TELEVISION AND AMERICAN CULTURE
Program for Writing and Rhetoric
Fall 2011, ECCR 139
WRTG 3020-083, TR 2-3:15
WRTG 3020-092, TR 2-3:15

Instructor: Dalyn Luedtke  Office: Temporary Building #1, Rm 02
Phone: 303.492.5286  E-mail: dalyn@colorado.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 8:30-10:00 and Thursdays 12:00-1:45 (and by appointment)

If my scheduled office hours do not work with your schedule, I’m happy to set up an alternative time to meet with you to discuss coursework. I am also available via email and I am notoriously fast at answering emails. It is definitely the most effective and efficient way to contact me.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Despite observations that we are currently experiencing the ‘death of TV’, television shows no sign of giving up the ghost to newer media. In fact, thanks to the convergence of TV and new media, television has truly become ubiquitous, moving from the living rooms to our bedrooms, kitchens, and pockets. As a result, the medium demands more critical attention than we have previously given it. This class will use a variety of approaches to assess the material, rhetorical, and cultural impact of a medium that many people seem eager to dismiss. But is it? How do viewers of the 21st century tune in and why? How do we define the contemporary viewing experience? How has television adapted to the new media environment? How has the TV industry changed over the last few decades? What does the future of TV look like? As a class, we will consider these questions and many others throughout the course of the session. Students will be required to keep a regular blog, respond to classmate’s blog posts, research and pitch an original television show, write a critical analysis of a television show, and create multimedia texts.

COURSE GOALS: Meant for juniors and seniors in the College of Arts and Sciences, this course will help you:

- gain familiarity with academic and popular writing genres and with methods of presenting information to a general audience;
- apply your disciplinary expertise to issues in television, media, and culture;
- hone your writing and critical thinking skills;
- assess and develop strategies for specific rhetorical situations;
- engage in thoughtful dialogue about popular culture;
- use new media rhetorically to engage your audience in a variety of ways;
- gain experience with video and audio composing and editing techniques;
- and, develop further understanding of conventions of standard linguistic usage and their application, including proper grammar, syntax, and punctuation, as you compose, revise, and edit your writing across a range of rhetorical tasks and genres.
**ATTENDANCE:** This course will be taught as a workshop; your participation is essential to the success of the course. Therefore, you are expected to attend class regularly and to be on time. **Each absence in excess of three will diminish your final grade by one grading increment. If you miss more than 6 classes, you will automatically fail the class.** I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. If you missed class for any reason*, it is an absence. So, **DO NOT** schedule doctors’ appointments, appointments with other faculty members, or job interviews during class time. I suggest you save your absences for any emergencies—a death in the family, illness, and so forth—that may arise during the course of the session. Although this class meets very early, I expect you to be on time. Excessive tardiness is disruptive to the class and will not be tolerated. In the event that you do miss part or all of class, you are responsible for getting any missed material. I suggest you exchange contact information with a classmate.

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. In this class, please consult the class schedule and let me know one week ahead of time if you will be missing class for religious reasons. You are still responsible for any work missed. See full details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html)

**WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE:** Writing classes are, by necessity, small. As a result, everyone needs to participate for the class to be successful. Writing is also inherently collaborative and we will work in groups as much as possible (both online and in my office outside of class) at every step of the writing process. Perhaps the most important group work we do, however, is workshopping—an integral part of any writing class.

The goal of workshopping each assignment is to make revision easier. You will get feedback from me and from several of your colleagues for each of the major assignments. Each workshop is composed of two parts. The first phase of the workshopping process will take place in Googledocs, where each group member will annotate and comment upon each draft. Next we will meet in my office at the appointed time to discuss the drafts in person. The first phase should prepare you to talk about the draft; therefore all drafts are due before our scheduled review dates. If you do not post your draft in Googledocs by the designated time, your draft will not be workshopped, resulting in an automatic 10% deduction in the grade for that assignment.

