

HIST*6290: North American History - Television

Fall 2024

Department of History
Credit Weight: 0.50

Course Details

Calendar Description

Depending on the expertise of the instructor, this course may concentrate on either the United States or Canada, or it may concentrate on a historical theme or themes common to the larger continent.

F24 Semester Theme

This semester, the course will examine the history of television and ways of writing historically about electronic and graphic media, including the moving image.

In the first half of the course, we will examine the history of television in the United States, supported by scholarly literature on the comparative case in Canada. We will also explore video and the moving image as a type of historical primary source. In the second half of the semester, using the tools and insights developed earlier in the course, you will research and write about the histories of television, the moving image, or other media in a context crucial to your own thesis or Major Research Paper (MRP) research.

Method of Delivery: Online synchronous (AD-S)

Meeting time: Tuesdays, 2:30-5:20

Instructor – [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | (519) 824-4120 ex. [REDACTED] | Mackinnon Extension [REDACTED]

Office Hours via Microsoft Teams: Students may opt to visit virtual office hours on Tuesdays from 12:00 to 2:00pm beginning on Sept. 9—please email [REDACTED] in advance for best results.

Assessments and Due Dates

Class Participation: 15%

Class Presentations (10%, 5%, 10%): 25%

Short Essay (due Mon., Oct. 28): 20%

Final Paper (due Fri., Dec. 15): 40%

See pages 8-10 of this syllabus for detailed instructions on course assignments.

Required Books

Craig Allen, *Eisenhower and the Mass Media: Peace, Prosperity, and Prime-Time TV* (University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

Gayle Wald, *It's Been Beautiful: Soul! and Black Power Television* (Univ. of Nevada Press, 2017).

Saul Austerlitz, *Money for Nothing: A History of the Music Video, from the Beatles to the White Stripes* (Continuum International, 2006).

Dean DeFino, *The HBO Effect* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

Lorna Roth, *Something New in the Air: The Story of First Peoples' Television Broadcasting in Canada* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

Marusya Bociurkiw, *Feeling Canadian: Television, Nationalism, and Affect* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011).

Jennifer S. Clark, *Producing Feminism: Television Work in the Age of Women's Liberation* (University of California Press, 2024).

John Ortved, *The Simpsons: An Uncensored, Unauthorized History* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2009).

Note: Students may access these **required** books in various ways, including the Internet Archive (archive.org), interlibrary loan, as inexpensive Kindle books to read on a laptop, through new and used booksellers, or online at UofG Library.

All remaining course readings will be available through the HIST*6290 Courselink site.

Schedule

Week 1 (Sept. 10)

Introductions, Assumptions, and Ground Rules

Questions:

What are the key terms, ideas, and questions in the history of television and the moving image, including how to use video as a unique type of historical source? What is at stake in the topics of this course?

Assignment:

Please come to class prepared to discuss a book, poem, song, movie clip, video, photograph, or other **non-academic thing** that conveys information, ideas, or even just inspiration for thinking about the topic of this course. The goal is to activate the creative part of your brain and think broadly about the tools historians use.

Week 2 (Sept. 17)

The “Golden Age” of Television

Question:

Why was early television programming so vapid?

Read:

James Schwoch, “Selling the Sight/Site of Sound: Broadcast Advertising and the Transition from Radio to Television,” *Cinema Journal* 30, no. 1 (Autumn 1990): 55-66.

Richard S. Tedlow, “Intellect on Television: The Quiz Show Scandals of the 1950s,” *American Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (Autumn 1976): 483-95.

Craig Allen, *Eisenhower and the Mass Media: Peace, Prosperity, and Prime-Time TV* (University of North Carolina Press, 1993). – online UoG:

https://ocul-gue.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_GUE/1gg5hqs/alma9953673278305154 .

“This Week Marks a Big Moment in Television History,” Hagley Museum, March 25, 2024, <https://www.hagley.org/research/news/hagley-vault/week-marks-big-moment-television-history> .

“Writing About Film,” Purdue Online Writing Lab,

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/writing_about_film/index.html .

“Audiovisual Recordings and Other Multimedia [how to cite them],” Purdue Online Writing Lab,

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/audiovisual_recordings_and_other_multimedia.html .

Watch:

“Newton Minow, who saw television’s ‘Vast Wasteland’,” CBS News, Dec. 31, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/newton-minow-who-saw-televisions-vast-wasteland/>.

