CFS 330U The American Family in Film and Television
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Wende Garrison   Course Time:
Email: wende@pdx.edu   Office hours: schedule appointments via email
Office: ASRC 620S   Credits: 4
Phone: 503-725-5055   Prerequisite: None

Course Description

The course examines the ways in which the American family is portrayed in film and television. This course begins by exploring the effect film and television portrayals have on expectations around such family issues as gender roles, conflict resolution, parenting, and traditions. The course then prepares students to choose a particular piece of film or television, deconstruct the portrayal it offers of the American family, and effectively present their findings on that portrayal to others. The course also examines how portrayals of American families have changed over time. In addition, in this course, special attention is paid to what types of families are not included in popular portrayals. The course is designed to be offered either in person or online.

The Families and Society Cluster (formerly Family Studies) equips students with the skills to examine historical experiences of multiple family forms in the United States, their intersections with social environments, contemporary challenges, and the effect of public policies on diverse contemporary families. The Cluster highlights theoretical models rooted in ecological systems, social justice, and social responsibility, as well as individual and micro-level family experiences. Students from all majors who participate in the Families and Society Cluster will find the courses relevant to their own and others' family experiences, while also developing a foundation to enhance career development in a variety of fields, such as education, business, social work, public health, and other health disciplines.

Course Outcomes

All University Studies courses have four outcomes:
- *Inquiry and Critical Thinking:* Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula—problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners.
- *Communication:* Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways— writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.
- *The Diversity of Human Experience:* Students will enhance their appreciation for and understanding of the rich complexity of the human experience through the study of differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.
- *Ethics and Social Responsibility:* Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially, through group projects and collaboration in learning communities.

In addition, this unique course has additional outcomes. Upon attendance of all class sessions and completion of all course assignments, students will be able to:
- Identify (list) and discuss the effects film and television portrayals have on personal expectations around families;
- Identify (list) and discuss the ways in which family portrayals have changed from the 1950s to the present;
- Identify (list) the types of families not included in popular portrayals, as well as discuss some reasons why these types of families are not included in popular portrayals; and
- Demonstrate (through public presentation) their own analysis of a particular family portrayal and it's effect on viewers.

Required Text

Austerlitz, S. (2014). *Sitcom: A history in 24 episodes from I Love Lucy to Community*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press.

Recommended: Taylor, E. (1989). *Prime-time families: Television culture in post-war America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Additional course materials, including readings and the course assignment guide, will be available on D2L (at https://d2l.pdx.edu) or through the PSU library system. In order to log into D2L, you will need an ODIN account. If you do not have an ODIN account, contact OIT (at http://www.pdx.edu/oit/contact).

Assignments

1. Quote and Response Assignments, 5 points each for a total of 20 points (weeks 2-6)
2. Individual Project/Presentation Proposal, required, but no points (due week 3)
3. Progress Note, 5 points (due week 5)
4. Presentation, 20 points (starts week 8)
5. Evaluation of Two Classmates' Presentations, 5 points each for a total of 10 points (weeks 8-10)
6. Four quizzes, 5 points each for a total of 20 points (weeks 3, 5, 7, and 9)
7. Online Participation in Discussion, 25 points (minimum of five discussion posts)

Evaluation and Grading

Portland State uses the following grading system:

There is no A+ given	B- = 80, 81, 82
A = 93 and above	C+ = 77, 78, 79
A- = 90, 91, 92	C = 73, 74, 75, 76
B+ = 87, 88, 89	C- = 70, 71, 72
B = 83, 84, 85, 86	D+ = 67, 68, 69

D = 63, 64, 65, 66   F = 59 and below
D- = 60, 61, 62

Course Policies

If a student fails to attend ¼ of the class sessions, they will be given a grade of M.

Institutional Policies

Academic Honesty and Integrity
All work submitted in this course must be your own, and it must be produced specifically for this course. (If you wish to incorporate some of your prior work into a course assignment, you must have the prior approval of your instructor.) All sources used in your work (ideas, quotes, paraphrases, etc.) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Violations of academic honesty will be taken seriously. Consequences may include failure in the course and suspension from your academic program. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the academic honesty and integrity guidelines for both the university and this major, both found in the current student handbook or bulletin and online.

Disability Resource Center
Portland State University and the School of Social Work are committed to providing accommodations for students who have disabilities in order to equalize their ability to achieve success in academic classes and to ensure physical access to student activities or university-sponsored events. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides academic accommodation for students in both classroom and testing situations and coordinates registration for students with disabilities. The DRC is located in Room 435 Smith Memorial Center and can be reached at (503) 725.4150 and through TTY at (503) 725.6504. Students with disabilities should contact the DRC by the third week of class. A staff member from Disability Resource Center will specify in a letter the accommodations that will be required for this class.

If you are requesting accommodation through the Disability Resource Center, please contact the instructor directly so that you get all the assistance you need.

Marginalized Populations
Readings, lectures, class discussions, and assignments include content on marginalized populations, including racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities, and individuals with disabilities. Marginalized populations are those who are experience discrimination because of one or more attributes or status that are not valued by dominant society. Marginalized persons are at increased risk of social isolation, economic disadvantage, and their consequences because of the effects of structural inequality and lack of access to power. Marginalized populations, including persons of color and ethnic diversity, and populations that are vulnerable due to poverty, age, gender, ability and sexual orientation, will be represented in class readings and discussions.