Each major assignment will be formally workshopped once, and I will be checking Googledocs to make sure you have annotated and commented. Take the workshop seriously by engaging with the drafts, asking content-related questions, providing constructive feedback and concrete suggestions for improvement, and present your responses in a respectful manner. If you miss a workshop completely, your own assignment will be deducted 10%. And, since I often cancel class for workshops, you will also be counted absent if you fail to participate. So, please just don’t miss a workshop.
REQUIRED MATERIALS:
- *Television Criticism* by Victoria O’Donnell
- Class blog: http://tvwritingF2011.wordpress.com
- *Cultural Learnings*: http://cultural-learnings.com
- Purdue Online Writing Lab: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
- A pocket folder

GRADING: Your final grade is broken down into the following proportions:
- Analysis Paper 15% or 15 points
- Episode Commentary 15% or 15 points
- Podcast 15% or 15 points
- Blog Portfolio and Reflection 35% or 35 points
- Final Group Project 20% or 20 points

Please note that the blog portfolio and the final group project are not due until the last week of class. These projects combined comprise 55% of your grade. I’m more than happy to let you know how you’re doing in the class up to that point, but, if you’re uncomfortable with having over half your grade undetermined at that point in the semester, then this class may not be appropriate for you.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS: In this class, you will be asked to switch between very different genres of composition and do so in a way that is explicitly rhetorical. You must turn in all the major assignments (those listed above) in order to pass the class. Please keep all the work related to the major assignments, such as drafts or any pre-composing activities, as I may ask you to turn them in with the assignment.

All assignments must be posted on the class blog with the appropriate tags by the designated time—except for the analysis paper, which will be handed in traditionally. Computer problems, Internet disruption, and other tech problems are not legitimate reasons for failing to post your assignments on time. Please plan ahead. *I will not accept any papers or homework assignments via email, so do not ask.*

ANALYSIS PAPER: For the analysis paper, you will write a 5-7 page analysis of a television program of your choosing. As with any critical analysis, you will analyze the details of the text and attempt to draw conclusions based upon your analysis of those details. A thorough analysis will consider the context of the show (time period, network, lead-in, and so forth), the audience, and the purpose. Remember that analysis is subjective, which means that your reader may not agree with your conclusions, so it your job to provide ample evidence to support your conclusions and anticipate any objections your reader may have.

In order to prepare for the paper, we will read __________, which has a number of examples that should help you plan for your own writing. The goal is to analyze your chosen show in a way that tells us something new about it—something we might not
have thought of on our own. For example, a feminist lens isn’t likely to tell us anything new about the relationship between Brett Michaels and the girls on *Rock of Love*. However, cultural analysis of *Rock of Love* might begin to get at the reasons “celebreality” is so popular by focusing on the ways in which this show and others like it allow audiences access to a lifestyle and world that was previously inaccessible—a kind of “behind the scenes” look at the mechanizations of celebrity.

This is an academic paper, meaning that you will need to use *at least* five scholarly sources and adhere to current MLA guidelines. You’ll need to carefully consider which program you choose; ideally, it should be one that you are familiar with and that is complex enough to approach in a number of critical ways.

**EPISODE COMMENTARY:** Following your analysis paper, you will produce a video in small groups that analyzes a single episode of a television show, similar to the commentary you’ve seen included on TV shows and DVD’s. You will be using scenes from the show along with voiceover narration. Each group will choose one 60 minute (or 42-44, as it were) episode to analyze. While the emphasis will be on analysis, like the previous paper, you can also bring in background information on the show and the people involved, funny stories from the production, awards the show may have received, and any other relevant information.

Your commentary should provide the viewer with interesting, engaging stories and information about the show. Like the analysis paper, it should also show the viewer aspects of the show that aren’t immediately obvious through casual viewing. You will turn in a bibliography with the video, which you will post in the comment section of the blog post. It should be formatted according to MLA guidelines and include any sources you used to gather information about your show. You will also need access to sound/video editing and recording software. If you don’t have experience with iMovie or other similar software, there is plenty of help to be had in ATLAS. You will learn.

**PODCAST:** At this point in the semester, you will have written for both academic and popular audiences, and you will have composed written and visual texts. Next, you will produce a text that is simply auditory: the podcast. If you haven’t heard a podcast before, it is “[…]a digital audio or video file that is episodic; downloadable; program-driven, mainly with a host and/or theme; and convenient, usually via an automated feed with computer software” (Zuniga, et al). In small groups, you will plan, produce, and record your podcast, which will then be posted on our blog. Each member of the group must speak during the podcast. It should feel like we’re listening in on a particularly lively and informative discussion. You can choose to discuss any issue(s) related to television.

