



Boston University Study Abroad London

Boston University Study Abroad London British Television Studies COM FT 318 (*Elective A*) Spring 2016

Instructor Information

A. Name	Dr. Christine Fanthome
B. Day and Time	Mondays and Tuesdays, 9am-1pm (plus Wednesday 13 January & Friday 12 February)
C. Location	Wetherby (2 nd Floor), 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU
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G. Office hours	By appointment

Course Description

This course focuses on British television, tracing its historical development from the early years of the BBC to the present day, identifying key influences and analysing its impact on British culture. In so doing it examines the structure of the production industry and its programme output, with particular emphasis on news, soaps, reality TV, children's programming, and film and TV adaptations of Shakespeare.

Methodology

Each teaching session will involve a lecture, illustrative material and a class discussion or workshop activity based on the set reading. Students should absorb as much television as they can out of class in order to participate fully in seminar discussions.

**Please note no laptops allowed in the classroom.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Understand British television's historical, cultural, political and economic contexts.
- Have an awareness of how professionals in the industry work
- Consider the implications of current economic and technological changes in the British television industry
- Show greater insight about the conventions, objectives and structures of specific programme genres

Textbooks/Supplies

Some items available in PDF form. Please visit Blackboard: <http://learn.bu.edu>, and log in using your Kerberos username and password to view files. All key textbooks in library.

Evaluation Plan and Grading Criteria

Assessment

Graded	50%
Examination	50%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

(Poor timekeeping and/or unauthorised absence from class, e.g. due to late arrival of aircraft on the day of class, will result in a grade drop.)

The subject of the essay will be the BBC (title to follow). It should be approximately 2000 words in length and should draw on a minimum of 5 academic sources (text books, journal articles, etc). Websites may be used *in addition* to more traditional sources and *not instead* of them, and only academic or industry websites should be used. All quotations and citations should be referenced, and include appropriate page numbers. Students are expected to submit independent work as per the BU Code of Honour which can be found in the Academic Handbook. **The deadline for essay submission is 08.50 on Friday 12th February 2016. Essays should be submitted in hard copy to the main office at 43 Harrington Gardens by the deadline. Electronic copies will not be accepted.**

NB Students who are undecided whether or not to take COM FT 318 should attend session 1 in any case (Wednesday 13 January) because all the necessary information for the essay will be given in the course of this class.

The exam will require an understanding of key concepts discussed during the module. Part one will be a 'quiz' requiring short answers to a list of questions. All questions must be attempted. Part two will be one extended essay from a choice of four. The exam will take place on **Tuesday 16 February 2016.**

Grading

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism: <http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester>

** Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

Attendance

Classes

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme. This may result in the student having to take a medical leave of absence from the programme or withdraw from the programme.

Authorised Absence:

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorized Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness for more than one day. In this situation students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as

possible). **Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence**

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- Illness (first day of sickness): If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student's lecturer).
- Illness (multiple days): If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call into to the BU London Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence:

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Lateness

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

Schedule

SESSION 1 - Wednesday 13 January

Introduction to the course

Historical overview part one: The early days of the BBC:

- origins of 'public service broadcasting'
- definition and development of BBC standards
- legacy, influence and relevance in today's multi-channel environment

Viewing: *Auntie: The Inside Story of the BBC*, programme 1 (BBC)

Initial seminar questions: How relevant is Lord Reith's view to the BBC's role today? What does this indicate about the future of the BBC?

Required reading for the class:

Crisell, Andrew, (2002), *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting*, 2nd edition, London and New York: Routledge, Chapter 5: 'Television: The First Years of Competition' pp. 84-105.