Eisenhower Presidential Campaign Commercials (and all the other presidents up to 2020) at Museum of the Moving Image: The Living Room Candidate,

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1952> .

Assignment:

Presenter(s) – lead the class in a discussion of the readings and questions for the week; additionally, come prepared to present an inspirational primary source relevant to the week.

Class – come prepared to discuss the reading and having done your own research on the questions of the week.

Week 3 (Sept. 24)

The Politics in Entertainment

Question:

How and why did early television programming absorb forms from earlier media like radio and the phonograph? How and why did television adapt (or not) to social and political change?

Read:

- Lynn Spigel, "White Flight," in Lynn Spigel and Michael Curtin, ed., *The Revolution Wasn't Televised: Sixties Television and Social Conflict* (Routledge, 1997): 47-72. – Courselink > Content
- Murray Forman, "One night on TV is worth weeks at the Paramount': Musicians and Opportunity in Early Television," *Popular Music* 21, no. 3 (2002): 249-76, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/853718> .
- Gayle Wald, *It's Been Beautiful: Soul! and Black Power Television* (Univ. of Nevada Press, 2017). – online UoG Library: https://ocul-gue.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_GUE/1neq0sb/cdi_dukeupress_books_org_bibliovault_9781478093640 .
- Darrell Y. Hamamoto, "Interview with Television Producer Rod Amateau of *Dukes of Hazzard*," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 9, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 166-70.
- John Eric Starnes, "The Rebel Behind the Wheel: An Examination of the 'Redneck' Rebel Cultural Trope in the *Dukes of Hazzard*," *Review of International American Studies* 14, no. 2 (Fall-Winter 2021): 89-102.

Watch:

- "Florence Meets Mr. Right," *The Jeffersons*, S5 E06, Youtube.com, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk9nS1DpaIA> .
- "Lamont Can't Stand Being Poor Anymore," *Sanford and Son*, Youtube.com, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqQ8MTi4g1w&list=PL7A4BkO0RBox6pl8NYPi94EClo8uGojI2> .

Assignment:

- Presenter(s) – lead the class in a discussion of the readings and questions for the week; additionally, come prepared to present an inspirational primary source relevant to the week.
- Class – come prepared to discuss the reading and having done your own research on the questions of the week.

Week 4 (Oct. 1)**Cable TV and Audience Segmentation****Questions:**

What is audience segmentation and its social impact? When, why, and how did it come about?

Read:

- TV Guide* (digitized) at The Museum of Broadcast Communications, https://museumtv.pastperfectonline.com/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_criteria=%22All+TV+Guides .
- Saul Austerlitz, *Money for Nothing: A History of the Music Video, from the Beatles to the White Stripes* (Continuum International, 2006). – online UoG Library: https://ocul-gue.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_GUE/1gg5hqs/alma9953513050005154 .
- Dean DeFino, *The HBO Effect* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013). – online UoG Library: https://ocul-gue.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_GUE/1neq0sb/cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781623565213 .
- Mark Jurkowitz and Amy Mitchell, "How Americans Get TV News at Home," *Pew Research Center Report*, October 11, 2013,

<https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2013/10/11/how-americans-get-tv-news-at-home/> .

Assignment:

Presenter(s) – lead the class in a discussion of the readings and questions for the week; additionally, come prepared to present an inspirational primary source relevant to the week.

Class – come prepared to discuss the reading and having done your own research on the questions of the week.

Week 5 (Oct. 8)

Comparative Case Study: Canada

Question: How has the regulatory, cultural, and business context in the US contrasted with the Canadian example?

Read:

Lorna Roth, *Something New in the Air: The Story of First Peoples' Television Broadcasting in Canada* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005). – online UoG Library:

https://ocul-que.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_GUE/1neq0sb/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_36442391 .

Marusya Bociurkiw, *Feeling Canadian: Television, Nationalism, and Affect* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011). – online UoG Library: [https://ocul-](https://ocul-que.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_GUE/1gg5hqs/alma991460706105151)

[que.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_GUE/1gg5hqs/alma991460706105151](https://ocul-que.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_GUE/1gg5hqs/alma991460706105151) .

Neil Diamond, dir., *Reel Injun*, National Film Board of Canada, 2010. – online UoG Library:

https://ocul-que.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_GUE/1gg5hqs/alma994004765505151 .

Watch:

“I Am Canadian: The Rant,” SHNKArchives, Youtube.com,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMxGVfk09IU> .