**FINAL PROJECT:** For the final project, you will work in small groups of three people. Together you will study and analyze a channel or network to determine their business strategies, programming techniques, target demographic, and how they engage audiences in an online environment. This information will be compiled into a prospectus, which is made up of four parts: background and industrial context, a brief analysis of one show and how it fits into the industrial context, an audience and online analysis, and an original
TV pitch. While a prospectus is typically used to map out a research plan for longer projects, you will be using it to provide background information and framing for a television pitch and, in essence, as a rhetorical justification for your “pitch” of an original television show. The project will then be presented to the rest of the class.

You must pitch a show that you believe would be appropriate and successful for the network you have chosen. The pitch should involve a clear, concise rationale for the show (based on your research) and a detailed description of the show: title, plot line, scheduling, trajectory, and other relevant details. You need to be as detailed as possible and really tailor your idea to the channel/network you are pitching. Consider whether they have migrated toward reality programming, a specific demographic, or medical dramas. What have they had success with? What audience might they be courting (given recent shows that have retired, been cancelled, or been huge successes—either on your channel or off)? You will turn in the prospectus and program proposal to me, which will be graded on the strength of the writing, attention to detail, and rhetorical sophistication.

For the presentation, you will have 30 minutes to present your pitch, which should acknowledge and integrate the information from your prospectus. You must think through all the details of the program and be prepared to answer any questions the network executives (the rest of the class) might have regarding the content, scope, online presence, and marketing of the program. As part of the presentation, you will also unveil a trailer for your television program. While I don’t expect you to shoot original footage, I do want you to use clips, videos, pictures, audio, and/or music to put together a trailer that gives us an idea what the show will be about, who the characters are, and the overall “feel” of the program. The goal of the trailer is to give us a better sense of tone—something that is difficult to get across in the pitch. Overall, you should use any media that you deem appropriate and you must present this in a professional manner. While it is clear that you will need to think about your pitch rhetorically, you will also need to approach your presentation from a rhetorical perspective. Think about ways to keep your audience engaged by asking them questions, avoiding long monologues, and using different types of media.

**BLOGS:** Although this class is about TV, it is still a writing class, which means I expect you to write regularly. There are TV blogs aplenty on the Internet and we are about to enter the fray. You will be expected to write one blog per week (300 words or more) that engages with some aspect of the television industry. It can be a weekly program review, thoughts on the upcoming fall lineup or reviews of the premieres, or even gossip-related. However, I do expect your blog to be critical, thoughtful, and reflect you as a writer. You will write a total of fifteen blogs. In addition, I expect you to respond to your classmates’ blogs. You must leave at least two comments per week. Your comments should be substantive and engaging; try to establish a dialogue. I strongly suggest you begin reading other TV blogs to get a sense of how others approach both blogging and commenting. The more you can become part of the TV/entertainment blogging culture, the easier this part of the class will be. As you will see, this is not academic writing. You should work on cultivating a voice and engaging your audience in discussion. Feel free to use humor, sarcasm, links, videos, and pictures.
At the end of the semester, you will turn in a digital blog portfolio, which will be a reflection on the writing we have been doing and links to all of your revised blogs. The blog portfolio grade will be based on a combination of participation (blog comments=5%), evidence of rhetorical awareness, voice, presentation (blog posts=20%), and thoughtfulness and attention to detail (reflection=5%)

Before we begin working on each of these assignments, you will get a more detailed prompt from me with guidelines for composing and the rubric I’ll be using to assess the assignment. In an effort to be as paperless as possible, and publish in an online environment, you will turn in all major assignments by posting them to the blog with the appropriate tags. Posting assignments to the blog will also allow you to use multimedia when appropriate.

**Late assignments will be docked 10%** for every class period they are late unless you make arrangements with me ahead of time. If you know you will be unable to turn in your final draft on time because of unforeseen circumstances, please let me know at least 24 hours in advance. Extensions will not be given if requested within 24 hours of the due date. Please keep in mind that this class will move quickly—blogs pile up, commenting has to be done, new apps have to be learned, and you will often be working with others—so timeliness is critical during this semester. Any extensions you may get will inevitably cut into the time you have for the next project. Manage your time wisely.

The grading process may take as long as a week, but I will do my best to get your papers back to you as quickly as possible.

