

Victoria

UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

*Te Whare Wānanga
o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*



SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE AND MEDIA STUDIES

MDIA 302 – TELEVISION NARRATIVE

TRIMESTER 2, 2007

COURSE GUIDE

Course coordinator

Dr Joost de Bruin

Email: joost.debruin@vuw.ac.nz

Phone: (04) 463 6846

Office: Room 207, 42-44 Kelburn Parade

Office hours: Monday 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Friday 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Or by appointment

Tutor

Ngairé Shepherd

Email: ngaire.shepherd@vuw.ac.nz

Office: Room 105, 42-44 Kelburn Parade

Office hours: Monday 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Or by appointment

Postal address

Media Studies Programme

School of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies

Victoria University of Wellington

PO Box 600

Wellington

Class times

Lectures: Monday 11.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. (two hour lecture, one hour screening) in Murphy LT220

Tutorials: Thursdays / Fridays (starting in week 2).

Students can sign up for a tutorial via S-CUBED. Go to

<https://signups.vuw.ac.nz> and follow the instructions.

Tutorial lists will be posted on the Blackboard site and

the Media Studies notice board on Monday 16 July.

“Whereas our ancestors used to listen to tall-tale spinners, read penny dreadfuls, tune in to radio dramas, or rush to the local bijou each Saturday, now we primarily satisfy our ever-constant yearning for stories by gathering around the flickering box in the living room.

Television is the principal storyteller in contemporary (...) society.”

(Sarah Kozloff, 1992: 67)¹

“Television functions as a social ritual, overriding individual distinctions, in which our culture engages in order to communicate with its collective self (...). To encompass this notion, which requires that we concentrate on the messages and their language as much as on the institutions that produce them, and on the audience response as much as on the communicator’s intentions, we have coined the idea of television as our own culture’s *bard*.”

(John Fiske and John Hartley, 1978: 85)²

Course aims

MDIA 302 investigates narratives in the leading fictional and factual genres of primetime television, with particular emphasis on drama, documentary and reality TV. Drawing on narrative theory and textual analysis of contemporary television programmes, we will analyse, firstly, which stories television tells us and how it tells us these stories and, secondly, what these stories mean for the culture we live in.

Course objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. be familiar with the concepts and approaches which focus on popular media and television within narrative theory
2. be familiar with current academic research into the leading fictional and factual television genres
3. be able to independently analyse and evaluate narrative structures within television programmes and present their findings in written or oral form
4. be able to reflect on the cultural meanings of television narratives and actively engage in the existing academic and public discussions about these

Course philosophy

MDIA 302 – Television Narrative is a relatively new course. It was offered for the first time in 2005. All teaching staff involved in this course will put maximum effort into lecturing and tutoring at a high level. In return, you are asked to actively engage in this course. That involves, in our view: attending lectures and tutorials; reading all the required texts every week; actively searching for more information about topics that specifically interest you; preparing questions for tutorials; actively engaging in discussions inside and outside tutorials; and aiming to perform at your best in the assignments set for this course. The course coordinator is happy to receive feedback if you see possibilities for improvement regarding the way the course is taught.

¹ Kozloff, Sarah (1992). ‘Narrative Theory and Television’. In: Robert C. Allen (ed.). *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled. Television and Contemporary Criticism. Second Edition*. London: Routledge. (pp. 67-100)

² Fiske, John & John Hartley (1978). *Reading Television*. London: Methuen.

Lecture and tutorial outline

| Week | Lecture theme | Lecture date | Tutorial number | Tutorial date |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Week 1 | Introduction | 9 July | | |
| | | | | |
| Week 2 | Narrative theory | 16 July | 1 | 19/20 July |
| | | | | |
| Week 3 | Series/serials | 23 July | 2 | 26/27 July |
| | | | | |
| Week 4 | Complexity | 30 July | 3 | 2/3 August |
| | | | | |
| Week 5 | Quality | 6 August | 4 | 9/10 August |
| | | | | |
| Week 6 | Reality | 13 August | 5 | 16/17 August |
| | | | | |
| Mid-trimester break | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Week 7 | Comedy | 3 September | 6 | 6/7 September |
| | | | | |
| Week 8 | Crime | 10 September | 7 | 13/14 September |
| | | | | |
| Week 9 | Competition | 17 September | 8 | 20/21 September |
| | | | | |
| Week 10 | Transformation | 24 September | 9 | 27/28 September |
| | | | | |
| Week 11 | Representation | 1 October | 10 | 4/5 October |
| | | | | |
| Week 12 | Conclusion | 8 October | 11 | 11/12 October |

