

(THIS SYLLABUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE UP UNTIL START OF FALL SEMESTER)

THE 405 – Television: Past, Present and Future

Spring 2017, #30827

Wednesdays, 4:30pm -7:15pm

Tempe Campus, DISCOVERY #250

Professor: Joe Fortunato

Office: Dixie Gammage, Room 247

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Wednesday: 1:30 – 3:30 pm

(Or by appointment)

Phone: (480) 727-8472 (I don't check voice mail often, email is better!)

Email: Joseph.Fortunato@asu.edu

***If you have questions about the class, your grade, or need specific guidance on any assignments PLEASE COME AND SEE US DURING OFFICE HOURS! Don't wait until the last minute to ask for help.*

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Available via Amazon & ASU Bookstore

Television and American Culture by Jason Mittell

Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN# 978-0-19-530667-5

(Note: Like many textbooks, this is a bit pricey if you buy it "new." I highly encourage you to seek out used copies, on Amazon or elsewhere to save some money!)

Online via Blackboard

Various REQUIRED readings available on class Blackboard page under Online Readings. There are also various optional readings. Both are clearly marked.

Students must also purchase an account for TOP HAT for attendance and student engagement questions in class. Cost is \$24 for 1 semester (4 months) or \$36 for 1 year or \$72 for lifetime. See below for more information. This is REQUIRED for the class!

Top Hat course name: **THE 405 – Television, Past, Present, Future - Spring 2017**

Direct URL: <https://app.tophat.com/e/535975>

6-digit course code: 535975

Good sites for TV Study - <http://www.emmytvlegends.org>, www.thefutoncritic.com,
www.newsfortvmajors.com, <http://www.tvhistory.tv/History%20of%20TV.htm>

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Since becoming a dominant form of mass media after World War II, American television has continued to evolve and adapt, both suggesting and reinforcing cultural norms, as well as reacting to and reflecting contemporary society and notions of regional and national identity. This class will examine the manner in which television programs have been created, produced, distributed, viewed and archived historically from the past to the present, as well as speculate on the future of the medium. We will consider television's role in both reflecting and constituting American society through a variety of approaches. Our exploration will consider the economics of the **television industry**, television's role within American society as a **democratic institution**, the **textual form** of a variety of television genres, television's function in the formation and **representation of gender and racial identity**, television's **role in everyday life**, and the medium's social and **technological impacts**. We will consider not only why TV is what it is today, but how it might be different in the future. Through the exploration of critical perspectives on television, the course will prepare you for further studies in media criticism as well as enable you to be a more savvy and sophisticated consumer (and potentially producer) of television in your future endeavors.

Learning Goals:

- Gain an understanding of how television shapes and is shaped by American culture.
- Develop the vocabulary and skills to analyze television's industrial, formal and technological facets
- Expand your horizons to better understand and appreciate a wide range of television programs from a variety of historical contexts
- Think across disciplines to understand television as a multifaceted phenomenon

COURSE DROP AND WITHDRAWAL DEADLINES SPRING 2017

Session Dates and Deadlines	Session C: 15 weeks (Jan. 9 – April 28)
Classes Begin	January 9, 2017
Drop/Add Deadline	January 15, 2017
Tuition and Fees 100% Refund Deadline	January 22, 2017
Herberger Extended Add Deadline (with faculty approval email)	TBA
Academic Status Report 1 Deadline	Feb. 13-20, 2017
Spring Break	March 5-12, 2017
Academic Status Report 2 Deadline	Mar. 23-30, 2017
Course Withdrawal Deadline	April 2, 2017
Complete Withdrawal Deadline	April 28, 2017
Classes End	April 28, 2017
Final Grades Due	May 1-8, 2017

Please note – dates are subject to change. Check the ASU Calendar ONLINE for the most current and correct information! <https://students.asu.edu/academic-calendar - spring17>

The Herberger College of the Arts follows these deadlines strictly. If you wish to withdraw from

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this course, it is your responsibility to do so. Course registration changes are processed through My ASU: <http://my.asu.edu>.

