

# RTV 3405: TELEVISION AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

## Fall 2014 Section 4492

**When:** Mon, Wed, Fri, 9:35 AM -10:25 AM  
**Where:** Weimer Hall 1065 (Gannett Auditorium)

**Instructor:** Dr. Yu-Hao Lee  
**Contact:** [leeyuhao@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:leeyuhao@jou.ufl.edu) (pref)  
(517) 703-6922 (emergency ONLY)  
**Office hours:** Mon, Wed 11AM-12 PM  
or by appointment  
**Office:** 3051 Weimer Hall

**TA:** Robert H. Wells  
**Contact:** [rhwells@ufl.edu](mailto:rhwells@ufl.edu)  
(352) 213-5481  
**Office hours:** Mon, Wed, 3-4PM  
**Office:** G038 Weimer Hall

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Television, in general, remains the most popular entertainment form in the United States. While the technology, the industry, and the audience has changed over its history, its political, social, and cultural influence is still significant today. This course will introduce students to television from multiple perspectives. We will cover the history of television, the television industry and the telecommunication profession, the unique narrative and affordances of television, its cultural influence on American and international societies, and theories of television effects.

#### **You will learn...**

- To analyze television programs critically and identify its persuasive narratives
- To apply political, social, psychological theories in explaining television effects
- How television content is produced and programming logics
- How technology changes affect the relationship between producers and audiences
- The history of television as a technology and cultural artifact
- Basic ethics and demands of the telecommunication profession

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

1. Mittell, J. (2010). *Television and American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
2. More required readings on the course site: <https://lss.at.ufl.edu>  
select “e-Learning in Canvas,” and log in using your Gatorlink ID.

If you have problems with Canvas or any computer problems, please contact the UF Helpdesk by email (helpdesk@ufl.edu) or by phone (352-392-4357).

## **GRADES**

Exam 1	100 Points
Exam 2	100 Points
Exam 3	100 Points
Group Project	100 Points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>400 Points</b>

A	372 or above (93% or more)	C	292 to 303 (73%-75.99%)
A-	360 to 371 (90%-92.99%)	C-	280 to 291 (70%-72.99%)
B+	344 to 359 (86%-89.99%)	D+	264 to 279 (66%-69.99%)
B	332 to 343 (83%-85.99%)	D	252 to 263 (63%-65.99%)
B-	320 to 331 (80%-82.99%)	D-	240 to 251 (60%-62.99%)
C+	304 to 319 (76%-79.99%)	E	250 and below (0%-59.99%)

## **EXAMS (3 x 100 points)**

There are three exams in this class, each worth 100 points. The exam will consist of multiple-choice questions and short essays. There will be no make-up exams. No exceptions. The dates of the three exams are:

**Exam 1: September 26 (Fri)**

**Exam 2: October 24 (Fri)**

**Exam 3: November 21 (Fri)**

## **GROUP PROJECT (100 points)**

You will work in groups of 5 students to either 1) pitch a TV program for an audience niche, or 2) critically analyze an existing TV (broadly) program. You will be assigned to groups of five after the drop/add period has ended. A list of groups will be distributed via email and via Canvas. Mid semester, we will do a lottery to determine the order of presentations. You will have exactly 5 minutes to present your project in class at the end of the semester. Your presentation should be polished and rehearsed.

**TV program pitch:** At the end of the semester, you will propose a new television program that will attract an audience segment. You will “pitch” the program in groups of five (5) in class during the last week of class. In your pitch, you need to make the case why your show will succeed for the specific channel. You must provide a brief summary of the program, describe the

audience you will attract and why it matters for the channel, and how your pitch will fulfill the economics of television production to become a success. You will also need to address the issue of negative representations of a group of your choosing (i.e., racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, women, members of the LGBT community, etc.) and find a way for your show to counter such problems for the channel's reputation.

Each student in each group should submit a copy of the pitch via Canvas by noon on Dec. 9 along with evaluation forms for the other members of your group. More details on the project will be provided throughout the semester, and we will have class workdays to facilitate group work needed to finish the project.

**TV program Analysis:** Similar to the pitch. At the end of the semester, you will critically analyze a television program of your choosing. You will analyze the program in groups of five (5) in class during the last week of class. In your analysis, you need to explain why your program is a success or flop to a specific channel. You must provide a brief summary of the program, describe the audience that it attracts and why it matters for the channel. Analyze how the program fulfills the economics of television production and whether it is successful. You will also need to address the issue of negative representations of a group of your choosing in the program (i.e., racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, women, members of the LGBT community, etc.) explain why it is a good or bad example of group representation, and how this representation may affect its audience or target group.

Each student in each group should submit a copy of the analysis via Canvas by noon on Dec. 9 along with evaluation forms for the other members of your group. More details on the project will be provided throughout the semester, and we will have class workdays to facilitate group work needed to finish the project.

### **EXTRA CREDITS (40 points Max):**

You will have the opportunity to earn up to 40 extra credits throughout the semester. The extra credits will be earned through:

- a) Participating in activities announced in class and via email
- b) Quizzes throughout the semester

### **CLASS POLICY**

**Attendance:** The class will start promptly at 9:35 AM. If you come in late, or have to leave early, please do so quietly without disturbing others in the class.

**Electronic devices:** You are allowed to bring laptops or tablets for note-taking. But uses of other electronic devices are strictly prohibited during class, **ESPECIALLY CELLPHONES**. Please turn your phone off or to silent mode during class and keep it tucked away.

