action, which includes failure of the course and possible expulsion from the university. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes a violation of academic honesty, as per the Student Handbook.

**Montclair State University is committed to maintaining an environment that is inclusive and free of discrimination, bullying, or harassment.** MSU welcomes persons from all racial, ethnic, social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Behavior that violates the civil and statutory rights of any individual or group, or interferes with any individual or group's ability to benefit from, or contribute to, the employment, educational, and/or cultural opportunities provided by the University constitutes a violation of University policy and will not be tolerated.

## Need Help?

### Feeling lost or overwhelmed?

If you are experiencing stress to the extent that is interfering with your ability to cope with this course and/or normal every day tasks, *please seek help*. At Montclair State University, all counseling services are free, voluntary and confidential. You can call (973) 655-5211 or go to <https://www.montclair.edu/msu-cares/>

### Having trouble with online learning in general?

You can live-chat with the Academic Support Center: <https://www.montclair.edu/academic-support-center/>

### Accommodating Students with Disabilities

It is important for those students with a documented disability to have the appropriate university staff communicate that information to me. This confidential information may afford modification of testing, or other class requirements. For more information, go to: <https://www.montclair.edu/disability-resource-center/about-our-services/> or call (973) 655-5431.

### Need Technology Assistance?

Submit a university Help Desk ticket or live chat at <https://msuchat.montclair.edu/>

## Performance Assessments

### READING QUIZZES (120 points).

There are weekly Canvas quizzes on each of the assigned chapters in the textbook. Lockdown Browser is required and the quizzes are rapid-fire (time limit) and closed-book/closed-note. Quizzes hold you accountable for completing the reading (preparing for class) and do not measure master of content. In other words, if you keep up with the reading, then you will keep up with the quizzes.

### LEARNING APPS (120 points)

As a follow-up to our weekly class sessions, you are asked to apply your new knowledge to a televisual (con)text of your choice. You will submit these learning applications or "apps" through Canvas (they do **not** require Lockdown Browser). Think of them as a collection of building blocks leading up to the final exam.

### CURATION CLOUD ACTIVITY (30 points)

Every student enrolled in the course belongs to a critic cloud of 4-5 members. Each cloud is responsible for providing the Zoom class with illustrative examples pertaining to specific concepts from the textbook. This measures your ability to collaborate with others, wrestle with complex ideas, pose insightful questions, and audio-visually communicate information within our Zoom environment. Each cloud will formulate questions for the final exam.

### FINAL EXAM (100 points)

The culminating assessment in the course is a Canvas-based exam based on the essential questions, textbook readings, learning applications, and cloud curation presentations. There will be a class session dedicated to review and preparation for the final examination.

## Perils of Multitasking

As MIT neuroscientist Earl Miller explained in an interview with NPR, most people are actually quickly shifting their attention from one task to another when they think they are doing two or three or eight things at once. That constant change of focus makes our brain *less* functional, not more.

Learn more at  
<http://www.digitalresponsibility.org/perils-of-multitasking>



## Grading Standards

The following evaluation criteria are applied to all oral, written, and digital assignments that comprise the course of study. Major assignments will be accompanied by more detailed assessment rubrics:

**A—Demonstration of superior work.** Work demonstrates deep and detailed understanding of material; is logically developed and academic in tone and approach. Sources used are cited appropriately and in accordance with APA style guidelines. Creativity or special insights are evident, and work is free from spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

**B—Very good work.** Work demonstrates a clear understanding of the material and provides relevant details that ground theory in practice. Work reflects appropriate tone and approach for college-level work and displays coherent organization, addresses the purpose of the assignment. Work is relatively free from spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

**C—Satisfactory work.** Work, for the most part, demonstrates understanding of material and provides a few relevant details. Work displays a basic level of organization, mildly addresses the purpose of the assignment, and contains spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

**D—Unsatisfactory work.** Student work displays a severe lack of understanding of material and provides little or no relevant detail. The work is poorly organized, does not meet the purpose of the assignment, and contains numerous spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

**F—Work is neither satisfactory nor complete.** Student work displays no understanding of material and provides no detail. The work lacks organization, does not meet the purpose of the assignment, and does not adhere to spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting guidelines.

