**COMM 4860 REALITY TELEVISION**

**3 HOURS**

**Course Information**

**Course Description:**

Reality TV is an upper-level Media Studies course. We begin with a historical analysis of Reality TV's documentary roots, discuss the transition to more meaningful docusoaps of the 1970's, and conclude with more a critical evaluation of current continental franchise programming through class essays, discussions, interactions, and/or instructor’s chosen assignments.

**Course Objectives:**

At the end of this course, students should be able to

* Examine and critically evaluate unscripted programming
* Explain the role of gender bias, racial stereotyping in casting
* Detect and define product placement, voyeurism, and surveillance
* Understand the impact that Reality TV has had on scripted programming
* Become a more critical thinker and viewer

**Prerequisites and Corequisites:**

There are no prerequisites or co-requisites for this course.

**Course Topics:**

* The historical development of Reality TV
* Cultural and psychological impact of Reality TV
* The structure and formatting of Reality TV
* The relationships between culture and identity and between culture and language
* Examine how the depiction of race and gender through the Reality TV lens

**Specific Course Requirements:**

Students should be familiar with D2L technology and a word processing software such as Microsoft Word in order to submit your essays and final paper.

**Textbooks, Supplementary Materials, Hardware and Software Requirements**

**Required Textbooks:**

Shooting People: Adventures in Reality TV, Sam Brenton, Reuben Cohen (Verso, 2003)

Reality TV: An Insider’s Guide to TV’s Hottest Market, Troy DeVolld (Michael Wise Productions, 2011)

Reality Bites Back: The Troubling Truth About Guilty Pleasure TV, Jennifer L. Pozner, (Seal, 2010)

**Supplementary Materials:**

The instructor will post supplemental readings/video sources for further understanding of course material or course assignments on the content area, if necessary.

**Hardware Requirements:**

For information on the minimum hardware requirements visit [Technical Support](http://www.rodp.org/students/hardware_software.htm).

**Software Requirements:**

For information on the minimum software requirements visit [Technical Support](http://www.rodp.org/students/hardware_software.htm).

**Common applications you might need:**

* To read a PDF file download the latest version of [Adobe Reader here](http://get.adobe.com/reader/) .
* Don't have Microsoft Word? Explore an alternative [OpenOffice here](http://www.openoffice.org/) .
* Accessing a PowerPoint file? Download the [PowerPoint Viewer](http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=6)

**Web Resources:**

[The Everyday Writer](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/everyday_writer3e/default.asp?uid=0&rau=0)

The Writing Center [Online Writer's Handbook](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPAFormatting.html)

**Instructor Information**

Please see [Instructor Information](file:///C%3A%5Cd2l%5Ccommon%5Cdialogs%5CquickLink%5CquickLink.d2l?ou=7826924&type=content&rCode=TBRTrainin-13449721) in the Getting Started Module for instructor contact information, virtual office hours, and other communication information.

A student can expect to receive a response from the instructor within 24-48 hours of a student's email to the instructor unless notified of extenuating circumstances.

**Participation, Assessments & Grading**

**Quizzes/Exams, 300 points total**

There are two quizzes and one **Final Exam**, based on information from readings. Each quiz/exam is worth 100 points. The assignment calendar indicates when each quiz is due. **There are no make ups for quizzes.**

**Discussion Participation, 500 points total**

You are required to participate actively in ten class discussion forums in a timely manner. You must submit one original post and two response posts in each forum. The assignment calendar indicates when each discussion forum begins and ends. Each forum is worth 50 points, and there are no make-ups for discussions. Follow these guidelines when participating in a forum:

* You will not be able to view other threads until you have submitted your own thread. So if you do not submit an original post, you will lose the points for response posts and vice versa.
* Maintain threads by using the Reply button rather than by starting a new topic.
* Do not make insulting or inflammatory statements to other students. While expressing disagreement is fine, be respectful of differing perspectives.
* Remember without facial expressions some comments may be misunderstood. Thus, be careful in wording your posts. Use of emoticons might be helpful in some cases.

**Critical Analysis Essay, 100 points total**

There is one essay, based on information from readings, discussion forums and viewings required for this course. The essay is worth 100 points. The assignment calendar indicates when the essay is due. Late essays will be dropped by 20 percent. Technical problems are not an excuse for a late essay.

**Final Paper, 100 points total**

There is one final project paper, in which you will propose a Reality TV concept based upon course materials (rubric provided) The final paper, including the rubric, is worth 100 points. The assignment calendar indicates when the plan and the paper are due. **There are no late submissions for the final project**. Technical problems are not an excuse for a late paper.

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| Graded Items |
| **Description** | **Points** |
| 10 Discussions @ 50 points each | 500 |
| 3 Quizzes/Exams @ 100 points each | 300 |
| Critical Analysis Essay @ 100 points | 100 |
| 1 Final Paper @ 100 points | 100 |
| **Total Points** | **1000** |

To determine your grade, divide your number of points by the total number possible.  This  percentage is applied to the following scale:

A     =   90.0—100.0%

B     =   80.0—89%

C     =   70.0—79%

D     =   60.0—69%

F      =   Less than 60.0%

Grading Scale

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Point Range** | **Assigned Grade** |
| 900 - 1000 Points | A |
| 800 - 899 Points | B |
| 700 - 799 Points | C |
| 600 - 699 Points | D |
| Under 600 Points | F |

**Assignments and Participation**

* **Discussion Forums: Original and Response Posts (500 points total):**

You will read each chapter in the textbook and post your original answers to discussion questions in the forum based on the due dates noted on the course calendar.