**NOTICES:**

- If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices
- Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See polices at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code
- The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of
Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh

- All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor and http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism, the act of passing off someone else’s work as your own, is both dishonest and illegal. Stealing, buying, or using someone else’s work without proper documentation and permission constitutes plagiarism and violates university policy. Such behaviour is taken seriously by the University and the Honors Council, to whom such incidents will be referred. If you get caught plagiarizing, you will receive an automatic “0” for the paper, an “F” in the course, and a report will be filed with the Honors Council. It simply is not worth it.
Unit 1: Orientation and Context

CALENDAR:
Week One: “The Role of the Critic” and Blogging
Hello. Welcome to WRTG 3020: TV and American Culture. On this site, you'll find everything you need for the course. Under the header, there are tabs that will direct you to the main documents you need: (1) The syllabus and schedule can be found under "The Title Sequence"; (2) Detailed Prompts are under "Scenes"; (3) Rubrics are under "The Reviews"; and, (4) Revision and editing exercises are "Reshoot and Edit."

All documents are also available in printable PDF versions. Just click on the title of the document and the link will take you to it. On the left hand side of the screen, you'll see a search bar to help you find exactly what you're looking for. There is a "TV Topics" cloud, so you can find all blog posts related to any topic we've written about. And, there is also an extensive list of links that will take you to popular blogs, entertainment sites, reviews by well-respected critics, scholarly websites on TV, and some writing resources to help you along the way. Just move your mouse over the title of each link for a description.

HW: 1. All of you need to read "The Blog" under the Scenes tab, including the list of links at the end of the prompt. You don't have to read every single word that is linked to, but browse through them so you start to get a feel for the nature of blogging and what I'm asking of you. 2. I also need you to sign up for a Wordpress account. I will send each of you an invite that will take you to Wordpress and allow you to access our blog. For help with signing up, please watch this video and this one for help with logging in. 3. Last, I'd also like you to read the syllabus one more time. If you have any questions about it, please ask them as a comment. Otherwise, please just leave a comment saying you have read and understand the syllabus. I'd like you to get some practice posting a comment. For directions on how to post a comment, please watch this video.

Week Two: Workshopping the Blog

Today we discussed the nature of blogs--what they look like, who the audience is, how to engage that audience, and so forth--and how they build communities around TV shows. Over the weekend, I'd like you to continue exploring some of the blogs listed in the aide bar, or others you may have found on your own, to develop a better sense of the genre. It may behoove you to engage with some of those blogs more actively as well. Become a part of the community. Leave comments. It's fun. I promise.

I'd also like you to read "Chapter 1: The Work of the Critic" (3-20) in Television Criticism. While you can post your blog first, I think it would be extremely helpful to read this chapter before you begin writing. As a blogger, you are a critic and O'Donnell provides a succinct description of the industry and insight into the job of a critic. Contrary to popular belief, a critical review is not necessarily a negative one. She
explains that difference well and you should definitely keep your job as critic in mind as you write your blogs.

Last, I want you to draft your first blog post and post it to the class blog. Think about your audience, what they need to know, and what response you want from them. If you decide to write about a specific TV show, you can assume that your audience is familiar with the show and you don't need to give them a bunch of background information or a summary of the plot and characters. As you can see from other blogs, they usually focus on recapping the current episode and adding commentary of their own. The commentary is EXTREMELY important. It is what defines your voice, elicits dialogue, and makes the blog post interesting. Yes, people who missed an episode will appreciate the recap, but most of your readers won't be reading your blog post unless they've already seen it--most people don't like spoilers. Also, please use video, images (no larger than medium), and hyperlinks to enhance your blog post when you feel it's appropriate. The nature of blog posts are that you can be more creative in that respect. Take advantage of those possibilities.

**Week Three: Representations on TV**

Today we reviewed the concepts from "Chapter 7", specifically looking at the representations, how they work, and what the consequences of specific representations are. As you watch your weekly shows or sit down for a marathon, pay attention to the different characters and events are represented and what those representations mean. Between now and Sunday, we'll see lots of representations of 9/11. How has it changed over the last ten years? Who are the villains in this tragedy? How are they represented? What about the heroes? How does that reflect dominant American ideologies? You can ask yourself these same questions with just about any shows, but I want you to start approaching your regular viewing with some criticality. Doing so will help your blog posts become more critical as well.

