English 247
American Literature and Popular Culture
Subtopic: Storytelling in the Age of Television
Winter 2017; Tues/Thurs, 10:00-11:20
HH 227

Prof. Victoria Lamont
Office: HH: 226
Office Hours: by appointment (I am generally around Tues/Thurs 2:30-3:45)
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emails normally answered within 24 hours, 9-5, Monday to Friday
Please check Learn regularly for announcements and assignment information.

Course Description
This course explores the relationship between American literature and popular culture with a focus on television and short fiction narrative from the 1950s to the contemporary period. We will study storytelling as a specific cultural practice that is fundamental to the way people understand the world and their place within it. In addition to examining the formal aspects of stories (temporality, point of view, characterization, figuration etc.), we will study how stories, readers, and societies interact.

Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this course you should be able to do the following in short assignments, essays, and on the exam:

• Identify the formal components of stories and explain their functions,
• Explain how the stories on the course syllabus are connected to specific social and historical contexts,
• Analyze the ways in which specific stories mediate our understanding of the social world and our place within it.
• Compare the similarities and differences between television and textual storytelling in both formal terms and in terms of how they mediate social reality.

**Required Primary Readings**

*English 247 Courseware Package.* A selection of short fiction. Available at the Bookstore.


*I Love Lucy,* “Lucy Does a TV Commercial.” We will watch the entire episode in class. The clip “Vitameatavegamin” is widely available online.


*The Cosby Show,* Pilot. 1984. Watch in class (A poor quality version available online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5n1nqViNEI&t=33s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5n1nqViNEI&t=33s)).


Orange is the New Black, pilot. 2013. Netflix

Required Secondary Readings


Recommended Reading and Resources


St James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture. For background information about television series we will be studying. Online via library.

Literature Online. For background information about literary authors and texts we will be studying. Online via library.

Summary of Assignments

Detailed instructions and rubrics will follow; if you anticipate difficulties with any of these assignments, please do not hesitate to meet with me early in the semester.

Participation: 10%

Participation comprises the following activities:

- Prepare for class by reading assigned texts closely. When I assess your participation I will be paying close attention to evidence of preparation.
- Listen actively to lectures and discussions
- Contribute to discussion with questions, ideas, or responses
-Respond to ideas that come up in readings, lectures, or discussion
-Be kind to each other.

**Portfolio: 30%**
Throughout the term I will assign written analysis or reflection activities that you will collect in your ePortfolio on Learn. Examples of activities include short written reflections on class readings, lectures, or discussion; or links to clips from television episodes accompanied by a short written analysis. You will receive time and instruction in class to help you build your portfolios. I will assess portfolios half way through the term and at the end of the term. For each assessment you will submit your three best portfolio items.

**Close Analysis Essay: 40%**
Length: 1500-2000 words plus Works Cited.

Breakdown of Essay Mark:
- Proposal and outline: 10%
- Peer Review Workshop: 10%
- Final Draft: 20%

Write an essay on a topic of your own design that compares an American television episode of your choice (on or off the syllabus) to a literary text from the course syllabus. Your essay should be researched using 4-6 relevant and up-to-date scholarly books and/or journal articles.

**Take Home Exam: 20%**
You will be given a choice of essay questions that will ask you to make connections among different historical moments, concepts, and narratives that we have studied this term. There will be a choice of questions. Questions will be drawn from ongoing discussion and will be distributed on the last day of class.
**Schedule of Classes**

Subject to change. Changes will be announced in advance in class and on Learn. Please bring texts to class. You are encouraged to bring devices to class for accessing television episodes.

CP=Courseware Package  
HTW= *How to Watch Television*

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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| Week 1: Jan 3/5 | Thurs: HWT 1-9; An episode of your favorite television series that you can refer to in class. | Introduction to course.  
Introduction to textual and narrative analysis. |
|               | Thurs: *The Dick Van Dyke Show,* “I’m No Henry Walden;” HWT 112-120.       | Hegemony and subculture in the 50s and 60s.                            |
|               | Thurs: Allen Ginsberg, “Howl.”                                             |                                                                        |
| Week 2: Jan 10/12 | Tues: HWT 299-307; Twilight Zone, “The Eye of the Beholder.”              | Responses to the civil rights movement in Lit and TV.                  |
|               | Thurs: “Sonny’s Blues” (CP).                                               |                                                                        |
| Week 3: Jan 17/19 | Tues: “There Will Come Soft Rains,” “That Only a Mother” (CP).            | Post war science fiction as social commentary.                         |
| Week 4: Jan 24/26 | TUES: “There Will Come Soft Rains,” “That Only a Mother” (CP).            |                                                                        |
| Week 5: Jan 31/Feb 2 | Tues: *I Love Lucy*, “Lucy Does a TV Commercial” (Watch in class); HWT 244-251.  
Thurs: *The Group*, Chapter Two (CP) | Post war woman-centered narratives. |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Week 6: Feb 7/9     | Tues: *Mash*, “The Interview” (Watch in Class); HWT 195-203.  
Thurs: “A Different View” (CP). | Stories and war                  |
| Week 7: Feb 14/16   | Tues: *The Cosby Show*, Pilot (Watch in Class).  
Thurs: “How Did I Get Away with Killing...” (CP) | Representing race  
**Portfolios Due Feb 17, 11:59 PM. Share with me via Learn.** |
| Feb 20-24: Reading Week |                                                                                |                                  |
| Week 8: Feb 28/Mar 2 | Tues: *24*, season 4, episode 1; HWT 85-93.  
Thurs: “Hair, Prayer, and Men” (CP). | Television after 911  
**Essay proposals due** |
| Week 9: Mar 7/9     | Tues: *Glee*, pilot. | Queer storytelling               |
|               | Thurs: “Old Father, Old Artificer” (CP) | Tues: Orange is the New Black, pilot. HWT 94-102.<br>Thurs: “What You Pawn, I Will Redeem” (CP) | Storytelling on the margins<br>**Portfolios Due March 17, 11:59 PM.**<br>Review<br>Essay Peer Review Workshops<br>Essay due 11:59 pm: use drop box on Learn<br>Take-home exam due 11:59 pm: use drop box on Learn |
|---------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 10: Mar 14/16 |                                                       |                                                                                           |
| Week 11: Mar 21/23 |                                                       |                                                                                           |
| Week 12: Mar 28/30 |                                                       |                                                                                           |
| April 3         |                                                       |                                                                                           |
| April 10        |                                                       |                                                                                           |

**Late Work**
Short assignments (worth 10% or less) are not accepted late without medical documentation. Essay extensions will be considered if you approach me before the due date. Late essays/take-home exams are penalized 3%/day late. I don’t accept late assignments after the term is over.

**Electronic Device Policy**
Please use laptops for other class-related activities only. Cell phones must be switched to silent and put away. If I think a device is being used in a distracting manner, I will ask you to put it away.
**Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance is expected and will count towards participation mark. If you miss an assignment because of lateness you will receive a mark of 0. Please arrive for class on time and stay until the class is over. No admissions to class more than 10 minutes late.

**Cross-listed course**

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/arts-academic-integrity) for more information.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/student-discipline). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/student-discipline).

**Turnitin.com:** Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. In the first week of the term, details
will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.

Note: students must be given a reasonable option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. See guidelines for instructors for more information.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 - Student Appeals.

**Note for students with disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.