Mandatory requirements, assignments, penalties and expectations

The course is internally assessed. In order to pass it, students are required to:

1. attend at least nine tutorials
 2. complete all four assignments
- Assignment 1 – five 500 word tutorial exercises and tutorial participation – **20 %**
Due: Every Wednesday 10:00 a.m. before the mid-trimester break (weeks 2 – 6)
 - Assignment 2 – 2000 word essay – **25 %**
Due: Monday 20 August 10:00 a.m.
 - Assignment 3 – tutorial presentation – **20 %**
In tutorials after the mid-trimester break (weeks 7 – 10)
 - Assignment 4 – 3000 word essay – **35 %**
Due: Monday 8 October 10:00 a.m.

Assignment 1 tests course objectives 1 and 2; assignment 2 and assignment 3 test course objectives 1, 2 and 3; and assignment 4 tests all four course objectives.

See the next page for detailed instructions regarding assignment 1. More detailed instructions regarding the other assignments will be given at appropriate points during the course in the lectures and tutorials.

Students who cannot attend a particular tutorial session or who require an extension for any of the assignments need to contact their tutor in advance. Extensions will not be given without a medical certificate or similar evidence.

Late essays which have not been granted an extension will be subject to a penalty of 5 % of the assignment's grade. Plagiarism (see below) will, in most cases, result in an E grade, or, depending on the severity of the plagiarism, automatic failure.

Students are expected to be familiar with the New Zealand television landscape. Watching television is an indispensable part of this course. Students are encouraged to watch more television than they normally would, especially regarding the genres that are central to this course: television drama, documentary and reality TV.

For the assignments, students will need to use a television and a video recorder.

Workload

The course is designed on the assumption that students will commit an average of 18 hours a week to the course, which includes attending lectures and tutorials, watching TV, reading required texts and additional literature, and preparing for assignments.

Tutorial exercises

Tutorial exercises are based on the required readings and the lectures and are aimed at increasing your understanding of these and preparing you for tutorial discussion. Tutorials can be a vital component of undergraduate study. They provide a forum for collaborative learning in which small groups can discuss, clarify and debate the issues raised in the readings and in the lectures. They can also help you develop communication skills which will be valuable in any postgraduate area of work. Tutorial exercises and participation make up 20 % of the assessment for this course.

Five tutorial exercises will be posted to “Tutorial Exercises” on Blackboard in the first half of the course (weeks 2 – 6). You are required to complete all five of these. Each exercise should be 500 words. They are to be uploaded to Blackboard before 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday. This is to allow your tutor time to mark them before tutorials. Each tutorial exercise is worth 3 %. Depending on the quality of your exercise, your tutor will give you either 3 % (A+), 2.5 % (A), 2 % (B), 1.5 % (C), or 1 % (E).

The remaining 5 % of tutorial assessment will be based on your tutorial participation over the course of the trimester. Your attendance will have some relevance here, so if you cannot attend a particular tutorial you should give your tutor a note to explain your absence so that this can be taken into account. To allow tutorial groups to settle down, and for you to become familiar with your fellow students, your tutor, and some of the ideas underlying this course, participation assessment will not start until week 4. The criteria for tutorial participation will be discussed in the second tutorial.

Submitting essays

Essays for this course (assignment 2 and assignment 4) are checked electronically for plagiarism. You will be required to upload a copy of your essay to the MDIA 302 Blackboard site. It will then be uploaded to www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting inappropriate referencing, misquotation and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

As well as submitting your essays electronically, you need to hand in a hard copy. You will be required to attach a cover sheet which you need to sign, indicating that you are aware of the University’s policy on plagiarism and that the assignment is all your own work. It is your responsibility to ensure you understand what plagiarism is, and what the University’s policy on plagiarism is. Please do NOT sign the cover sheet if you do not understand these.

Additional information

There is a Blackboard site for this course, which we will use to post announcements and additional information such as a selection of Power Point slides from the lectures (these contain the key points of a lecture, but do not replace your own notes), tutorial exercises, assignments, guidelines on essay writing, and links to relevant websites.