Mair, J. (2014), 'History repeating itself? Hutton, Savile and the future of the BBC', in Mair, J., Tait, R. and Keeble, R. L. (Eds) (2014), Is the BBC in Crisis? Abrams Academic Publishing, pages 12 – 26

Suggestions for additional reading:

Aitken, R. (2013), Can we still trust the BBC?, London: Bloomsbury Publishing plc

Born, G. (2005), Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the reinvention of the BBC, London: Vintage

SESSION 2 – Monday 18 January

Historical overview part two: from monopoly to multi-channelled environment:

- ITV and the 'golden age'
- Channel 4 – narrowcasting for the masses
- BSkyB; Channel 5; Freeview
- Re-defining and maintaining quality standards

Viewing: Showreels from the BBC; ITV; C4 and Five which reveal each channel's marketing stance and audience strategy

Initial seminar questions: How has the broadcasting landscape changed? What are the repercussions of the changes? How can quality be defined and maintained in today's multi-channelled environment?

Required reading for the class:

Fanthome, Christine, (2003), Channel 5 – the early years, Luton: University of Luton Press, Part 1: The Context of Contemporary Broadcasting, pp 1 – 34

Mulgan, Geoff, (Ed), (1990), The Question of Quality, London: BFI pp 4 – 32

Suggestions for additional readings:

Brown, M. (2007) A licence to be different, London: BFI, particularly chapter 25, 'Channel 4 at the crossroads', pages 315 – 323

Fanthome, C. (2003), Channel 5 – the early years, Luton: University of Luton Press, parts 2, 3 and 4

Johnson, C. and Turnock, R. (Eds) (2005) ITV Cultures: Independent Television over Fifty Years, Open University Press, especially pages 15 – 35

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE ARE TWO SESSIONS TODAY (TUESDAY 19TH JANUARY) – MORNING AND AFTERNOON

SESSION 3A – Tuesday 19TH January 9.00 – 13.00

Industry insight and an overview of TV audiences:

- An overview of industry structure; producer-broadcasters; publisher-broadcasters; independent production companies; staffing
- The art of scheduling in today's market

- An overview of quantitative and qualitative TV audience research to include the audience data collected by BARB. We shall also examine qualitative audience measurement such as questionnaires, surveys, interviews, diaries, focus and friendship groups and consider Ien Ang's theories relating to the "unknowable" audience. Class activities will include either textual analysis of a selection of iconic advertisements or an exercise in scheduling.

Required reading for class:

Ien Ang, (1991), Desperately Seeking the Audience, London: Routledge, part one pp 15 – 41

Bignall, J. (2013) An introduction to Television Studies, 3rd edition, London: Routledge, chapter 10 'Television Audiences' pages 256 – 280

Gomery, Douglas, and Hockley, Luke, (Eds), (2006), Television Industries, London: BFI Chapter 5: 'Selling and Television'.

Suggestions for additional readings:

Orlebar, J. (2011), The Television Handbook, 4th edition, London: Routledge, chapter 22 "Working in Television" pages 271 – 285

Stradling, L. (2010) Production Management for TV and Film, London: Methuen

SESSION 3B – Tuesday 19th January AFTERNOON SESSION

FIELD TRIP – BBC TOUR OF BROADCASTING HOUSE – be there by 15.40 please.

Our visit to the main hub of the BBC will give us a glimpse of the newly refurbished Broadcasting House. We shall learn about the rich history of the building and develop our understanding of the ethos of the BBC.

Please meet at 15.40 ready to start the tour at 16.00. Please wear sensible footwear as the tour will involve a lot of walking. There are several photo opportunities, so feel free to bring your phone/camera. There is a café and a shop of BBC merchandise within the venue, should you arrive early.

BBC Broadcasting House

Portland Place

London W1A 1AA

Nearest tube: Oxford Circus. Broadcasting House is a 5 minute walk, straight up Regent Street going north towards Regent's Park. As you look at the front of the building, bear left and the entrance for tours is a side entrance.

SESSION 4 –Monday 25 January

News

- defining news values
- objectivity and perceived obstacles
- critical analysis and deconstruction of various news bulletins from diverse channels (class exercise)

Viewing: Examples of news bulletins from various channels; *Bethlehem Year Zero* (ITV), ('news' bulletin depicting the birth of Christ – which illustrates news conventions)

Initial seminar question: Can news ever be simply 'a window on the world'?

