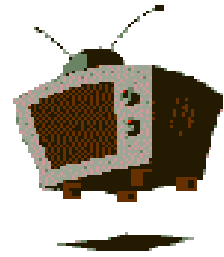


# CO 375-50 — Television Criticism

Fall 2005 — Wednesday, 4:30 – 7:15 p.m.  
Writing Intensive Course



**Dr. Chad Dell**

Office hours:

E-mail:

Office: 224 Plangere Center, 263-5192 (main office: 571-3449)

Mon. & Thurs., 1–2:30 p.m., or by appointment

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**Course Objectives:** This is an advanced course in television critical studies, otherwise known in the academy as television criticism. In this course we will:

1. Expand our knowledge of television as a unique message-generating system, examining the ways in which television shows are structured, and its uses of mise-en-scene, videography, editing and sound.
2. Examine some of the key critical methods that have been applied to television in recent years, including semiotics, genre analysis, ideological criticism, cultural criticism, and others. In the process, we will investigate the relationship between television, culture and society, developing critical questions along the way.
3. Improve our skills—in both written and oral form—as intelligent, observant critical viewers of television.

## Required Texts:

- Butler, J. (2002). *Television: Critical Methods and Applications* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Vande Berg, L. R., Wenner, L., & Gronbeck, B. (2004). *Critical Approaches to Television* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Perrin, R. (2004). *Pocket Guide to APA Style*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

## Class Policies:

1. **Attendance:** Classroom time will be a balance of lecture, discussion, screenings, and questioning during class. Because this class meets only once per week, attendance is particularly important. Naturally, your attendance is required, and absences will have a negative effect on your final grade as follows:

- ❑ 2 unexcused absences: drop one letter grade
- ❑ 4 unexcused absences: drop two letter grades
- ❑ more than four unexcused absences: automatic failure
- ❑ habitual tardiness: two latenesses will be the equivalent of one absence.

Absences because of a religious holiday or athletic event are only excused when you notify me in advance. Absences because of illness or athletic event require written documentation from a doctor or athletic director. If you are late, it is up to you to remind me after class of your attendance.

2. **Special Needs:** Students with disabilities who need special accommodations for this class are encouraged to meet with me during office hours, or with the appropriate disability service provider on campus [571-3460] as soon as possible. Students will not be afforded any special

accommodations until they disclose the disability, register with the campus disability service provider and complete the documentation process. Please see the student handbook for more information on the procedures.

3. **Grading:** Your final grade for the semester will be comprised of the following:
- 30% Two short critical essays (15% each; 5 pages each)
  - 25% One long critical essay (10-12 pages)
  - 10% Midterm exam
  - 10% Final exam
  - 10% Chapter Summaries
  - 10% Class preparation, participation, paper drafts and ungraded assignments
  - 5% Group Discussion Leaders

Grading Scale:

A 90-100 (90-91 A-/ 100 A+)	D 60-69	(60-61 D-/ 68-69 D+)
B 80-89 (80-81 B-/ 88-89 B+)	F 0-59	
C 70-79 (70-71 C-/ 78-79 C+)		

