

THE CREATIVE LIFE IN TELEVISION

Course Overview

This is a “real-time” class that will follow the life and death of a television season. We will examine what makes it on the air, why it gets there, who creates it, who sells it and who buys it. The course examines the struggle of the networks to survive in a rapidly changing environment and in the face of new technologies. And as the dinosaurs die, we will look at the new opportunities that this era of change offers for fresh talent. Every week there will be news articles and feature pieces emailed to you for discussion in class. You will be expected to come in up to date on current television and events prepared to discuss. We will have guest lectures from working professionals to share their creative journey, do our own exercises in creative thinking – both in and out of the box. The course will integrate with your internship. We will operate as if we are a production office in search of a show idea. You will be required to watch TV and think about it like a professional, come in with ideas and insight. Final paper will be an examination of shows that are “On the Bubble” with analysis of ratings, what works on the shows, what doesn’t, the impact of time slot, casting, writing and what could be done to save the show.

Methodology

Class will include lecture, guest speakers, field trips to the Museum of Radio and Television, assigned writing projects, videos, assigned viewing and reading.

Required Reading & Viewing

Reading: Weekly Variety, Daily Variety, The Hollywood Reporter, TV Week, T BA newspaper articles which will be emailed to you in advance of each class.

Suggested Reading

This Business of Television by Howard Blumenthal and Oliver Goodenough; *The Last Great Ride* by Brandon Tartikoff;

Grading Criteria

Sign ON/Sign Off project	30%
On The Bubble Evaluation/Essay:	30%
Attendance and Participation:	30%
Class Project TBA	10%

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1.	01/27/05	7pm – 9pm	Introduction; Defining Goals:

Hand out:

ASSIGNMENT: If there were no restrictions - Program your own broadcast day from sign-on to sign-off. You can choose from anything ever produced. Visit the Museum of Radio and Television to view shows in their library. Be prepared to defend your choices. Who is your audience? Are they underserved? Make a decision as to whether you are commercial broadcast, basic cable or premium HBO style cable. Present a short essay with your reasoning and choices.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
2.	02/03/05	7pm-9pm	Dicing the Broadcast Day

Present Broadcast day

ASSIGNMENT: Watch a selected show and be prepared to discuss pros and cons. Thinking behind its development and prospects for survival.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
3.	02/10/05	7pm-9pm	Broadcast networks as Dinosaurs

The incredible shrinking pie and the opportunities it presents

ASSIGNMENT: Handouts:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
4.	02/17/05	7pm-9pm	The Season So Far

ASSIGNMENT: Handouts: _____ (BIOS AND REQUIRED VIEWING)

Handout: Handout: Bob Sanitsky Bio

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
5.	02/24/05	7pm-3pm	How To Sell This Great Idea

Bob Sanitsky follow-up discussion

Handout: Ted Harbert Bio

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
6.	03/03/05	12m – 3pm	What Producers Look For

Ted Harbert follow-up discussion

Jeff Klein Bio

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
7.	03/10/05	7pm –9pm	How to be Fertile in the Vast Wasteland

Handout: Alan Cohen Bio

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
8.	03/17/05	7pm-9m	Manipulating the Marketplace

ALAN COHEN follow-up discussion

ASSIGNMENT: Choose shows that are “On the Bubble” in anticipation of writing analysis of why they are struggling and what you would do to save them. (Counts as essay) Requirements will be handed out.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
9.	03/24/05	7pm-9pm	Downloading your evening

ASSIGNMENT:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
10.	03/31/05	7pm-9pm	Why HBO Exists

Jay Rowe follow-up

ASSIGNMENT:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
11.	04/07/05	7pm-9pm	

Assignment: What do We Know?

<u>CLASS #12</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic Shows</u>
12.	04/04/05	7pm-9pm	“On the Bubble” Why They’re Struggling

CLASS #13

04/21/05

Spillover

Terms and Conditions

Attendance and participation is 30% of your grade. Late work will be graded down a grade. Absences are permitted with either a Doctor’s note or a note from your Supervisor at work. Unexcused absences will result in a half grade penalty.

Plagiarism

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be “...expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the dean.”