You must respond to/engage with other students’ discussion posts. After reading all of the discussion posts, you must respond to two posts from other students for each forum by the due dates noted on the course calendar.

Each discussion (one original post and two response posts) is worth 10 points. There are ten discussion forums throughout the semester.

* **Quizzes/Final Exam (300 points total):**

You will complete quizzes in D2L based on the due dates noted on the course calendar.

Quiz questions are based on textbook chapter and course readings/materials, and viewings.

Each quiz is worth 100 points. There are two quizzes throughout the semester and one Final Exam.

* **Analytical Essay (100 points):**

You will write one analytical essay and submit it through the Dropbox feature.

The essay is worth 100 points. Refer to the detailed guidelines in the relevant module.

* **Final Paper/Project (100 points):**

You will write a final paper/project which proposes a Reality TV concept. You will submit it through the Dropbox feature.

The final paper/project is worth 100 points. Refer to the detailed guidelines in the relevant module.

**Attendance and Participation:**

In this course, participation is required. We cannot establish a community of online learners unless you participate in a meaningful way. Please check regularly your eCourseware email for course announcements and for important communication from me.

You must actively participate in threaded class discussion, and your participation must be timely. If you consistently wait until the last few hours of a discussion, the quality of your participation may suffer, as will your grade. Do not hesitate to ask questions and to mention current events as part of your discussion, but please keep all discussion comments relevant to the course material.

Keep up with deadlines by reading the course calendar and the course schedule. You have a window of time in which to participate in each discussion forum and in which to submit your analytical essays and your final paper. Once discussion time ends, you will not receive credit for further discussion on that module’s topics. After the final deadline for an essay or the final paper is past, you will receive a zero for that assignment. **Technical problems are not an excuse for late assignments.**

If you receive financial aid, your attendance records are automatically extracted and are provided to the financial aid office. You do not need to provide documentation of your attendance.

Students who cease participating in the course but do not officially drop or withdraw will receive a final grade of F.

**Course Ground Rules:**

In this course, participation is required. We cannot be a real class unless you participate.

Learn how to navigate in the learning environment system (D2L) and let me know immediately if you experience problems.

Keep abreast of course announcements.

Use the D2L email located within the course, as opposed to a personal email address.

Take care of technical problems immediately.

Observe course netiquette at all times.

If you are caught cheating or using the work of others without attribution, then you will fail that particular assignment. You may also fail the course and face other disciplinary action.

A helpful site is located at the Virtual Library, <http://vl.rodp.org/cite.htm>. It provides information on how to avoid plagiarism and how to cite sources.

The following is the campus policy on plagiarism: “Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline based on your home school guidelines. If you are unaware of your home school's Academic Misconduct Policy, please contact the Student Affairs office. Each student is governed by the UM school policy.”

**Guidelines for Communications**

**Email:**

* Always include a subject line.
* Remember without facial expressions some comments may be taken the wrong way. Be careful in wording your emails. Use of emoticons might be helpful in some cases.
* Use standard fonts.
* Do not send large attachments without permission.
* Special formatting such as centering, audio messages, tables, html, etc. should be avoided unless necessary to complete an assignment or other communication.
* Respect the privacy of other class members

**Discussions:**

* Review the discussion threads thoroughly before entering the discussion. Be a lurker then a discussant.
* Try to maintain threads by using the Reply button rather starting a new topic.
* Do not make insulting or inflammatory statements to other members of the discussion group. Be respectful of others' ideas.
* Be patient and read the comments of other group members thoroughly before entering your remarks.
* Be cooperative with group leaders in completing assigned tasks.
* Be positive and constructive in discussions.
* Respond to discussion topics or questions in a thoughtful, helpful, timely, and thorough manner.

**Web Resources:**

 [Columbia Guide to Online Style](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html) by Janice R. Walker and Todd Taylor Citation Styles Online <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite6.html>

Copyright Issues <http://www.tbr.state.tn.us/general_counsel/ip/Copyright%20in%20DE.htm>

**Library**

The [Tennessee Virtual Library](http://vl.rodp.org/RODP_login.htm)is available to all students enrolled. Links to library materials (such as electronic journals, databases, interlibrary loans, digital reserves, dictionaries, encyclopedias, maps, and librarian support) and Internet resources needed by learners to complete online assignments and as background reading must be included in all courses.

**Students with Disabilities**

Qualified students with disabilities will be provided reasonable and necessary academic accommodations if determined eligible by the appropriate disability services staff. Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of a student's eligibility for specific accommodations from the disability services staff. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with their disability services staff and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.

**Syllabus Changes**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to this syllabus. If changes are necessitated during the term of the course, the instructor will immediately notify students of such changes both by individual email communication and posting both notification and nature of change(s) on the course bulletin board.

**Technical Support**

Please visit the [Get Help](file:///C%3A%5Cd2l%5Ccommon%5Cdialogs%5CquickLink%5CquickLink.d2l?ou=7826924&type=content&rCode=TBRTrainin-8634184) page in the Getting Started Module of this course to find technical support information.