Set texts

1. MDIA 302 – Television Narrative course reader. Available from Student Notes.
2. Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (Eds.) (2004). *Understanding Reality Television*. London: Routledge. Available from VicBooks at Kelburn Campus.

Reading list

The chapters and articles below are required readings. Students are expected to have read them before the lecture in which they are addressed. They can be found in the course reader (labelled *) or in the set text (labelled ^).

Week 2: Narrative Theory

1. *Gripsrud, Jostein (2002). *Understanding Media Culture*. London: Arnold. Chapter 7, 'Narratology: The Forms and Functions of Stories'.
2. *Kozloff, Sarah (1992). 'Narrative Theory and Television'. In Robert C. Allen (Ed.), *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism. Second Edition* (pp. 67-100). London: Routledge.
3. *Fiske, John and John Hartley (2003). *Reading Television*. London: Routledge. Chapter 6, 'Bardic Television'.
4. *Stephens, Tainui (2004). 'Māori Television'. In Roger Horrocks and Nick Perry (Eds.), *Television in New Zealand: Programming the Nation* (pp. 107-115). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Week 3: Series/serials

1. *Feuer, Jane (1986). 'Narrative Form in American Network Television'. In Colin MacCabe (Ed.), *High Theory / Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film* (pp. 101-114). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
2. *Allen, Robert C. (1985). *Speaking Of Soap Operas*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. Chapter 4, 'A Reader-Oriented Poetics of the Soap Opera'.
3. *Gillespie, Marie (1995). *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change*. London: Routledge. Chapter 5, 'Neighbours and Gossip: Kinship, Courtship and Community'.

Week 4: Complexity

1. *Creeber, Glen (2004). *Serial Television: Big Drama on the Small Screen*. London: BFI. Introduction, 'From Small to Big Drama'.
2. *Nelson, Robin (1997). *TV Drama in Transition: Forms, Values and Cultural Change*. Houndmills: MacMillan. Chapter 2, 'Flexi-Narrative from Hill Street to Holby City: Upping the Tempo; Raising the Temperature'.

3. *Jacobs, Jason (2003). *Body Trauma TV: The New Hospital Dramas*. London: BFI. Chapter 1, 'Genre and Context'.
4. *Dunleavy, Trisha (2005). 'Popular "Series" Drama in TV's Multi-Channel Age', *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, 115: 5-22.

Week 5: Quality

1. *Brunsdon, Charlotte (1990). 'Problems with Quality', *Screen* 31(1): 67-90.
2. *Schröder, Kim Christian (1992). 'Cultural Quality: Search for a Phantom? A Reception Perspective on Judgements of Cultural Value'. In Michael Skovmand and Kim Christian Schröder (Eds.), *Media Cultures: Reappraising Transnational Media* (pp. 199-219). London: Routledge.
3. *Nelson, Robin (1997). *TV Drama in Transition: Forms, Values and Cultural Change*. Houndmills: MacMillan. Chapter 9, 'For What It's Worth: Problematics of Value and Evaluation'.

Week 6: Reality

1. *Kilborn, Richard and John Izod (1997). *An Introduction to Television Documentary: Confronting Reality*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Chapter 3, 'Shaping the Real: Modes of Documentary'.
2. *Coles, Gail (2000). 'Docusoap: Actuality and the Serial Format'. In Bruce Garson and Margaret Llewellyn-Jones (Eds.), *Frames and Fictions on Television: The Politics of Identity within Drama* (pp. 27-39). Exeter: Intellect Books.
3. *Kavka, Misha (2004). 'Reality Estate: Locating New Zealand Reality Television'. In Roger Horrocks and Nick Perry (Eds.), *Television in New Zealand. Programming the Nation* (pp. 222-239). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
4. ^Clissold, Bradley D. (2004). 'Candid Camera and the Origins of Reality TV: Contextualising a Historical Precedent'. In Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (Eds.), *Understanding Reality Television* (pp. 33-53). London: Routledge.

Week 7: Comedy

1. *Neale, Steve and Frank Krutnik (1990). *Popular Film and Television Comedy*. London: Routledge. Parts of chapter 9, 'Broadcast Comedy and Sit-com'.
2. *Mills, Brett (2004). 'Comedy Verite: Contemporary Sitcom Form', *Screen* 45(1): 63-78.
3. ^Gillan, Jennifer (2004). 'From Ozzie Nelson to Ozzy Osbourne: The Genesis and Development of the Reality (Star) Sitcom'. In Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (Eds.), *Understanding Reality Television* (pp. 54-70). London: Routledge.