94-100%= A	84-86%= B	74-76%= C	64-66%= D
90-93%= A-	80-83%= B-	70-73%= C-	60-63%= D-
87-89%= B+	77-79%= C+	67-69%= D+	59% or below= F

## Professor Contact



Vanessa E. Greenwood, Ph.D.  
Professor, School of Communication and Media  
Founding Director, C+MRC ([cmrcollaboratory.org](http://cmrcollaboratory.org))

### **Zoom Office Hours (ID# 589 624 8622)**

Tuesdays & Fridays 2:00-3:00pm  
Wednesdays 1:30-2:30pm

*Best method of contact is Canvas messaging or email*  
**[greenwoodv@montclair.edu](mailto:greenwoodv@montclair.edu)**



# Fall 2020 Semester Schedule

Date	Essential Questions	Readings & Assignments Due
<b>INTRODUCTION TO TELEVISUAL LITERACY</b>		
Aug 26	How do I pass this course?	Review course syllabus Acquire textbook & TV programming Course Survey
Sept 2	What is <i>television</i> and why is televisual literacy important?	Buckingham (1989) <i>Television Literacy</i> (PDF) Quiz #1   Learning App #1 due 9/7
Sept 9	What is the role of the television critic?	<i>TV Criticism</i> (Introduction & chapter 1) Quiz #2   Learning App #2 due 9/14 Curation Clouds #1 & #2 Present
<b>INDUSTRY &amp; POLITICS</b>		
Sept 16	How does the television industry work?	<i>TV Criticism</i> (chapter 2) Quiz #3   Learning App #3 due 9/21 Curation Clouds #3 & #4 Present
<b>FORM &amp; AESTHETICS</b>		
Sept 23	What are the codes and conventions of television production?	<i>TV Criticism</i> (chapter 3) Quiz #4   Learning App #4 due 9/28 Curation Clouds #5 & #6
Sept 30	In what ways does television function as a storyteller?	<i>TV Criticism</i> (chapter 4) Quiz #5   Learning App #5 due 10/5 Curation Clouds #7 & #8
Oct 7	What are the rules of televisual storytelling?	<i>TV Criticism</i> (chapter 5) Quiz #6   Learning App #6 due 10/12 Curation Clouds #9 & #10
<b>REPRESENTATIONAL MEANING</b>		
<i>October 14th—University Day (no classes)</i>		
10/14	In what ways is TV a "window to the world?"	<i>TV Criticism</i> (chapter 7) Quiz #7   Learning App #7 due 10/19
Oct 21	How "real" is reality television?	Best (2012) <i>Reality TV</i> [PDF] Quiz #8   Learning App #8 due 10/26 Curation Clouds #13 & #14
Oct 28	How are media representations constructions of reality?	<i>Navigating Media Literacy</i> [PDF] Quiz #9   Learning App #9 due 11/2 <b>Curation Clouds #11 &amp; #12 (chapter 7)</b>
<b>ENACTING TELEVISUAL LITERACY</b>		
Nov 4	What theories can we use to enact televisual literacy?	<i>TV Criticism</i> (chapter 6) Quiz #10   Learning App #10 due 11/9 Curation Clouds #15 & #16
Nov 11	In what ways is television post-modern?	<i>TV Criticism</i> (chapter 8) Quiz #11   Learning App #11 due 11/16 Curation Clouds #17 & #18
Nov 18	What are the rules for critiquing television?	<i>TV Criticism</i> (chapter 9) Quiz #12   Learning App #12 due 11/23 Curation Clouds #19 & #20
Nov 25	Does TV ever end?	Hagedoorn (2018) <i>Cultural Memory as TV</i> (PDF) Bonus Quiz (optional) Curation Clouds #21 & #22
Dec 2	<b>Final Exam</b>	