Required reading for the class:

Biens, R. (2014) Digital Currents: How technology and the public are shaping TV news, University of Toronto Press, Chapter 6: News-Gathering, Story-Writing, and Transmission Phases, pages 164 - 220

Crisell, Andrew, (2006), A Study of Modern Television: Thinking Inside the Box, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Chapter 5

Suggestions for further reading:

Creeber, Glen, (Ed), (2001), The Television Genre Book, London: BFI, pp108 – 124

Orlebar, J. (2011), The Television Handbook, 4th edition, London: Routledge, chapter 11 'Television News', pages 137 - 157

SESSION 5– Tuesday 26 January

Children's Television:

- traditional perception of children's TV needs and wants
- moral panics
- active and passive viewers
- case study: the development of children's programming on Five from launch to the present day

Viewing: *Teletubbies* (BBC); *Fifi and the Flowertots* (Five); *Peppa Pig* (Five) *Newsround* (BBC)

Initial seminar question: What do research findings indicate regarding British parents' attitudes to the programming they want for their children? Is this an international view?

Required reading for the class:

Fanthome, C. (2006) The Strategic Development of Children's Programme Provision on Five, in Journal of British Cinema and Television, Volume 3, number 2, pages 304 – 317

OFCOM (2011) Children and parents: media use and attitudes report, sections 1, 2 and 6

Suggestions for additional reading:

Atwal, K, Millwood-Hargrave, A, and Sancho, J, (2003), *What Children Watch – An analysis of children's programming provision between 1997 – 2001, and children's views*, London: BSC and ITC, pp 71 – 100, starting 'The Role of Television' NB - THIS IS DATED, ALTHOUGH IT IS USEFUL TO COMPARE THIS WITH THE 2011 OFCOM REPORT.

Messenger Davies, M. (2010) Children, Media and Culture, Open University Press, Chapter 9: Children's Television, pages 147 - 171

SESSION 6 – Monday 1 February

Reality TV:

- Overview of key British reality shows
- Identifying the source of component parts of this new hybrid genre
- Changing perceptions of 'celebrity'
- The implications and consequences of interactivity, eg voting

Viewing: *I'm a Celebrity, Get Me out of Here* (ITV); *Big Brother*; (C4); *How not to get on Big Brother* (Channel 4)

Initial seminar questions: How real is reality TV? Does the rise of reality TV suggest that this genre is democratising or dumbing down TV output?

Required reading for the class:

Skeggs, B. and Wood, H. (2012) Reacting to Reality Television: Performance, Audience and Value, London: Routledge, Chapter 1 ‘Reality television: from representation to intervention’ pages 21 – 47

Wyatt, W. N. and Bunton, K. (Eds) (2012) The Ethics of Reality TV: a philosophical examination, Chapter 9: Elliott, D. ‘Democracy and Discourse: How Reality TV Fosters Citizenship’, pages 143 - 158

Suggestions for additional reading:

Christopher Dunkley, ‘It’s not new and it’s not clever’, from Cummings et al (2002), Reality TV: How Real Is Real?, Institute of Ideas

Deborah Jermyn, Deborah, and Holmes, Su, (Eds), (2004), Understanding Reality Television, London: Routledge, Chapter 5 pp 111 – 135

SESSION 7 – Tuesday 2 February

Soaps:

- overview of development of British soaps
- key conventions of the soap genre
- key differences between British and American expectations

Viewing: *EastEnders* (BBC); *Coronation Street* (ITV); *Eldorado* (BBC)

Initial seminar question: Why did the BBC’s new flagship soap *Eldorado* fail? What does this tell us about the expectations of British audiences?

