FTT 30461: History of Television  
Spring 2008

Prof. Christine Becker  
Office: 230D Performing Arts Center, 631-7592  
Mailbox: 230 Performing Arts Center (FTT office)  
Email: becker.34@nd.edu  
Office Hours: MW 1:30-2:30 & Thur 3-4 or by appointment

Class Meetings  
MW 11:45-1:00  232 DeBartolo  
Screenings  
Mon 6:30-8:30  232 DeBartolo

Course Description  
This course analyzes the history of television, spanning from its roots in radio broadcasting to the latest developments in digital television. In assessing the many changes across this span, the course will cover such topics as why the American television industry developed as a commercial medium in contrast to most other national television industries, how television programming has both reflected and influenced cultural ideologies through the decades, and how historical patterns of television consumption have shifted due to new technologies and social changes. Through studying the historical development of television programs and assessing the industrial, technological, political, aesthetic, and cultural systems out of which they emerged, the course will piece together the catalysts responsible for shaping this highly influential medium.

Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, you should be able to:
- Review the history of radio and its influence on television
- Discuss the industrial format of U.S. television and how it came to be that way
- Explain the history of the major networks and the significance of the network structure through various periods of television history
- Assess the impact of changing technologies on the form, industrial operations, and viewer experience of TV
- Appreciate how TV is influenced by and also influences social and cultural trends
- Recognize different programming strategies and their implications

Required Texts
- Only Connect, 2nd edition, by Michele Hilmes
- Library E-reserves and Concourse articles

Grading Breakdown
- Class preparation, participation & quizzes 15%
- Primary Research Paper (due Mon, Feb. 25) 15%
- Exam I (on Wed, Feb. 27) 15%
- Exam II (on Wed, April 2) 15%
- Contemporary TV Paper (due Wed, April 30) 20%
- Final Exam (on Mon, May 5, 8am) 20%
Important Details:

Attendance
You are expected to attend all class meetings. I will, however, grant you two free class absences (whether “excused” or “unexcused”) and one screening absence across the semester. For every absence in excess of these limits, the class participation/preparation grade will be lowered by a grade level (e.g. A- to B+, B to B-, etc.) at the instructor’s discretion.

Participation
Participation is important to the success of this class. The more people we hear from on any given day, the more ideas we will be able to explore and the more we will all enjoy and benefit from the course. Just keep up with the readings and screenings, and you will have plenty to add to the class. I don’t mind class discussions that go in unexpected directions (in fact I encourage them), so speak your mind, ask questions and answer questions. Also keep in mind that my definition of participation is not isolated to only verbal participation. Anything that shows that you are engaged in the course and striving to engage with the material counts as participation. Thus, listening intently to me and your peers during class, participating in free writes, coming to my office hours, and writing or e-mailing me questions outside of class also counts for participation, as by doing these things you are exhibiting your engagement with the course material.

PowerPoint Slides
All of the PowerPoint slides I use during class will be available to you before each class session on our online Concourse space (oit.nd.edu/concourse). Please note that the slides do not contain everything you need to know for the course. If fact, they probably don’t even contain half of what you need to know—I only use them when I have a bunch of info that easily lends itself to bullet-pointing or some pretty pictures to show you. So don’t feel that you can nap through lectures since the PowerPoint slides will be available; they are merely there to facilitate your note taking and supplement exam studying.

Readings
In addition to the textbook reading, there are additional individual articles assigned on many days. Because of the prohibitive expense to students, I no longer use a printed course packet. Instead, these articles are available on a library e-reserve page, with a few additional articles placed on our Concourse space. On the syllabus, each article is prefaced by an indication of its location, and you should read each article for the day it’s listed on the syllabus. The URL for library e-reserves is https://www.library.nd.edu/reserves/ereserves/search.cgi. There will also be a link to this page from our Concourse space.

Quizzes & Exams
There may be occasional announced quizzes on the readings and screenings. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest quiz grade; because of this, I do not offer make-up quizzes. There are also two in-semester exams and one final exam. Any "make-ups" must be cleared with the college dean before they are approved by the instructor.

Papers
You will be assigned two papers. You will receive information about these assignments well before they are due. Late papers will lose a grade level for every late day; an A will be reduced
to an A-, an A- to a B+, etc., for each late day. If you hand in a paper to my mailbox or e-mail it to me, it is your responsibility to confirm that I received it on time. “You mean you didn’t get my paper? I e-mailed it to you but must have sent it to the wrong address” is not an acceptable excuse for a late paper. If you need an extension, you must request it at least a week before the due date for any assignment.

