

ENG 110 Introduction to Film & Media Studies: Confessional Culture (12075)

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Ray Rondot

MW 4-5:50pm

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Fall 2015

Office: PLC 327

Pacific 16

Office Hrs: MW 1:30-3:30pm and by appointment

Twitter Handle: @drsarahray

Course hashtag: #eng110uo

Course Description

Television Studies is an established field within media studies, and with the dominance of reality television in particular, a research emphasis on this style is growing exponentially. Reality television and documentary film have important relevance for sociological studies because of their assumed but tenuous relationship to the real world as well as creative and strategic use of social representation. In this course, students will explore the world of reality television, documentary, and digital storytelling: the categories, sociological & consumption messages, audience interaction, and media coverage. In addition, students will learn important aspects of the history and theories of screen culture, as well as how to analyze and interpret a wide variety of media texts using key film and TV studies concepts and vocabulary. This course satisfies the Arts & Letters group requirement.

Goals:

- Gain basic understanding of Television aesthetics
- Learn TV studies vocabulary
- Develop skills to critically analyze television and its political and cultural impact

Key Questions

What is a “confessional” space and how is the “confessional” gendered, racialized, and classed? How do confessional patterns in documentary, talk TV, and reality TV inform our understanding of anonymous disclosure? What is a performed identity? What is a performative identity? What discourses—social, personal, economic, and political—do confessional representations employ? What is the relationship between fantasy and reality and who gets to decide? How do key concepts such as camera work, editing, sound, and staging inform how we understand “real” media texts?

Course Materials

All readings available on Canvas under the “Files” tab. Students must print articles and bring them to class.

Course Policies and Guidelines

Access

If you have a disability (documented or undocumented) that may affect your ability to participate in this class, please see me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements for your full access to all classroom activities.

If you require additional help for this course in any way, please let me know so that we can work together to get you the help you need.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted for this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrasing) must be properly documented. Please refer to the summary of the Code of Student Conduct on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. In cases where plagiarism has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is standard practice. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Attendance & Screenings

Screening and discussing media texts in a group setting is vital to critical learning and thus *attendance is mandatory*. Of course, emergencies happen. Consequently, you will not be penalized for missing up to 2 lecture sessions. Beyond 2 absences, a third absence will result in the deduction of **one-half letter** grade for the term. A fourth absence will result in a **full grade** deduction. On the fifth absence, the student will automatically receive a **failing grade** for the course.

If you are late or absent, you are responsible for collecting any assignments you may have missed. Check Canvas and email frequently as I will sometimes post updates, additional reading, and class assignments, which are not listed on the syllabus. If you are absent during a screening, you will need to make arrangements to view the materials at home before the weekly blog post is due. Please email me for links or check the “Pages” site on Canvas, as I will sometimes post class media there.

Twitter

Television was born as an inherently social media that took up residence inside family spaces and connected rather than isolated. It’s a difficult charge to watch television with other people and *not* talk about it. However, vocalized conversations are distracting and can make it impossible for those around you to hear what’s happening. As a solution, I request that you use Twitter on your computer or mobile device. I will be live-tweeting our screenings and invite your participation. It’s an easy way to ask me questions. I will use Twitter to note points of interest and discussion topics that we’ll address as a class following the screening. Please note, I am *only* giving you license to use Twitter (not Facebook, not email, not Messages). If I notice any abuse of this privilege during class time, I will mark you absent. Follow along and join in the conversation by using our course hashtag: #eng110uo

Virtual Office Hours

I encourage you to attend office hours as often as possible. However, if you cannot attend in person or simply have a quick question, I will be available **Monday and Wednesday 2:30-3:30pm** in the “Chat” function on Canvas. If you do not see that I am available during this hour, send me an email. I will occasionally hold extra virtual office hours via Chat throughout the term so please familiarize yourself with the tool. If others are in the Chat function, you can also ask questions of your peers, discuss readings and assignments, and get to know one another. This might be a great platform to discuss your media assignment projects. *Note:* Chat comments cannot be deleted. Please use discretion when using this function.

Canvas Requirements

Navigating a new digital platform can be challenging, but the more knowledgeable you are about Canvas, the more helpful it will be. Please familiarize yourself with how Canvas works ASAP.

Note: You are required to change your notification settings in Canvas so that you receive announcements and messages from me. In Canvas, in the upper right corner, click “Settings.” In the settings function, on the left side, click “Notifications.” On this page, make sure that the tabs labeled “Announcement” and “Conversation Message” are marked “ASAP.” You can choose to receive other types of updates on an immediate, daily, or weekly basis, or you may choose not to receive other notifications at all.