“The Two Sides of Canada,” *Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj* | Netflix, *Netflix is A Joke*, Youtube.com, Sept. 2, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDPeXoQUrbl> .

Assignment:

Presenter(s) – lead the class in a discussion of the readings and questions for the week; additionally, come prepared to present an inspirational primary source relevant to the week.

Class – come prepared to discuss the reading and having done your own research on the questions of the week.

Week 6 (Oct. 15) – Fall Break, no class meeting

Week 7 (Oct. 22)

Working in Television

Questions:

What has it been like to work in television, when, for whom, and why?

Read:

Jennifer S. Clark, *Producing Feminism: Television Work in the Age of Women's Liberation* (University of California Press, 2024) – open-access:

<https://luminosoa.org/site/books/m/10.1525/luminos.180/> .

John Ortved, *The Simpsons: An Uncensored, Unauthorized History* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009). – focus on Ch. 1-12.

“Finding the Silver Lining: Canada’s Outlook on the 2023 WGA Strike,” Toronto Film School, June 7, 2023, <https://www.torontofilmschool.ca/blog/2023-wga-strike-impact-canada/> .

Katie Kilkenny, “Would You Do It Again? A Year After Strikes, Hollywood Reckons With the Aftermath,” *The Hollywood Reporter*, July 19, 2024,

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/actors-writers-strikes-one-year-later-1235950418/> .

Watch:

“The Snow Must Go On (November 7, 1970),” *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, S1 E08, Youtube.com, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcZb-bQACAQ> .

Assignment:

Presenter(s) – lead the class in a discussion of the readings and questions for the week; additionally, come prepared to present an inspirational primary source relevant to the week.

Class – come prepared to discuss the reading and having done your own research on the questions of the week.

SHORT THEMATIC ESSAY

Due Monday, Week 8 (Oct. 28) in our Courselink Dropbox

Week 8 (Oct. 29)

Final Paper Preview Roundtable

Assignment:

Give a brief (10 minutes max!) preview of your semester historical research and writing project.

Week 9 (Nov. 5):

Independent Research & Writing Week

Assignment: Get to work!

Week 10 (Nov. 12)

Final Essay Presentations

Assignment:

Presenter(s) – full presentation (15 minutes each max!) of your semester historical research and writing project.

Class – come prepared to ask intelligent questions.

Week 11 (Nov. 19)

Final Essay Presentations

Assignment:

Presenter(s) – full presentation (15 minutes each max!) of your semester historical research and writing project.

Class – come prepared to ask intelligent questions.

Week 12 (Nov. 26)

Final Essay Presentations

Assignment:

Presenter(s) – full presentation (15 minutes each max!) of your semester historical research and writing project.

Class – come prepared to ask intelligent questions.

Week 13 (Nov. 28) – extra class as per [University Schedule of Dates](#)

Final Essay Presentations

Assignment:

Presenter(s) – full presentation (15 minutes each max!) of your semester historical research and writing project.

Class – come prepared to ask intelligent questions.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER**Due: Friday, December 13** in our Courselink Dropbox

COURSE REQUIREMENTS / ASSESSMENTS IN DETAIL

Class Participation – 15% of course grade:

Please come to class having completed assigned reading and ready to discuss it in an informed way with respect to the weekly questions posed in the course schedule, those posed by the seminar leaders for the week, and/or your own questions. An early discussion section participation grade will be provided for students in week 8.

Reading Guide/Notes & Seminar Leader Assignment – 10% of course grade: This assignment has two parts:

1. 5% of course grade: In your assigned week for this task, please **produce a reading guide** for the readings, videos, and/or websites of the week that you and fellow students can have on hand and refer to later, making sure to have a draft ready before the relevant class meeting. You may use that draft of the notes to aid your work as presenter in class. Then, **no later than midnight on the day you serve as seminar leader**, deposit your revised (in reference to any new, good ideas that emerged during the class discussion) notes in our Courselink Dropbox. Thereafter, Dr. Nance will post the guide on Courselink for fellow students.

Reading guide length: ca. **1500 words**. You **do not** need to provide “works cited” list at the end of the reading guide, but do include foot/endnote citations. Please use bullet points, headings, and other formatting that makes your guide more user friendly. Remember, it is not an essay; it is a set of notes.

Please do see Dr. Nance for one-on-one help with any aspect of your writing or making sense of the week’s readings.