Academic Dishonesty

All necessary and appropriate sanctions will be issued to all parties involved with plagiarizing any and all course work. Plagiarism and any other form of academic dishonesty that is in violation with the Student Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. For more information, please see the ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>

Special Accommodations

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the ASU Disability Resource Center (<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/#> ; Phone: (480) 965-1234; TDD: (480) 965-9000). This is a very important step as accommodations may be difficult to make retroactively. If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, in order to assure that you receive your accommodations in a timely manner, please present this documentation to me no later than the end of the first week of the semester so that your needs can be addressed effectively.

TOP HAT ACCOUNT – REQUIRED!

Hey! Your professor is using Top Hat this term to make lectures more fun and effective. Top Hat is web-based so you can use **ANY** device to participate in class, ask questions, give feedback, and access review tools. Profs activate attendance, poll questions, discussions, and tournaments while Students interact in real time and see the results your performance in the Student Gradebook or access homework and review

Get Started

Part of your final grade will be evaluated through Top Hat, so it's important to register ahead of class.

1 Register Check your email for an **invitation** to join your course in Top Hat and follow the link to make an account.

If you haven't received an invite, go to **tophat.com/register/student** and make an account. Then visit **tophat.com/e/#####** (where “#####” is your course's unique 6- digit code) to enroll directly. You can enroll in additional courses that are using Top Hat while logged in.

2 Subscribe Top Hat subscriptions give you access to an unlimited number of classes at a cost of **\$24 for 1 semester** (4 months) or **\$36 for 1 year**. (A better deal if you have other classes at ASU that might use this program)

Purchase online with a credit card or get a redeemable subscription code at your campus bookstore (not available on all campuses).

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3 Access You can access Top Hat in and out of class on any device:

- Web: log in to Top Hat via **tophat.com/login**.
- Mobile: download our free apps on iOS or Android.
- SMS texting: if you plan on texting, enter your cell number when you register online and look out for text instructions on questions in class. Add our number as a contact so you have it handy. US: +1-315-636-0905 / Canada: +1-647-931-6505

Support - Have any questions or trouble accessing Top Hat? We can help:
support@tophat.com or **1 (888) 663-5491**

In Class Screenings

As you will see below, in many cases, the screening for each week is “To Be Announced” (TBA). I intend to be VERY flexible when it comes to in class screenings. Our class discussions may run long (a good thing – it means we’re engaged in debate!) and we might not always have time to screen shows and clips. If you see something in class you are interested in, I encourage you to seek the show or clip out on your own!

Whenever possible, I have also placed a number of relevant shows on reserve in the library, for your enjoyment and research. And keep in mind the library is a great resource for video, even if it's not something on reserve!

Recommended Books For Further Reading (if you want to learn more!)

Tube of Plenty by Erik Barnouw (classic text for TV History)

This Business of Television by Howard J. Blumethal and Oliver R. Goodenough (name says it all - great reference guide to the “business” side of television!)

The Television Will Be Revolutionized by Amanda D. Lotz (excellent book on the current state and “future” of television) – note, book is available online via ASU Library

The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows by Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh (a reference guide to pretty much every television show ever broadcast, with dates, network schedules, etc)

Television: The Critical View Edited by Horace Newcomb (A large collection of scholarly essays on a wide variety of television topics – good place to start with a research project)

MANY OF THE CLASS READINGS and ASSIGNMENTS will be available on BLACKBOARD.

If you have NOT used Blackboard before, I suggest you use a tutorial or sign up for a class. You can find more information at:

http://help.asu.edu/sims/selfhelp/SelfHelpHome.seam?dept_pk=822

Class Twitter Feed! Follow @the405tv

I’ve set up a class Twitter feed to “broadcast” class announcements, info and interesting

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screenwriting related things I find. Please note this is OPTIONAL. You don't have to use it, but for those who might want to "follow" and keep informed, it's there. Nor does it replace email, so continue to use email for general communication.

COURSE POLICIES

Partial or complete screenings may be viewed every week, accompanied by a lecture or discussion – sometimes the lecture will precede the screening, other times the screening will precede a lecture and discussion. Sometimes it will be mixed together. Do NOT plan on skipping out on the screenings, as class attendance may be taken at any time. If you leave class early or come late, you are considered absent.