Week 8: Crime

1. *Sparks, Richard (1992). *Television and the Drama of Crime. Moral Tales and the Place of Crime in Public Life*. Buckingham: Open University Press. Chapter 2, 'Moral Tales and Social Theory'.
2. *Creeber, Glen (2004). *Serial Television. Big Drama on the Small Screen*. London: BFI. Parts of chapter 3, 'Serial Killers: Murder, Masculinity and the Reinvention of the Crime Genre'.

3. ^Jermyn, Deborah (2004). "'This Is About Real People!': Video Technologies, Actuality and Affect in the Television Crime Appeal'. In Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (Eds.), *Understanding Reality Television* (pp. 71-90). London: Routledge.

Week 9: Competition

1. *Roscoe, Jane (2004). 'Big Brother in Australia: Performing the "Real" Twenty-Four-Seven'. In Robert C. Allen and Annette Hill (Eds.), *The TV Studies Reader* (pp. 311-321). London: Routledge.
2. *Wilson, Pamela (2004). 'Jamming Big Brother: Webcasting, Audience Intervention, and Narrative Activism'. In Susan Murray and Laurie Ouellette (Eds.), *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture* (pp. 323-343). New York: New York University Press.
3. ^Cavender, Gray (2004). 'In Search of Community on Reality TV: America's Most Wanted and Survivor'. In Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (Eds.), *Understanding Reality Television* (pp. 154-172). London: Routledge.
4. ^Foster, Derek (2004). "'Jump in the Pool": The Competitive Culture of Survivor Fan Networks'. In Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (Eds.), *Understanding Reality Television* (pp. 270-289). London: Routledge.

Week 10: Transformation

1. *Mosely, Rachel (2000). 'Makeover Takeover on British Television', *Screen* 43(3): 299-314.
2. ^Palmer, Gareth (2004). "'The New You": Class and Transformation in Lifestyle Television'. In Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (Eds.), *Understanding Reality Television* (pp. 173-190). London: Routledge.
3. ^Stephens, Rebecca L. (2004). 'Socially Soothing Stories? Gender, Race and Class in TLC's *A Wedding Story* and *A Baby Story*'. In Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (Eds.), *Understanding Reality Television* (pp. 191-210). London: Routledge.

Week 11: Representation

1. *Gray, Herman (2000). 'The Politics of Representation in Network Television'. In Horace Newcomb (Ed.), *Television: The Critical View. Sixth Edition* (pp. 282-305). New York: Oxford University Press.
2. ^Pullen, Christopher (2004). 'The Household, the Basement and *The Real World*: Gay Identity in the Constructed Reality Environment'. In Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (Eds.), *Understanding Reality Television* (pp. 211-232). London: Routledge.
3. *Roscoe, Jane (2000). 'Documenting the *Immigrant Nation*: Tensions and Contradictions in the Representation of Immigrant Communities in a New Zealand Television Documentary Series', *Media, Culture & Society* 22: 243-261.

General University policies and statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at www.victoria.ac.nz.

Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct

Academic grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at: www.victoria.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely.

Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning,
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course,
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Students with Impairments (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

telephone: 463-6070

email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The Media Studies Disability Liaison Person is Dr Joost de Bruin. He can be contacted by student who have special needs related to impairments. Email: joost.debruin@vuw.ac.nz; phone: (04) 463 6846.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contacts are **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407** and **Dr Stuart Brock, Murphy Building, room 312**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Māori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

This programme offers:

- Academic mentoring for all Māori & Pacific students at all levels of undergraduate study for the faculties of Commerce & Administration and Humanities & Social Sciences. Contact Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 6015 to register for Humanities & Social Science mentoring and 463 8977 to register for mentoring for Commerce and Administration courses
- Postgraduate support network for the above faculties, which links students into all of the post grad activities and workshops on campus and networking opportunities
- Pacific Support Coordinator who can assist Pacific students with transitional issues, disseminate useful information and provide any assistance needed to help students achieve. Contact; Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 5842.

Manaaki Pihipihinga is located at: 14 Kelburn Parade, back court yard, Room 109 D (for Humanities mentoring & some first year Commerce mentoring) or Room 210 level 2 west wing railway station Pipitea (commerce mentoring space). Māori Studies mentoring is done at the marae.

Student Services

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.