For homework, please read "Chapter 6" and "Chapter 10." Unfortunately, we were unable to watch *Buffy* or *BSG* in class, so I'd like you to all watch the final episode of *Expedition Impossible*. Be prepared to talk about it in detail from both a representational and rhetorical perspective. We'll use it as the class example to make sure we're all on the same page.

Last, I've had a request that we all use a specific option to make scrolling through the homepage easier. After your first paragraph, hit enter, then click the "insert more tag" button, which is located to the right of the link/unlink buttons. You can see I use it on this post. It shortens what appears on the main page so you don't have to go through as many pages. For more details on that this is and how to use it, see the support page.

**Unit 2: Critical Analysis**
For the first essay, you will closely analyze an episode from a television program of your choosing.* As with any critical analysis, you will analyze the details of the text and attempt to draw conclusions based upon your analysis of those details. Consider the context of the show (time period, network, lead-in, and so forth), the audience, and the purpose. You may want to keep our class discussions on critical analysis (such as in your blogs) and effective writing in mind as you write. Remember that analysis is subjective, which means that your reader may not agree with your conclusions, so it your job to provide ample evidence to support your conclusions and anticipate any objections your reader may have.

You have a wide variety of options for this paper. You can pick any show that you’re interested in and any approach. You are probably better off picking a show you’re intimately familiar with, as long as you can still be critical. The goal is to analyze the show in a way that tells us something new about it—something we might not have thought of on our own. Keep that in mind as you decide how to approach it. For example, a feminist lens isn’t likely to tell us anything new about the relationship between Brett Michaels and the girls on *Rock of Love*. However, cultural analysis of *Rock of Love* might begin to get at the reasons “celebreality” is so popular by focusing on the ways in which this show and others like it allow audiences access to a lifestyle and world that was previously inaccessible.

The first thing you should do is choose a show to analyze. Watch it once or twice while taking notes. Once you have chosen a text, consider these questions to try to determine how you want to approach it:

- **Rhetorical Analysis:** Is there a clear purpose to the text besides entertainment? If so, what strategies are being employed to achieve that purpose? Are they successful? How does the text identify with its audience?
- **Cultural/Ideological Analysis:** What ideological assumptions does the episode/show make? What does the episode/show say about our values? Fears? Hopes? Does it reflect particular American ideals or does it somehow subvert them? Or both?
- **Representation:** Who is represented in the show in terms of ethnicity, gender, class, ability, sexuality, age, and so forth? How exactly are they represented? Who gets left out? How are insiders/outsiders or heroes/villains represented?
- **Generic Analysis:** Does the show conform to the characteristics of its genre? How does it subvert them? What is the purpose in doing so? What are the ramifications of such subversion/adherence to the genre?

For further help with choosing a lens, read Chapters 6, 7, and 10 in *Television Criticism*. It’s homework anyway. O’Donnell provides an example of formal analysis in Chapter 10 and we will look at 1-2 student examples. They should be quite helpful.

*Depending on the type of analysis you do, you may end up analyzing one episode, a whole season, an entire show, one or more characters, and so forth.

**The Paper**
Now that you know what the purpose of the essay is and how to go about starting it, what **exactly** am I looking for?

- A relevant, engaging introduction.
- A strong thesis that clearly articulates your argument.
- Enough background or summary to acquaint the reader to the text and ground the analysis, but no more than that.
- Effective transitions that connect the ideas from one to paragraph to those in the next.
- Topic sentences that make arguable claims and relate back to your thesis.
- Concrete, textual evidence that supports your claims.
- Critical analysis that explains how your evidence supports the claims.
- Analysis that tells me something new about your text.
- Evidence that you have read the scholarship on your topic and show and understand how other scholars have approached them.
- A conclusion that goes beyond summary.
- The use of **five** scholarly sources that either support your analysis or provide a theoretical framework.
- A works cited page.
- MLA formatting.
- The rhetorical use of sentence variety.
- Attention to grammar and the correct use of a colon, semi-colon, and double-dash.
- 5-7 pages in length.

This is a relatively straightforward academic paper and you should consider your audience to be other television scholars. So, you should use the appropriate tone, respected sources, and show how your work fits within the body of scholarship on television.

