

21L 432/CMS 915 Understanding Television
http://web.mit.edu/21L.432/www/home/html
Prof. David Thorburn

Spring 2008
T, Th 3-4:30, 1-134
Screenings: M, 7-9. 1-134

Required attendance at these events:

MIT Communications Forum

March 6: Prime Time in Transition

March 13: Global Television

Both 5-7 p.m., Bartos Theater, MIT Media Lab

Key deadlines:

Exams:

Midterm: March 20

Final Exam: May 8

Papers (or installments) due:

Feb. 28, April 3, May 1

Schedule of Classes, Readings and Topics

	Tue	Thurs
Feb	5	Prologue: The Continuity Principle Thorburn and Jenkins, "Toward an Aesthetics of Transition"
		I. The Wasteland Mythology Kosinsky, "A Nation of Videots" Gerbner and Gross, "Living With Television" Paul Klein, "The Men Who Run TV ..." Barnouw, ch 1-2
	12	II. Television As A Cultural Form James Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication" in <i>Communication As Culture</i> Roland Barthes, "The World of Wrestling" in <i>Mythologies</i> David Thorburn, "Television As An Aesthetic Medium"
		14 Newcomb and Hirsch, "TV as a Cultural Forum" in Newcomb, ed., <i>TV: The Critical View</i> , 6 th edition, (Oxford Univ. Press, 2000) [This edition for all citations below from Newcomb] Tony Bennett, "Theories of the Media, Theories of Society" in Gurevitch et. al, <i>Culture, Society and the Media</i>
	--	21 III. The Broadcast Era Barnouw, ch. 3-4 Mike Mashon, "NBC, Walter Thompson, and the Struggle for Control of Television Programming, 1946-58," chapt. 8 in Michele Hilmes, ed., <i>NBC: America's Network</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). Anderson, "Disneyland," in Newcomb Spigel, "Women's Work," in Newcomb Brooks and Marsh, "Introduction"
	26	28 IV. TV Genres Barnouw, ch. 5 Thorburn, "Television Melodrama" in Newcomb
		28 First paper (or installment) due

Mar	4	6	Todd Gitlin, "Make It Look Messy: ... <i>Hill Street Blues</i> " Thorburn, <i>Encyclopedia</i> entry, "Television Aesthetics"
	11	13	Roberta Pearson and Maire Messenger Davies, "The Little Program That Could: The Relationship between NBC and <i>Star Trek</i> ," chapt. 12 in Hilmes, ed., <i>NBC: America's Network</i> . Pearson, [recommended]: "Heteroglossia in the Ensemble Programme" [typescript] Jenkins, " <i>Star Trek</i> Rerun ...," in Newcomb
	18	20	Alvey, "The Independents," in Newcomb Barnouw, ch. 6 Modleski, "...Daytime TV and Women's Work" Phil Williams, "... the TV Rerun," in Newcomb
		20	Midterm
			[Spring break]
Apr	1	3	Thorburn, <i>TV Encyclopedia</i> entries on detectives and <i>The Name of the Game</i> _____, "Is TV Acting A Distinctive Art Form"
		3	Second paper (or installment) due
	8	10	Recommended reading: Newcomb, "The TV Artistry of Norman Lear" Reeves, "Rewriting Newhart ..." Gomery, "... Movies Made-for-Television"
	15	17	Thorburn, "Interpretation and Judgment" McGrath, "The Triumph of the Prime-Time Novel," in Newcomb
	22	24	Gary R. Edgerton, "HBO: A Brief History"
			V. After the Broadcast Networks
	29		Thorburn, "The Sopranos ...", "Web of Paradox" Marc, "What Was Broadcasting?" in Newcomb
May		1	Third Paper Due
	6		Review
		8	Final Test
	13	15	Summary perspectives