4. **Written Assignments:** You will write two short critical essays (5 pages each), and one longer essay (10-12 pages). All papers must be typed, double-spaced, with 1" margins and 12 pt. font size. Consult Perrin's *Pocket Guide to APA Style* for style guidelines. Students will hand in a rough draft of each paper, a final draft, and will have an opportunity to rewrite papers within one week of their return (hand in the graded original along with your revised essay). The quality of writing (spelling, grammar, sentence structure and persuasive use of language) will account for 20 percent of the essay's grade. Late papers will be penalized 10% for each working day (M-F) they are late.
5. **Chapter Summaries:** You will write a one to two-page chapter summary for every **highlighted** reading on the syllabus, due the day the reading is due. Unlike other written work, I will accept neatly handwritten summaries. Late chapter summaries will only be accepted because of a documented excused absence.
6. **Participation:** This class will be conducted largely seminar-style, with a portion of the class time given to class discussion of readings and screenings. Your preparation and participation grade will be based on your degree of preparedness and willingness to participate in class discussions. Suggestions: Read the chapters before we discuss them. Participation is not based on the *quantity* of your participation, but on the *quality*. Finally, don't be afraid to ask questions: if you don't understand something, it is likely that others are having the same difficulty.  
**As a courtesy:** you are expected to turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class that might distract other students or interrupt class. Likewise, IM or non-class-related computer activity will be frowned upon. These behaviors run counter to the creation of a productive and focused learning environment. If you cannot cooperate in this, you may be asked to leave, and will be marked absent for the day.
7. **Screenings:** materials screened in class come from my personal collection. They will not be repeated. I urge you to take notes on all screened materials.
8. **Academic Honesty:** This class follows the standards outlined in the Monmouth University Student Handbook. Penalties for plagiarism in this class include: an "F" for the assignment; an "F" for the entire semester; and/or charges brought against you under the Student Code of Conduct, which could lead to expulsion from the University. I encourage your participation in maintaining an environment of academic honesty and integrity.

## Class Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change. Students are responsible for all changes announced in class.*

**Date: Subject:**

**Readings Due:**

9/7 Introduction to Television Criticism

Read the syllabus

9/14 Television Criticism: Basic Concepts  
Characters, Actors, Stars  
**First Chapter Summaries Due**

Butler, Ch 1, 3  
Vande Berg, Ch 2

9/21 Semiotic Criticism  
Writing Television Criticism

Butler, pp. 343-348  
Vande Berg, pp. 65-85 & Ch 4  
Perrin, Ch 3

9/28 Narrative Structure  
Bring *Pocket Guide to APA Style* to class today  
**Four Copies of First Draft of Essay #1 Due**

Butler, Ch 2  
Perrin, pp. 81-82, 95-6

**\*\*Monday 10/3: Final Draft of Essay #1 Due in my mailbox by 5:00 p.m.\*\***

10/5 Mise-en-scene  
The “look” of the Camera

Butler, Ch 5-6

10/12 Editing, Audio  
Yom Kippur begins at sundown

Butler, Ch 7-8

10/19 **MIDTERM EXAM**  
Intro to Essays #2 and #3

**\*\*Monday 10/24 -- Essay #3 Proposal Due in my mailbox by 5:00 p.m.\*\***

10/26 Ideological Criticism  
Group 1 Discussants

Vande Berg, Ch 11  
Butler, pp. 348-351

11/2 Ideological Criticism, continued  
**Four Copies of First Draft of Essay #2 Due – Bring *APA Guide* to class**

**\*\*Monday 11/7: Final Draft of Essay #2 Due in my mailbox by 5:00 p.m.\*\***

Tuesday, 11/8 – last day to withdraw with a “W” grade  
– Election Day – Vote!

11/9 Cultural Criticism  
Group 2 Discussants  
Vande Berg, pp. 390-420  
Butler, pp. 351-353

11/16 Cultural Criticism, con't  
Group 3 & 4 Discussants  
Vande Berg, pp. 445-482  
**Four Copies of Outline of Essay #3 Due**

11/23 No TV Criticism class – MU follows a Friday class schedule today

11/24 Thanksgiving Holiday

11/30 Paper Discussion & Critique  
**Four Copies of First Draft of Essay #3 Due** – Bring *APA Guide* to class

**\*\*Monday, 12/5: Final Draft of Essay #3 Due in my mailbox by 5:00 p.m.\*\***

12/7 Genre Criticism  
Group 5 Discussants  
Vande Berg, Ch 6  
Butler, pp. 338-343

12/14 Rhetorical Criticism  
Group 6 Discussants  
Vande Berg, 140-174

Final Exam: Wednesday December 21<sup>st</sup>; 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Calvin & Hobbes