Instructor Contact

Please feel free to come to in-person and virtual office hours for help. When you have a quick question or if you feel more comfortable in the virtual world, I am happy to answer any questions (or engage in conversation) via email. I **strongly prefer** that you email me rather than “message” me on Canvas via the “conversation” function since these communications easily get lost. However, the only way I can send out a class-wide email is to use the conversation Canvas function, so please check these messages on a regular basis.

Late work

If you do not attend class on a day when an assignment is due, you should make prior arrangements with me. All work is due at the beginning of class or during the specified time on the syllabus. If you fail to turn in an assignment, you can turn it in before the following class period but it will automatically be lowered by a full letter grade. After the following class, I will not accept late work.

Electronic Etiquette

All electronics must be turned off during class. Laptop computers are only allowed for individuals who have special needs or circumstances necessitating the use of a computer in class. Because of this strict policy, I have the ability to count you as absent if you engage in these activities during class.

Formatting Guidelines

All homework and papers must be typed. When citing sources, I expect you to use MLA citation style. Use 12 pt. font and 1 inch margins. Include a relevant title and page numbers. All assignments must be submitted electronically on Canvas. **I accept .doc and .docx file formats only.** No exceptions. Name your files using your last name and the assignment, for example: rondot_paper1.docx. You will lose points on assignments where you do not follow these guidelines.

Students who experience gender-based violence

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, coercion, and/or sexual harassment is encouraged to seek help. You can visit <https://safe.uoregon.edu> for information, and I also encourage you to contact Renae DeSautel, Sexual Violence Response & Support Services Coordinator, desautel@uoregon.edu. She will keep your information confidential. In addition, the UO Ombudsperson Bruce MacAllister ([541 346-6400](tel:541-346-6400) or ombuds@uoregon.edu) can provide confidential support and assistance. You can also contact any pastor, priest, imam, or other member of the clergy. All of these people, including all UO faculty members, have an obligation not to reveal your name or other specific information without your permission, although faculty members do have to provide “general information” (nothing that identifies anyone) that will help us create a safer campus. As your instructor, I can also reassign work partners and make other accommodations you may need.

Assignments

Final Term Grade

Participation	10%
Weekly Blog Posts (6 at 5% each)	30%
Group Presentation	20%
Paper Proposal	5%
Final Paper	35% (of this grade: 20% Rough Draft, 5% Peer Review)

Discussion Participation

Discussion is a vital aspect of this course. You should come to each class prepared to speak about the readings and your reactions and to be respectful of others’ opinions.

	A	B	C	D/F
Large Group Discussion	You frequently participate voluntarily Your contributions are thoughtful and respectful You listen well and make space for other classmates to speak	You occasionally participate voluntarily You listen thoughtfully and are willing to participate if called on	You rarely participate voluntarily, but you will if called on You may have rare instances of D/F expectations	You are often distracting or inappropriate during large group discussion (sleeping, intentional rudeness, using your phone, etc)
Small Group Discussion	You are engaged, interested, and show initiative during small groups	You are interested and on-topic during small groups	You are occasionally off topic; your discussion is often driven by only doing the bare minimum to address questions	You are frequently off topic, uninvolved, or distracting to other group members
Attendance / Preparedness	You are always punctual and well prepared You always bring your textbook and have completed the readings and homework	You are frequently punctual and prepared You usually bring the textbook and have done the readings and homework	You are occasionally late or unprepared You occasionally don't bring the textbook or complete readings	You are frequently absent, late, or unprepared Rarely bring textbook or complete readings/assignments

Weekly Blog Posts (500-750 words or between 2-3 pages double spaced)

On the weeks marked on the course schedule, you are required to upload a blog post to Canvas by midnight every **Thursday**. Some blog posts will be open-ended while others will ask you to respond to a specific question. In general, however, you should follow this format: 1) summarize the texts you have read and watched since your last blog post. 2) critically analyze the readings *and* viewings, paying attention to important points they raise as well as how the readings and viewings relate. 3) discuss how the cinematic terms and screen vocabulary you have learned thus far helps you more fully understand the week's viewing. 4) connect to previous material or other forms of media we have not yet discussed in the course. 5) list any questions you have concerning the week's material. I will not be grading for structure or academic writing. I will be grading for engagement, in-depth analysis, and your ability to succinctly synthesize the week's material. *Note:* though I may share questions and responses in class, it will be anonymous. Feel free to honestly discuss the readings and material.

Group Presentation

Working with 2-3 peers, groups will explain and define a key cinematic term, providing information about what the term is, its significance, and landmark examples of the concept for your classmates. The Group Presentation grade involves research ability, presentation efficacy, and ability to lead a short discussion. Presentations will be 20-30 minutes in length; rubric and guidelines to follow Monday of Week 1.

Final Paper Proposal

1-2 pages, with an additional bibliography. More information to follow.