2. 5% of course grade: In your assigned week for this task, using an uncirculated draft of your reading guide as a starting point, you will lead the class in a discussion of the week’s readings. Use assigned questions only as a starting point, identifying in the readings key passages, arguments, sources. Please also present a historical primary source that illustrates and/or problematizes some aspect of what we are examining for the week. Your presentation should (briefly) summarize the readings and discuss them substantively, while the primary source you present needs to be analyzed and connected to the readings; don’t just use it as decoration, but as an analytical source.

Students sharing the same presentation week should consult with one another and divide the readings among themselves in order to avoid overlapping presentations of sources or readings. The presentation schedule will be organized on our Courselink “Groups” widget following the first class meeting. The eventual presentation schedule will thereafter appear on Courselink in the announcements feed. Please make use of office hours for help in structuring this presentation or the reading guide mentioned above.

Short Thematic Essay – 20% of course grade:

Due Monday, Week 8 (Oct. 28) in our Courselink Dropbox

In order to demonstrate all your hard work in completing the assigned course readings in the first half of the semester **and** to try out research and writing techniques

you will eventually employ in your own research project, please write a short paper *drawn from the assigned course readings up to and including Week 7.*

Your goal: Explain how course themes have played out in the history of television and the moving image, including how to use video as a unique type of historical source. Please choose several specific case studies to discuss to demonstrate your analysis.

Paper length: **2000 words** (about 8 pages double-spaced). Please provide footnotes or endnotes according to the Chicago Manual of Style. You **do not** need to provide a “works cited” bibliography at the end of this paper. Please do see Dr. Nance for one-on-one help with any aspect of your writing.

Final Paper Preview Roundtable (Oral Report) – 5% of course grade:

During the class meeting in Week 8 (Nov. 1), you will give a brief (8 minute max!) report on your proposed semester research project exploring the history of television and ways of writing historically about electronic and graphic media, including the moving image, and some possible primary and secondary sources you will use.

Final Paper Presentation – 10% of course grade:

During weeks 10, 11 or 12, you will give a formal presentation detailing your final paper research project—15 minutes in length (max!). Please explain the case study you will research and write about in the second half of the course to explore the history of television and the moving image, including how to use video as a unique type of historical source. You may also provide an explanation of your research and writing process, plus a reflection on what is working, or not, what has been easy, what key points you want readers to understand, how this exercise will support your later (proposed / probable) MRP or thesis research. Feel free to discuss both primary sources and secondary sources relevant to your project. Imagine this as a friendly work-shopping opportunity in which students will help one another to produce the best possible final work.

The presentation schedule will be organized on our Courselink “Groups” widget following the first class meeting. The eventual presentation schedule will thereafter appear on Courselink in the announcements feed. Please visit office hours for help in structuring this presentation.

Final Research Paper – 40% of course grade:

Due: Friday, December 15 in our Courselink Dropbox

In the second half of the semester, using the tools and insights developed earlier in the course, you will research and write about a case study exploring the history of television and the moving image, including how to use video as a unique type of historical source, that is crucial to your own historical thesis or MRP research. Please employ both secondary and primary sources in your writing.

Paper length: 4000 words (ca. 15 pages double-spaced). Please provide footnotes or endnotes according to the Chicago Manual of Style; no MLA or

parenthetical citations please. Yes, you **do** need to provide a “works cited” page at the end of this paper. Please visit office hours for help in structuring this presentation.

Use of AI (eg. ChatGPT) and other writing tools in this course

Students in this course may use writing aids like Grammarly or the spelling and grammar features in Word to revise their writing. They may also use AI services like ChatGPT to correct spelling and grammar, or to ask factual or research questions. You must cite information you copy and paste from ChatGPT into your own work as originating in an AI application, using quotation marks to indicate the relevant text (citation info in footnote #1 below).¹

Beyond that, please see the [University of Guelph Guidance on the use of Generative AI for Graduate Students](#), as well as the statement on Academic Misconduct below.

College of Arts Policies

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Graduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#).

Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses are available in the [Graduate Calendar](#).

Copies of Out-Of-Class Assignments

¹ “You **do need** to credit ChatGPT,”
<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/Documentation/faq0422.html>.

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

More information: www.uoguelph.ca/sas

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is outlined in the [Graduate Calendar](#).

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via Courselink and/or class email.

This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

COVID-19 Safety Protocols

For information on current safety protocols, follow these links:

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campus/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-safe-return/>

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campus/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces>

Please note, that these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health, or government directives.