There is a fair amount of reading in this class. While I would not consider it “difficult” reading, I highly encourage you to keep up. Please have the weekly reading completed before the date of class on the syllabus. Although not all readings may be extensively referenced in lecture and discussion, you are responsible for knowing the general content and argument of every article, and questions about the reading and lectures WILL be in the exams.

Offensive Content:

While all efforts are made to ensure a safe, accessible class environment, due to the subjective nature of art, this course may present material deemed offensive by certain students, either in required screenings, readings, assignments, in fellow students' comments, or in lectures. There may be some elements of profanity, sexual content and violence to which students will be exposed. If you are easily offended, please do not take this class. If you remain in the class, you will be responsible for ALL material, regardless of content.

Assignment Mechanics and Formatting: All FORMAL papers must be typed, double-spaced, stapled, and marked with your last name and page number in the upper right corner. Please cite all sources and be consistent using MLA format. No late assignments will be accepted. For help in formatting MLA style, buy the **MLA Handbook**, or use **The Owl at Purdue** online: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

All writing assignments must be delivered in BOTH hard copy form at the beginning of class AND must be submitted via Safe Assignment on Blackboard the same day (or earlier). Keep copies of your work. There will be no excuses for work that is delivered late. Please read the assignments carefully. If you do not understand the assignment, contact me for clarification, and don't wait until the last minute. Plan ahead and do not wait until the assignment is almost due. Meeting deadlines is a key part of your educational process. **PLAN AHEAD AND ALLOW FOR MURPHY'S LAW.**

Attendance Policy:

I will apply professional standards which means **attendance and punctuality is of paramount importance** in this class. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you will be counted as absent. **Remember, signing someone else's name to the attendance is a violation of ASU policy and can result in disciplinary action or expulsion!** Attendance can take place at any

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time during the class, so if you think you can show up on time and then vanish after a break, that would not be a good idea. **Please be to class on time. Excessive or repeated tardies will be treated as unexcused absences at the discretion of the instructor.** Hopefully, you will WANT to be in class, but I would not recommend *any* absences. Miss a day, miss a lot.

This is an upper level elective course and you are all responsible adults. Therefore, even though attendance will be taken every week, you will not “officially” be graded on your attendance. I do pay attention to who’s coming or not! However be aware of one important thing - **ANY STUDENT WITH MORE THAN FOUR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE CLASS!**

Tardies

In accordance with the policy above, 4 tardies = 1 unexcused absence.
10 minutes (or more) late = Tardy. 1/2 hour (or more) = Absent

Also, if you are absent (unexcused) on a day when an assignment is due, you will also lose points for that assignment. You cannot hand in material beyond the delivery deadline without prior arrangements with the professor, or a documented excuse as stated above.

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Class Runovers: Due to the length of some screenings, there will likely be occasions when class will run long. While I cannot require you to stay past the designated end of class, if you must leave, you will still be responsible for seeing the remainder of a film on your own.

Classroom Etiquette:

- I prefer you do **NOT** eat or chew gum during class. If you must, please do not make noise or bother your neighbors. Clean up!
- Please do **NOT** use cell phones, iPods or other electronic devices during class.
- If you are using a laptop, you must turn it off during screenings. During class, if you are caught doing email or anything **OTHER** than taking class notes, you will **NOT** be permitted to use your laptop again in class.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a VERY serious breach of academic integrity. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive an automatic grade of E and possibly a grade of XE, which will remain on your permanent academic record. Also, if you have ever taken all or part of this course before, and are taking it again for any reason, you **MUST** create and submit original work and writing for this semester. No recycling of papers/work you’ve handed in before for this or any other class!

Also, you cannot turn in work (films or written assignments) also submitted to other classes! Original work for this class only!

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICIES

Although there is no official “discussion” or “attitude” component to your grade, discussing the course content in class at the appropriate time may help your grade – as will showing up to office hours, corresponding with the instructor, etc. In a large class, it is impossible for every opinion and perspective to be heard, but if you feel strongly about a film or a class topic, you are encouraged to share your knowledge, opinions, and observations with the class and the instructor. You can also use your journals for this as well.