Guest speaker: Nora Dennehy, Former Senior News Producer, BBC (To be confirmed)

Required reading for class:

Hilmes, M, (2007), ‘Front Line Family: ‘Women’s culture’ comes to the BBC’ in Media, Culture & Society, January 2007, vol 29, 1: pages 5 – 29

Hobson, D. (2003), Soap Opera, Polity Press, chapter 1: ‘Soap Opera and the Broadcasting Industry’, pages 41 – 61

Suggestions for additional reading:

Buckingham, David, (1987), Public Secrets: EastEnders and its audience, London: BFI, Introduction and Chapter 1: ‘Creating the Audience’ pp 1 – 34

Robert C Allen, ‘Making Sense of Soaps’, in Robert C Allen and Annette Hill, (2004) The Television Studies Reader, London: Routledge, pp 242 – 257

**** Contingency Class Date: Friday 5th February.** Students are obligated to keep this date free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled

SESSION 8: Monday 8 February

Drama: Televising Shakespeare

- historical origins of the success of the single drama
- televising Shakespeare (pros and cons; adhering to the original text or adapting the stories for the contemporary audience;)

Viewing: *Shakespeare Re-Told* (BBC); *Macbeth* (BBC) *Macbeth* (Polanski)

Initial seminar questions: Is televised Shakespeare relevant to today's audiences? What are the commercial difficulties of producing and distributing the single play in today's multi-channelled environment?

Required readings for the class:

Hindle, M. (2007) *Studying Shakespeare on Film*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, Part 1: Shakespeare and the language of film, pages 1 – 16

Hatchuel, S. (2008) *Shakespeare, from stage to screen*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 2: From theatre showing to cinema telling, pages 33 - 65

Suggestions for additional reading:

Crisell, Andrew, *A Study of Modern Television: Thinking Inside the Box*, (2006), Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Chapter 9

Davies, Anthony, and Wells, Stanley, (Eds), *Shakespeare and the Moving Image: The Plays on Film and Television*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press – Chapter 4 - Michele Willems, 'Verbal-Visual, Verbal-Pictorial or Textual Televisual? Reflections on the BBC Shakespeare Series' pp 69 - 85 Chapter 5 - Neil Taylor, 'Two Types of Television Shakespeare', pp 86 – 98

SESSION 9 – Tuesday 9 February

Field trip to Princess Productions – to be confirmed

NB EARLY START!

DRAFT SCHEDULE – TO BE CONFIRMED NEARER THE TIME

- 8.30 Arrive at Princess Productions, Whiteleys, Bayswater W2. (Make your own way). Nearest tube Bayswater, or bus number 70.
Watch a recording of *The Wright Stuff* (daily news discussion show). Meet the researcher who is in charge of finding an audience for the show, briefing them, and liaising on screen between audience and anchor, for an informal chat.
Make your own way home (tube Bayswater, or bus – number 70 goes from outside Whiteleys to Queen's Gate) Further instructions will be given in class before the field trip.

SESSION 10 – Friday 12 February

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A SHORT SESSION

09.00 – 11.00 – *New Media - New Audiences?*

This final session will begin with a discussion about changes in audience behaviour arising from the development of the internet, social media and the impact and proliferation of user-generated content. In the light of online and mobile viewing together with timeshift technologies, we shall question whether television viewing in the traditional sense will soon be obsolete. In addition, there will be an opportunity during this session for students to ask questions about the forthcoming examination.

Reading:

Bury, R. & Li, J. (2015) Is it live or is it timeshifted, streamed or downloaded? Watching television in the era of multiple screens, *New Media & Society*, 17 (4) 592 - 610

FINAL EXAM: The exam will be on **Tuesday 16 February**. Exam times and locations will be posted on the BU London website and in the Student Newsletter two weeks before exam dates.

Terms & Conditions

Students must check their email and the weekly Student Newsletter for field trip updates and reminders.

I will make some time available in each session for students to raise questions etc. Should students wish to discuss matters with me in person I will also be available during the break mid-lecture and at the end of class. Alternatively, please feel free to e-mail me with questions. If you have problems with the availability of reading materials (all of which should be in the library) please contact me either through the Student Affairs Office or via e-mail.