**CALENDAR:**

**Week Four: Rhetoric and Ideology**

- 9.13 (T): Discuss Rhetoric and how it is employed in *Expedition Impossible*. **HW:** Read Foss’s “Ideology” chapter and example.
- 9.15 (R): Discuss Ideology. What is it? Why is it important? Go over prompt for critical analysis. **HW:** Make sure you’re caught up on your blogs and commenting. Pick one show you want to work with. Watch at least 2-3 episodes. Do a preliminary Google search. What are people saying about your show? Come to class prepared to discuss it.

**Week Five: The Writing Process**

- 9.20 (T): Discuss examples. Prewriting and Writing Exercises. How are you going to approach your show? Why did you pick it? What has been said about it? **HW:** Draw up a preliminary outline of your paper, including plans for the intro, theoretical framing, the components of the show you’ll be focusing on, and so forth. It doesn’t have to be super-detailed. I just want you to have a structure you
can start putting information into; you’ll also need some idea of what direction you’re going for the library.

9.22 (R): Meet at the library for writing/reading/researching time. Sign up for a Google account. We will meet in Norlin M210. Please bring your laptop or check one out from the library to use during class. **HW:** Draft intro, thesis, background paragraph and outline the rest of the paper using major claims as your main points with evidence that supports the claims underneath. Make it as complete and detailed as possible. *Don’t forget about you blog!!!!*

**Week Six: Revising and Workshopping**
9.27 (T): Bring one copy of your draft to class. Write 3 questions you’d like answered about that draft at the top. Round-robin whole class workshop. **HW:** Finish draft.
9.29 (R): Open class (depends on where you’re all at and what you need). 1) **Full drafts need to be posted to Google by midnight;** 2) Responses to your group mates due by Sunday at 5:00pm; 3) Review the feedback you got Sunday night and start revising. DO NOT WAIT.

**Week Seven: Edit and Submit**
10.04 (T): Revising and editing workshop: strong topic sentences, cohesion, overall org. **HW:** Finish exercises started in class.
10.06 (R): **Final Draft Due in a pocket folder with all drafting materials.** Write reflection. Watch/listen to commentary. Begin discussing the function of commentary.

**Unit 2: Episode Commentary**
In the critical analysis, you developed your ability to critically engage with a television program of your choosing. Next I want you to draw on that skill by producing an episode commentary that emphasizes both analysis and research in a less academic genre. You’ll still need to approach the assignment rhetorically and think about who would be watching the commentary and for what purpose, so you can then make decisions about content, tone, and the types of strategies you’ll employ in the composition of your commentary.

**Guidelines:**

For the assignment, you will produce a video in small groups (3-4 people) that analyzes a single episode of a television program, similar to the commentary feature you’ve seen included on TV shows and DVDs. You will record your discussion of the episode over the footage. Each group will choose one 60 minute (or 42-44, as it were) episode to analyze. Whereas the previous paper was predominantly analysis, this project will combine a variety of approaches to the program. You can bring in background information on the show and the people involved, funny stories from the production, awards the show may have received, gossip about the show or the people involved with it and so forth. You will also analyze the action, narrative, acting, plot devices, representations, and any other aspect of the production that you find interesting.
Your commentary should provide the viewer with interesting, engaging stories and information about the show. Like the analysis paper, it should also show the viewer aspects of the show that aren’t immediately obvious through casual viewing. While you are not required to use scholarly sources, I still highly recommend that you do so. Scholars are remarkably adept at focusing on the minutest of details, so reading what they have to say will give you more information to work with.

You will turn in a bibliography with the video, which you will post in the comment section of the blog post. It should be formatted according to MLA guidelines and include any sources you used to gather information about your show. Each person in the group will also post a short reflection on the dynamics of your group and what you, personally, contributed to the project. Part of the grade will be based on your ability to work as a team and a relatively equal distribution of tasks.

Technology

You need access to sound/video editing and recording software. If you don’t have experience with iMovie or other similar software, there is plenty of help to be had in ATLAS. You will learn.

CALENDAR:

Week 8: What is Episode Commentary?
10.11 (T): Critical Analysis Due. Reflection. HW: Watch 20-30 minutes of any movie or TV show commentary. Take note of the characteristics.
10.13 (R): In Class: Discuss characteristics of the commentary genre: Purpose? Audience? Tone? Content? Go over the prompt. Form groups and discuss 3-4 shows that you’d like to work with. HW: Each person does some research, watches their show, and put together a short proposal/outline of the program.