Grading Structure:

Although slight changes may result due to last minute changes or point adjustments, in general, your final grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

Group Project (Film/Present/Paper):	100 points (25%)
Weekly Journal (collected twice):	75 each x 2 =150 Points (25%)
2 Multiple Choice Exams:	50 points each (25%)
1 Cumulative Final Exam:	100 points (25%)

GROUP PROJECT

You will be required to do one GROUP Film/Presentation/Paper. It is YOUR CHOICE if you do a film, a class presentation or a paper, or if you turn it early for extra credit. (Though plan ahead, so you can coordinate your choice with other people for the group project!) The assignment details for both will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard, but here is a quick synopsis:

Group Film: You may choose up to FIVE people in class to work with. I HIGHLY encourage you to do a film with your group, but a written choice is available below if you cannot secure equipment. **(NOTE – If you make a film, you MUST obtain the proper safety and location permits. Failure to do so will result in a ZERO for the assignment!)**

Group Presentation: You may form groups of FIVE people and schedule a class presentation. Using PowerPoint, Prezi or other presentation software, you will present to the class on a topic related to the class that I approve. You must schedule this in advance.

Paper: You will write a 6-8 page FORMAL research paper on a topic that is related to class. This can be done as an individual or with ONE partner (two people total). Some ideas for papers can be found on the assignment sheet on Blackboard, but I encourage you to be original. As long as it's about a television topic from our class, it's probably fair game!

EXTRA CREDIT:

There is no formal extra credit in this class, so plan on doing well on your assignments. HOWEVER, you will have the option to turn in your Films/Papers early for EXTRA CREDIT of 15% & 10% on the assignment! (That's at least a whole letter grade more on the assignment!) As a bonus, if you do a final film and turn it in early, we might be able to see some of them in class! **See the syllabus for the dates to receive extra credit!**

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EXAMS:

Exams will be timed IN-CLASS, multiple-choice exams based on the films, readings and lectures. **PLEASE DO NOT MISS AN EXAM DAY!** Make up Exams will NOT be given unless it is a DOCUMENTED medical/family emergency. If you must make up an exam, even with documentation, it will be longer and a more difficult format (no multiple choice).

WEEKLY JOURNAL:

Because we will be covering a wide variety of topics, you are going to write a weekly Journal to reflect on your thoughts regarding the readings, discussions, topics, shows and issues we learn about in class. These are informal reflections, so it will only be graded as such (but good grammar and mechanics is always a good habit!). No citations, etc. required. Shoot for a full page (single spaced) each week. A full page (or more) will get you a better grade. Less than that will be graded accordingly. I will collect these TWICE during the semester to browse through them and record your grade. Each “Journal Check” will be worth 75 points. You will turn in a hard copy of your Journal (stapled together!). You must also submit to SAFE ASSIGN for full credit.

Grade Scale:

A+ = 97-100%
A = 94-97
A- = 90-94
B+ = 87- 90
B = 84-87
B- = 80- 84
C+ = 75-80
C = 70 -75
D = 60-70
E = 59 and below

Grading Rubric: All formal written assignments will be graded according to the following rubric:

70 points (70%) – Content
15 points (15%) – Grammar and Mechanics
15 points (15%) – Citations

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Please Note: While every effort will be made to adhere to this schedule, it is subject to change during the semester at the discretion of the instructor. You will be notified in class of any changes to exam times or readings, but **screenings and discussions may be substituted at any times without notice.**

* - Reading in Mittell Textbook

** - Reading available online via Blackboard

MODULE ONE: TELEVISION INSTITUTIONS

This module examines the key institutions and activities that make up the broad spectrum of the American television industry. These include the creative production companies that make programs; the businesses that distribute programs, sell advertising, and provide audience ratings; and finally the government agencies that regulate the industry.

JAN 11: Welcome/Class Introduction/Why Television?