**Honor Code:** You are beholden to the tenets of the Honor Code for every aspect of this class. Plagiarism, copying, and other forms of academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with University policy. Plagiarism is any instance of presenting the ideas and/or words of others as your own, whether they are from published sources, web sources, or your peers, without citation. Check the student handbook for University policies, and review the Honor Code at www.nd.edu/~hnrcode.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1  Course Overview**

**Jan. 16:** Introduction to the Course and to Television History

Hilmes: Ch. 1

**Week 2  Radio Roots I**

**Jan. 21:** The Invention of Radio

Hilmes: Ch. 2

NO SCREENING

**Jan. 23:** Creating Commercial Broadcasting

Hilmes: Ch. 3, 62-76, 140-141

**Week 3  Radio Roots II**

**Jan. 28:** Radio Programming

Hilmes: Ch. 5, 118-125

E-reserves: Douglas, “Radio Comedy and Linguistic Slapstick”

NO SCREENING

**Jan. 30:** Cementing Commercial Broadcasting’s Structure

Hilmes: pp76-83

E-reserves: Hilmes, “Who We Are, Who We Are Not”

**Week 4  The Beginnings of Television**

**Feb. 4:** TV Predictions, Inventions, and Public Introductions

Concourse: Desmond, “Seeing Round the World”

E-reserves: Winston, “The Development of Television”

SCREENING: *Life With Luigi, I Remember Mama*

**Feb. 6:** Early Television Programming

E-reserves: Lipsitz, “The Meaning of Memory”

Matthei, “Inventing the Commercial”

**Week 5  The Rise of Network Television**

**Feb. 11:** The Networks Take Over

Hilmes: pp153-158

SCREENING: *Burns and Allen Show, The Honeymooners, Marty*
Feb. 13: “Golden Age” Programming  
   Hilmes: pp158-168  
   E-reserves: Spigel, “Installing the Television Set”

Week 6  Television Takes Hold  
Feb. 18: Network Consolidation  
   Hilmes: 185-187  
   SCREENING: I Love Lucy, Father Knows Best, Donna Reed, Mr. Adams and Eve  
Feb. 20: The Domestic Sitcom  
   E-reserves: Douglas, “Mama Said”

Week 7  Paper & Exam I  
Feb. 25: Discussion of Primary Research History Assignments  
   ***PAPER I DUE***  
   NO SCREENING  
Feb. 27: EXAM I

SPRING BREAK!

Week 8  Into the Sixties  
March 10: The “Vast Wasteland”  
   Hilmes: pp187-199  
   E-reserves: Minow, “The Vast Wasteland Speech”  
   SCREENING: Twilight Zone, Have Gun Will Travel, East Side/West Side  
March 12: Cold War-Era Television  
   E-reserves: Newcomb, “The Opening of America”  
   Watson, “The Kennedy-Television Alliance”

Week 9  Wars at Home and Abroad  
March 17: Civil Rights & Vietnam on Television  
   Hilmes: pp176-181, 200-204, 227-230  
   E-reserves: Torres, “Civil Rights and Televisual Information”  
   SCREENING: Bewitched, Julia, I Spy  
March 19: Gender and Race in the Sixties  
   Hilmes: pp208-214  
   E-reserves: Kackman, “I Spy a Colorblind Nation”  
   Concourse: Metz, “Love the House, Hate the Work”  
   Bodroghkozy, “Is This What You Mean By Color TV?”

Week 10  Television in the 1970s  
March 24: EASTER BREAK, NO CLASS  
March 26: The Turn Toward Relevance & Quality  
   Hilmes: pp230-240  
   E-reserves: Gitlin, “The Turn Toward Relevance”
Week 11  Television in the 1970s & Exam II
March 31: The Turn Away From Relevance & Quality
  Hilmes: pp260-268
  E-reserves: Ozersky, “Return to Normalcy, 1975-77”
  Feuer, "MTM Enterprises: An Overview"
SCREENING: All in the Family, M*A*S*H, Mary Tyler Moore Show
April 2: EXAM II

Week 12  The Networks Get Competition
April 7: The Arrival of New Competitors
  Hilmes: pp217-227, 251-260
  SCREENING: Roseanne, The Cosby Show, Frank’s Place, Twin Peaks
April 9: Quality and Televisuality
  Hilmes: 305-313
  E-reserves: Caldwell, “Excessive Style”
  Gray, “Politics of Representation”

Week 13  Television in the 1990s
April 14: New Networks
  Hilmes: pp294-305
  SCREENING: Will and Grace, Steve Harvey Show, Buffy
April 16: New Representations
  E-reserves: Becker, “Prime Time Television in the Gay Nineties”
  Hunt, “Black Content, White Control”

Week 14  New Regulation and Expansion
April 21: The 1996 Telecom Act & Conglomeration
  Hilmes: pp283-292, 344-349
  SCREENING: Family Guy, The Osbournes, The Shield
April 23: Contemporary Programming and Policy Trends
  Hilmes: pp362-379, 384-387

Week 15  The New Century of Television
April 28: Global Changes
  SCREENING TBA
April 30: The Future of Television
  Hilmes: Ch. 14
  E-reserves: Lotz, “Television Outside the Box”
  ***PAPER II DUE***

**** FINAL EXAM ****
MONDAY, MAY 5, 8-10AM