Week 9: Learning the Technology
10.18 (T): Bring or check out laptop and bring to Norlin M210. ATLAS presentation. For the last 25 minutes, group should discuss the proposal for each program and decide on a program and specific episode. Come up with an agenda/task list and divide up the work. Begin looking for sources on your show. HW: Watch the episode you’ll be working with. Take detailed notes. Begin on your designated tasks. Look for sources on your show.
10.20 (R): Look at an example in class, specifically the balance of information. Discuss the role analysis should play and how to plan the commentary. (outline, script, etc) HW: Plan the content of your commentary (you may want to do this on Googledocs or just divide up the work) and bring a draft to class on Tuesday.

Week 10: Recording Your Commentary
10.25 (T): Workshop drafts. Finalize content. HW: Make sure the commentary is planned out completely. Everyone should know their role and be prepared.
10.27 (R): No Class. Recording Day. Get together as a group and record your commentary. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time for any editing you
might want do, potential problems, changes to the script, timing issues, etc. I will be in my office for drop-in conferencing if you want to come by to discuss your plan, tech issues, group issues, etc. HW: Finish editing and get Dropbox account set up.

Week 11: Moving from Video to Audio
11.01 (T): Episode Commentary Due. Please post to the Dropbox by 5:00pm. Discuss challenges of the technology, lessons learned, and how this applies to a writing class. HW: Pick one podcast and listen to it. Come to next class prepared to discuss it in terms of characteristics, approach, genre, content, and so forth.
11.03 (R): Discuss the purpose, audience, and characteristics of a podcast. Go over the prompt. HW: Listen to two more podcasts and research general topics for podcast. On Googledocs, begin compiling information for podcast.

Week 12: Technology and Lost Canons
11.08 (T): Discuss the last canon of delivery. What is effective delivery? Is it important for this genre? What strategies are available for you?
11.10 (R):

Week 13: Moving from Audio to Multimodal
11.15 (T): ATLAS LAB HOURS. Use this time to meet as a group and record the podcast.

Final Project: Research a Network and Pitch an Original Show
For the final project, you will work in small groups of four people. Together you will study and analyze a channel or network to determine their business strategies, programming techniques, target demographic, and how they engage audiences in an online environment. This information will be compiled into a prospectus, which should—ideally—rhetorically inform the project you decide to pitch to your network. The project will be a detailed ‘pitch’ of a show that you believe would be appropriate and successful for the network you have chosen. You must think through all the details of the program and be prepared to answer any questions the network executives (the rest of the class) might have regarding the content, scope, online presence, and marketing of the program. You will turn in the prospectus and program proposal to me, which will be graded on the strength of the writing, attention to detail, and rhetorical sophistication. For the presentation, you will have 30 minutes to present your pitch. You must have supporting documents (either a handout of some kind or a digital text that you can project) and a sample trailer for your show. Also, think of ways to keep your audience engaged throughout the course of the presentation. Remember, this is an exercise in rhetoric. Think about your purpose. Know your audience. Plan accordingly.

The Prospectus:

While the prospectus is typically used to map out a research plan for longer projects, you will be using it to provide background information and framing for the television pitch and, in essence, as a defense of your project. The prospectus is made up of four parts:
background and industrial context, a brief analysis of one show and how it fits into the industrial context, an audience and online analysis, and an original TV pitch. You may use any organization that you feel is appropriate, but you need to make sure you cover these basic sections.

The background and industrial context should cover how your channel/network fits into the industrial context of commercial television. The goal is to create a profile of the channel/network that highlights the various ways it works within the facets of the television industry. You should offer a brief history of the channel/network to provide some context as to how it emerged into what it is today, but your discussion should focus on the contemporary situation. Aspects of the industry that you might cover the following aspects: ownership and conglomeration; specific partnerships with other companies; roles in production / distribution / transmission; branding strategies; specific target audience(s); scheduling and promotional techniques; signature programming and genre trends; advertising strategies; and related channels/networks (like with ESPN / ESPN 2 for instance). While you don't need to address every single on of these details, you need to decide which information is most relevant to your channel and overall project. Be sure to address the key elements that distinguish your channel, providing a strong overview for understanding how this channel/network fits into the contemporary television industry.