Screening: Television History or Television: Window to the World

Reading: *Mittell, "Introduction: Why Television" (1-13)

**Lotz, "The Television will be Revolutionized" - Introduction (1-25)

Topics: An introduction to the class, what we will cover and how we will cover it. We will ask the obvious but not easy question, "What is television?" and provide a preview of topics ahead.

JAN 18: Exchanging Programming – How Television Gets Into Our Homes

Screening: Broadcast Television, Cable TV and Beyond

Reading: *Mittell, "Chapter 1: Exchanging Programming" (15-53)

Topics: We began our examination of television as a commercial industry, and explore the exchange of programming. How are television programs produced and find their way into our homes through distribution and transmission? Are the commonly held beliefs that "television is free" and "television is overly commercial" a contradiction?

JAN 25: Exchanging Audiences – How Advertising and Ratings Drive Television

Screening: Advertising, Audience and Feedback

Reading: *Mittell, "Chapter 2: Exchanging Audiences" (54-98)

**Promos – Coming This Fall (Ken Levine's Blog)

Topics: The economic model of American television is not driven by programs but by the sale of advertising. How did this economic model come to be? How does it work? If advertisers pay big money for people to see their ads, how are those people (audience) counted? Are bigger audiences always better? Are all "audiences" treated the same? How does this ratings system work and with billions of dollars at stake, is it the best we can do?

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FEB 1: Serving the Public Interest – The Television Industry & Government Regulations

Screening: **Mass Media in Society, Media Ethics, Media Rights and Responsibilities**

Reading: *Mittell, “Chapter 3: Serving the Public Interest” (99-125)

 ** “An Auction That Could Transform Local Media” *New York Times*

Topics: What role does the government play in television? What role SHOULD it play? How does regulation (or lack of it) affect indecent content, balanced political coverage or local vs. corporate control? What are the “ground rules” that allow private media companies to do business and make profits? What types of regulations serve what ends and how does the system favor some interests over others?

FEB 8: Televised Citizenship

Screening: **Television Media: Headlines or Hype? or Stay Tuned – Memorable Moments in TV News**

Reading: *Mittell, “Chapter 4: Televised Citizenship” (126-158)

 ** “Consultant Releases List of Words That Add Urgency to TV News” (on blackboard)

Topics: It’s part of their regulated mandate, but how does television attempt to “serve the public interest?” How does television use news and informational programming to inform citizens and fulfill the role of the press imagined in the First Amendment? Does television play too large a role in American politics? Can a commercial “for profit” television system really meet the demands of independent journalism?

EXAM 1 – IN CLASS (plan to stay longer if necessary)

MODULE TWO: TELEVISION MEANINGS

This module of the course exams the *form* and *content* of television programs as artistic *texts*, and looks at the way television tells stories and uses genre to convey meaning and culture

FEB 15: Making Meaning

Screening: ***America in Primetime*: Man of the House or Stay Tuned: Entertainment Kinescopes clip**

Reading: *Mittell, “Chapter 5: Making Meaning” (159-183, 202-212)
 (pages 184-201 are OPTIONAL)

Topics: What are the formal structures of television production? How have they changed (or stayed the same) as history and technology changes? What production elements go into producing certain styles and genres of television shows? How can understanding the formal styles and techniques of television production make you a more literate television and media consumer?

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FEB 22: Telling Television Stories

Screening: *Pioneers of Television – Sitcoms, Late Night, Game Shows*

Reading: *Mittell, “Chapter 6: Telling Television Stories” (227-258)
(pages 213-226 and 259-268 are OPTIONAL, but recommended)

Topics: What narrative forms does television use to tell its stories, both in scripted and non-scripted form? How do genres apply to television, and how do genre conventions affect the storytelling? What are some of the key genres in television and how have they changed (and remained the same) throughout history? How do genres affect the television industry and television study?

JOURNAL CHECK #1 DUE (7 entries) - In Class/Safe Assign

MARCH 1: Screening America

Screening: *Mass Media in Society; Class Dismissed or Smothered: The Censorship Struggles of the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*

Reading: *Mittell, “Chapter 7: Screening America” (269-304)

Topics: How does television convey “meaning” to viewers that shapes the way we think about our national character and identity? If television is considered “just TV” by some, can (or should?) it be studied in such cultural detail? Does TV shape us or mirror us (or both)? How does television portray dominant cultural ideologies alongside alternate belief systems? How does satire and parody shape the television landscape, and in turn, our national beliefs and dialogue?