Final Paper

6-8 pages, citing at least 5 readings. More information to follow. Part of your final paper grade will include your rough draft, which must be completed by Wednesday of Week 9 (20%) as well as your level of engagement with the peer review during Week 10 (5%).

Class and Reading Schedule*

Week 1

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 9/28	Syllabus, Introductions; Mise-en-scene Demographic Questionnaire	
Wednesday 9/30	Why First-Person Media?; Mise-en-scene Presentation sign up Readings: Biressi, Anita, and Heather Nunn. "Reality TV: A Sign of the Times?" Viewings: <i>The Newlywed Game</i>	Canvas Account set-up & bio; Upload Canvas Picture

Week 2

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 10/5	The Confessing Subject Readings: King, Barry. "Stardom, Celebrity, and the Para-Confession." Viewings: <i>The Oprah Winfrey Show</i>	
Wednesday 10/7	Emotions & Authenticity; Group Presentation - staging Readings: Aslama, Mina, & Mervi Pantti. "Talking Alone: Reality TV, Emotions, and Authenticity." Mittell, Jason. "Staging." Viewings: <i>America's Next Top Model; The Office</i>	Blog Post Due Thursday by midnight

Week 3

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 10/12	Crafting Citizens; Group Presentation - camerawork Readings: Ouellette, Laurie. "'Take Responsibility for Yourself': Judge Judy and the Neoliberal Citizen." Mittell, Jason. "Camerawork." Viewings: <i>Judge Judy</i>	
Wednesday 10/14	Crafting Bodily Value Group Presentation – lighting/color	Blog Post Due Thursday by midnight

	Readings: Jones, Cassandra L. "The Patriotic American Is a Thin American." Viewings: <i>The Biggest Loser; Extreme Makeover</i>	
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Week 4

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 10/19	Crafting the Family; Group Presentation - editing Readings: Edwards, Leigh H. "Reality TV and the American Family." Mittell, Jason. "Editing." Viewings: <i>Supernanny; The Briefcase</i>	
Wednesday 10/21	Crafting Heteronormativity; Group Presentation - sound Readings: Feuer, Jane. "Why I'm Embarrassed to be a <i>Bachelor</i> Fan." Mittell, Jason. "Sound." Viewings: <i>The Bachelor</i>	Blog Post Due Thursday by midnight

Week 5

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 10/26	Feminist Media Practices Group Presentation - advertising Readings: Watkins, Craig, and Rana Emerson. "Feminist Media Criticism and Feminist Media Practices." 	
Wednesday 10/28	Flipping the Script Group Presentation – star text/celebrity Readings: Todd, Sarah. "The Dark Catharsis of Lifetime's <i>Unreal</i> ." Viewings: <i>Unreal</i>	Blog Post Due Thursday by midnight

Week 6

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 11/2	Autobiographical Documentary Viewings:	

	<i>She's a Boy I Knew</i> (2008)	
Wednesday 11/4	LGBTQ Identities in Documentary Group Presentation – screen identity Readings: Pullen, Christopher. “Documentary Identity.”	Blog Post Due Thursday by midnight

Week 7

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 11/9	Documenting the Everyday Viewings: <i>Grizzly Man</i> (2005)	
Wednesday 11/11	Narrative & Voice; Group Presentation - narrative Readings: Tobias, Scott. “The Human Nature of Werner Herzog’s <i>Grizzly Man</i> .” Culler, Jonathan. “Narrative.”	
Friday 11/13		Paper Proposal Due by midnight

Week 8

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 11/16	The YouTube Phenomenon Readings: Strangelove, Michael. “Video Diaries: The Real You in YouTube.” Viewings: “An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube”	
Wednesday 11/18	Performative Storytelling Readings: Alexander, Jonathan, & Elizabeth Losh. “A YouTube of One’s Own?: ‘Coming Out’ Videos as Rhetorical Action.”	Blog Post Due Thursday by midnight

Week 9

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 11/23	Intimate & Viral Economies Readings: Poletti, Anna. “Intimate Economies: <i>Postsecret</i> and the Affect of Confession.” Listen to <i>Serial</i> Episode 1, “The Alibi”	
Wednesday 11/25	<i>Class Cancelled – Happy Thanksgiving!</i>	Email peer reviewers rough

		draft and post on Canvas by 4pm
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Week 10

Date	Agenda, Readings, and Viewings	Assignments Due
Monday 11/30	Peer Review Session; Revision Strategies	Peer Review Feedback; copy of your final paper
Wednesday 12/2	Wrap-Up; In-Class Reflection Viewings: <i>TBD</i> by students	

Finals Week:

Monday, December 7th: Paper 2 due on Canvas by midnight

*I reserve the right to update and make changes to this syllabus. It is your responsibility to keep up with all changes made to the syllabus, whether or not you attend class.