CFS 399: Weekly Schedule

Week	Monday topics	Wednesday topics
1	Course overview	Designing a family portrayal analysis project
2	Introduction to family portrayals	Community building
3	1950s Living Room Lectures: Advent of family portrayals	Analysis of *I Love Lucy and 1950s film portrayals*
4	1960s Flower Power: Family portrayals expand	Analysis of *The Brady Bunch and 1960s film portrayals*
5	1970s Nostalgia Impulse: Family portrayals get historic	Analysis of *The Waltons and 1970s film portrayals*
6	1980s It's Morning In America: Resurgence of nuclear portrayals	Analysis of *The Cosby Show and 1980s film portrayals*
7	1990s Urban Tribes: Portrayals deconstruct "family"	Analysis of *Will & Grace and 1990s film portrayals*
8	Student presentation and evaluations	Student presentation and evaluations
9	Student presentation and evaluations	Student presentation and evaluations
10	Student presentation and evaluations	Course wrap up
Finals	No meeting	No meeting

Assignments and Directions for Completion

1. Quote & Responses (Q&Rs)

Length: a quote from one of the readings + at least 150-250 words of your reflective response
Format: Single spaced, typed
"Q&R" stands for "quote and response," and in your Q&Rs you will engage with assigned readings to further your understanding of our course concepts, to prepare you for class activities and discussion.

To complete your Q&R, start by choosing a quote from *one* of the readings scheduled for that week, and then write a 150-250-word reflective response to the quote/reading. Be sure to include the name of the author and the title of the piece from which you are quoting.

A Q&R is *not* a summary of the reading. We've all read the article/essay that you're responding to, so focus your reflection on how you understand the reading, what it means to you, why you've chosen this particular quote from the reading, how this reading/quote links to other readings you've done for our class or to course concepts more generally. The Q&Rs are a place where you test out your evolving understandings of portrayals of families, gender roles, parenting, conflict resolution, etc.

2. Individual Project

The purpose of the Individual Project is to allow you to pursue a topic within the fields we're studying in a way that will further your own goals as a learner. After completing your individual work, you will write a reflection on the process of creating your project, and you will share your project with the rest of us so that you can teach us about your topic as well.

There are countless options for this Individual Project. All of the projects will include a research component, and it will be your responsibility to design your research methods as you develop your ideas for your project. See the guidelines for the Project Proposal and Project Progress Notes, on the following pages, for more information. We will regularly talk about the project in class, as well, so that you can work out your ideas in conversation with your colleagues and with the support of the instructor

Your work on the project (through your completion of the Project Proposal and the Project Progress Notes) will require you to do the following:
1. Identify a research question, a topic that you are interested in and want to know more about;
2. Determine the form your final project will take;
3. Decide upon the research methods that will best allow you to engage with your research question and build the raw material from which you will complete the artifact of your final project.
4. Reflect on your engagement with your project in a reflective essay to accompany the project itself. Guidelines for the reflection that accompanies the project will be distributed in class two weeks before the project is due.

See the guidelines for the Project Proposal and the Project Progress Notes for the step-by-step process you will use to work on your project this term. And remember, your completed project involves two elements: the project itself, and a 2-3 page reflection on your project and the process you engaged in to complete it.

3. Project Proposal

Length: 1-2 pages
Format: Typed, single-spaced
Your project proposal is intended to be a place for you to articulate the initial ideas that you have for your project so that you may begin to focus your efforts on it intentionally and for the duration of our term. You will receive feedback on your proposal from instructor, and we'll share our ideas in class so that your colleagues can offer support as well.   All projects bring together content, methods, and form.

In other words, your work this term will require you to identify a generalized topic (your *content*). This topic includes both the television show you will view, analyze and present on and well as the themes or topics your portrayal brings up. (For instance, The Cosby Show brings up topics of race and class and humor, whereas the The Waltons brings up topics of class and gender and the effect of economic trends on families.)

You will then need to focus one of those themes or topics into a specific research question and conduct research to answer the question (your *methods*).

When you have viewed your show, identified the topics, and done the research, you must then conceptualize your findings and develop the project's completed *form.* This form will be the form of your presentation to your colleagues.

4. Project Progress Note

Length: 1-2 pages
Format: Typed, single-spaced
The purpose of your Project Progress Note is to keep you on track with your project. We've all seen projects that have been thrown together at the last minute—perhaps we've even been perpetrators of that sort of work—and this assignment is intended to offer you a nudge to keep your work on your project moving forward throughout the term.

Whatever format your Progress Note takes, please also turn in the original copies of your project proposal with comments, so that your current reader has the full picture of what you're working on this term.

However you format/structure this plan, be sure to address these prompts:
1. Considering that while your project is due in Week Ten, you will likely present it earlier in the quarter--whether it's finished or not. Revisit your Project Proposal and indicate how well and thoroughly you've been working to accomplish the steps in your process that you

outlined there. Are you on track to complete your project according to your initial vision and your expectations for yourself? If so, how will you keep up that momentum through the end of the term? If not, why not, and how can you rethink your plan in order to get back on your own track?

2. Has your initial vision for your project changed since you first proposed it? If so, how and why? Either way, what are you learning about what it means to develop a project and how the processes you've chosen to develop it affect the project itself?

5. Celebrations of Learning: Presentation of Individual Projects (will be reformatted to online delivery method)

Length: 7-minutes
The purpose of this 7-minute presentation is to allow all of us to learn from your Individual Project and the research you conducted to complete it this term.

You are completely in charge of your presentation. You alone will decide how to structure and share your Individual Project—with input from the instructor, if that's helpful, of course. You are encouraged to share your project in a way that draws in and involves your audience while simultaneously allowing you to practice your skills in distilling and communicating key information.

6. Online quizzes

Throughout the term, you will have online quizzes through the D2L system. These quizzes are intended to assess your mastery of the course content and your ability to apply theory to case examples from the film and video clips you've examined.