**Honor Code:** As a student at this university, you have accepted a commitment to the Honor Code, and the principles of academic integrity, personal honesty, and responsible citizenship on which it was founded. As an instructor at this university, I am also charged with its enforcement and take that responsibility very seriously.

You can find the complete honor code via this link:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/scr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

Among the activities that could result in Honor Code violations are plagiarism, cheating, misrepresenting sources, the unauthorized use of others' work, etc. Consult me if you are uncertain about your Honor Code responsibilities within this course.

**Special Needs:** According to University policy, students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide appropriate documentation to you and you should provide this documentation to me when requesting specific accommodation. It is your responsibility to initiate this conversation early in the semester and you should plan to meet with me during office hours to discuss this.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE** (The instructor reserves the rights to change them as needed)

Date	Topic	Reading
<b>Week 1</b> Aug. 25 (M)	Welcome & Introduction	
Aug. 27 (W)	Why study television?	Textbook: Introduction (p.1-13)
Aug. 29 (F)	TV & convergence	The cultural logic of media convergence -Jenkins (2004)
<b>Week 2</b> Sep. 1 (M)	LABOR DAY (no class)	
Sep. 3 (W)	History of TV	Textbook: Ch.11
Sep. 5 (F)	History of TV (cont.)	Textbook: Ch.11 cont.
<b>Week 3</b> Sep. 8 (M)	The TV industry	Textbook : Ch. 1
Sep. 10 (W)	The TV industry (cont.)	Textbook: Ch.1 cont.
Sep. 12 (F)	Exchanging audience	Textbook: Ch. 2
<b>Week 4</b> Sep. 15 (M)	Exchanging audience (cont.)	Recounting the Audience-Lotz (2009)
Sep. 17 (W)	Participatory audience	Spoiling survivor-Jenkins (2006)

Sep. 19 (F)	Serving the public interest	Textbook: Ch. 3
<b>Week 5</b> Sep. 22 (M)	Serving the public interest (cont.)	Textbook: Ch. 3
Sep. 24 (W)	REVIEW: Exam 1	
Sep. 26 (F)	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
<b>Week 6</b> Sep. 29 (M)	TV and political citizenship	Textbook: Ch. 4
Oct. 1 (W)	TV and political citizenship (cont.)	Not Your Parents Presidential Debate-McKinney & Rill (2009)
Oct. 3 (F)	Narrative forms in TV	Textbook. Ch. 6
<b>Week 7</b> Oct. 6 (M)	Narrative forms in TV (cont.)	Textbook. Ch. 6
Oct. 8 (W)	Transmedia storytelling	Searching for the Origami Unicorn-Jenkins (2006)
Oct. 10 (F)	HOMCOMING (no class)	
<b>Week 8</b> Oct. 13 (M)	Screening America	Textbook: Ch.7
Oct. 15 (W)	Screening America (cont.)	Textbook: Ch.7
Oct. 17 (F)	GROUP WORKTIME	
<b>Week 9</b> Oct. 20 (M)	Identity on the screen	Textbook: Ch. 8
Oct. 22 (W)	REVIEW: Exam 2	
Oct. 24 (F)	<b>EXAM2</b>	
<b>Week 10</b> Oct. 27 (M)	American TV's global influence	Textbook: Ch. 11
Oct. 29 (W)	History of media effects	20 <sup>th</sup> century media effects -McDonald (2009)
Oct. 31 (F)	Methods of studying TV	(No reading)
<b>Week 11</b> Nov. 3 (M)	Cultivation theory	TV news and cultivation of fear-Romer et al. (2003)
Nov. 5 (W)	Agenda setting/ Framing	Framing, agenda setting, and priming-Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007)
Nov. 7 (F)	Priming	Beyond Vicary's fantasies- Karremanns & Vicary (2006)
<b>Week 12</b> Nov. 10 (M)	Excitation transfer theory &	TV viewing and psychological arousal-Zillmann

Nov. 12 (W)	Catharsis hypothesis Social cognitive theory	(1991) The effect of TV viewing on adolescents' civic participation-Hoffman & Thompson (2009)
Nov. 14 (F)	GROUP WORKTIME	
<b>Week 13</b>		
Nov. 17 (M)	TV ethics and regulations	Media Now Ch.16
Nov. 19 (W)	Review: Exam 3	
Nov. 21 (F)	<b>EXAM 3</b>	
<b>Week 14</b>		
Nov. 24 (M)	News, advertising, and PR	<b>TBD</b>
Nov. 26 (W)	THANKSGIVING (no class)	
Nov. 28 (F)	THANKSGIVING (no class)	
<b>Week 15</b>		
Dec. 1 (M)	Wrap-up: Future of TV	
Dec. 3 (W)	GROUP WORKTIME	
Dec. 5 (F)	Group project presentation	
<b>Week 16</b>		
Dec. 7 (M)	Group project presentation	
Dec. 9 (W)	Group project presentation	

### **Tips for doing well in this course**

1. Come to class regularly. The PowerPoint slides are NOT substitutes for coming to class and do not cover all the course content.
2. Take notes! This will help you retain information and help you with studying for the exam.
3. Do the reading BEFORE class and don't be afraid to ask questions. Never try to read everything right before the exam.
4. Study for the review session, so that your questions can be answered during review.
5. Find a friend in class with whom you can study and share information.
6. See the instructor as soon as possible (during office hour or by appointment) if you are having trouble with the course.