MARCH 15: Representing Identity

Screening: *Color Adjustment or Class Dismissed*

Reading: *Mittell, “Chapter 8: Representing Identity” (305-353)
** “*Can Television Be Fair to Muslims?*” New York Times

Topics: How does television represent certain social groups? How does television establish cultural “norms” and expectations that construct individual identity? What are the “dominant identities” in American culture and how does it deal with subordinate groups? How does television reflect, represent and construct racial, gender and sexual identities?

MODULE THREE: TELEVISION PRACTICES

The Module examines various methodologies and theories in the study of media effects and looks at how television is part of our culture in terms of practices in everyday life. What are some of the specific practices of viewing television? How does television viewing affect

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children? How does changing television technologies alter the way we consume and live with television?

MARCH 22: Viewing Television

Screening: **Media Impact or Trekkies**

(Outside of class) Mean World Syndrome

Reading: *Mittell, "Chapter 9: Viewing Television" (355-382)

** John Howard et al, "Response to Roots: A National Survey" (1978)

Topics: What role does television play in our everyday life? How is television talked about, debated and discussed beyond the time spent in front of the screen. What are the various theories and methodologies in terms of studying the effects of television? What roles do fans play in the television universe and how do fan cultures extend the influence of television beyond the screen?

EXAM 2 – IN CLASS (plan to stay longer if necessary)

MARCH 29: Television for Children

Screening: **TBA**

Reading: *Mittell, "Chapter 10: Television for Children" (383-402)

Topics: Do television messages and representations affect children differently than adult viewers or is this a myth? Should extra care be taken when creating children's programming? Should children themselves be part of the decision making process as to how television should be regulated (or not) with them in mind? Are children really as passive in their viewing of television as some believe?

FIRST CHANCE TO TURN IN FILM PROJECT/PAPER FOR EXTRA CREDIT (15%)

APRIL 5: Television's Transforming Technologies

Screening: **TBA**

Reading: *Mittell, "Chapter 7: Television's Transforming Technologies" (403-437)

Topics: How do the technologies that make up (and surround) television impact the messages conveyed? How do those technologies affect our interaction with the medium and with each other? Do technologies change our culture or does our culture determine how technologies develop? What have been some of the biggest transforming technologies over the history of television?

APRIL 12: Television and the Global Market

Screening: **TBA**

Reading: *Mittell, "Conclusion" (438-449)

**Oh & Banjo, *Outsourcing Postracialism: Voicing Neoliberal Multiculturalism in Outsourced* - p454 (Media as Conduit) - p466. (Optional: p449-454)

Topics: How does American television differ from television systems around the world? What are the effects of exporting American television around the world? How does such cultural exports alter other countries? How does it affect how the world views America?

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Class Presentations for extra credit

LAST CHANCE TO TURN IN FILM PROJECT/PAPER FOR EXTRA CREDIT (10%)

APRIL 19: What is the Future of Television?

Screening: TBA

Reading: **Lotz, "The Television will be Revolutionized" - Conclusion (241-256)
**Fortunato, "*Those Were the Days: How Changes in Technology Have Altered How We Watch Television.*"

Topics: **Koblin, "*With TV Viewing Changing, Networks Take Longer to Drop Shows*"
How will television viewing change as we head into the future? Is the idea of "primetime" and other former concepts of television now gone in the convergence era? How do you watch television? How are your habits similar or different to others? How are they different from past generations?

Class Presentations?

JOURNAL CHECK #2 DUE (7 entries) - In Class/Safe Assign

APRIL 26: Conclusion – What Have We Learned?

Screening: TBA

Reading: TBA

Topics: Class summary. How has television changed from the past, to present and into the future?

FINAL EXAM IN CLASS

FILM/PAPER DUE (In Class/Safe Assign)