The show analysis should discuss one program that aired on your channel in the 2009/10 season. You will analyze the program in terms of genre, style, tone, production method, and target audience. The selected program should be originally created for the channel/network, not a rerun or import. Your job is to analyze how its form and content fit with the industrial strategies and contexts you discovered in the first report. How does it construct its target audience? How does the program and its cultural meanings fit within the channel's brand? How might the production history of the show connect with its ownership structure? How does the program's scheduling connect with the channel's larger strategies? Ultimately, the goal is to provide clear and specific insights into how the meanings offered by this program are connected to the industrial systems that produce and distribute them.

The audience and online analysis should look at how viewers engage with the channel/network online. Profile what type of online presence the channel has, considering the availability of programming on their own site and/or others, the opportunities for viewers to participate in the channel's content and brand, what type of online advertising they feature, and how all of these elements tie back to the broader industrial profile you have written about the channel. Choose at least one active discussion about the channel's programming or news and analyze how fans seem to view the channel - is there hostility to decisions or practices, or do fans seem quite supportive of the channel, and why? Ideally, you should compare the discussions occurring on the channel's own site versus those on other fan sites (either around a specific program or a broader TV site like Television Without Pity).

The Pitch; or, The Program Proposal:
In the final section of the project, you will pitch an original TV show for the channel/network you have just researched. The pitch should involve a clear, concise rationale for the show (based on your research) and a detailed description of the show: title, plot line, scheduling, trajectory, and other relevant details. You need to be as detailed as possible and really tailor your idea to the channel/network you are pitching. Consider whether they have migrated toward reality programming, a specific demographic, or medical dramas. What have they had success with? What audience might they be courting (given recent shows that have retired, been cancelled, or been huge successes—either on your channel or off)?

Because I borrowed this idea from our textbook’s author, Jason Mittell, please go to his blog for some ideas and to see what his students have pitched:


The Presentation:

You are going to be presenting this to the class, so each of these sections should most likely be written in a way or adapted so that are consumable in presentation form. You will turn in the prospectus to me and have several copies (one for each group) available to the class for your presentation. Look at other examples online and feel free to borrow their organizational structure and rhetorical approach. Use graphs and illustrations where appropriate and needed.

As part of the presentation, you will also unveil a trailer for your television program. While I don’t expect you to shoot original footage, I do want you to use clips, videos, pictures, audio, and/or music to put together a trailer that gives us an idea what the show will be about, who the characters are, and the overall “feel” of the program. Overall, the goal of the trailer is to give us a better sense of tone—something that is difficult to get across in the pitch.

In order to do so, focus on establishing shots, action, and setting, combined with a score or sound effects that further your vision of the program. Technically speaking, you can use any video editing software you are familiar with (iMovie, Movie Maker, etc.). PLEASE USE THE SCHOOL’S RESOURCES. The Digital Media Services Center in ATLAS can help you with any technical issues that you may have. Don’t let the technology scare you. Not only is the software very user friendly, you have a lot of help available to you as a CU student!

Overall, the presentation should be 20-25 minutes long. You may use any media that you deem appropriate and you must present this in a professional manner. Please let me know what technology you need prior to your presentation (we will test in the class before presentations to make sure everything works, so please bring your files). While it is clear that you will need to think about your pitch rhetorically, you will also need to approach your presentation from a rhetorical perspective. Think about ways to keep your audience engaged by asking them questions, avoiding long monologues, and using different types of media. I am looking forward to seeing what you come up with!
*Thanks to Jason Mittell for his words and ideas.

**CALENDAR**

**Week 13: …Continued**

11.17 (R): Go over prompt for final project. What are the components? What is an effective presentation? How should you divide up the work? **HW:** Decide on a network. Begin a Googledocs collection for the final project. Each person should do preliminary research and add 250-500 words (at least) to their section of the final project. READ: Chapter 2 “Demystifying the Business of Television.”

**Week 14: Free At Last** (enjoy the break!)

**Week 15:**

12.06: Discuss the business of TV. Industrial Context, Online components, advertising, etc.

12.08: Watch sample trailers. The role of visual rhetoric. How do they create impact in 15 seconds? 2 minutes? What should be included in yours?

**Week 16:**

12.13: Group Presentations.

12.15: Group Presentations.

**Finals Week: BLOG PORTFOLIO DUE.**