

FI367-15 US Comedy Television

26/27

Department

SCAPVC – Film and Television Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Thomas Hemingway

Credit value

15

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

n/a

Module aims

This module will explore U.S. comedy television from one of the earliest televised sitcoms, *I Love Lucy* (CBS, 1951 – 1957), to present-day post-broadcast comedy such as *Bo Burnham: Inside* (Netflix, 2021). Taking a roughly chronological approach, each week will focus on different popular sub-genres such as the network sitcom, the late- night show, the ‘dramedy’, the adult animation, and the stand-up special. Lectures will situate the programmes within a historical context while seminars will allow students to discuss the texts more closely, with an emphasis on close analysis. Previous experience in television studies isn’t required but the module will utilise the skills of analysis, criticism, and theory covered in the core first-year classes, FTV Analysis and FTV Criticism (or outreach classes Film Analysis/History and Methods).

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Indicative Screening List: *I Love Lucy* (CBS, 1951 - 1957); *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (CBS, 1970 - 1977); *Seinfeld* (NBC, 1989 - 1998); *Friends* (NBC, 1994 - 2004); *Curb Your Enthusiasm*

(HBO, 2000 -); Arrested Development (FOX, 2003 - 2006); Saturday Night Live (NBC, 1975 -); Scrubs (NBC, 2001 - 2010); Girls (HBO, 2012 - 2017); Love (Netflix, 2016 - 2018); The Simpsons (FOX, 1989 -); Jackass (MTV, 2000 - 2001); Bo Burnham: Inside (Netflix, 2021).

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to closely analyse comedy texts and be able to discuss their significance within the genre.
- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of one or more comedy sub-genres and the key debates surrounding them.
- Use precise and engaging language to describe and analyse comedic moments from the texts.
- Demonstrate an ability to work in a group and communicate ideas effectively through speech as part of a presentation

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Research element

Students will have to write an essay that will involve research into concepts, contexts and texts.

Subject specific skills

This module develops skills of audio-visual literacy, through close textual and/or contextual analysis in relation to the moving image and sound. It also develops understandings of historical, theoretical and conceptual frameworks relevant to screen arts and cultures.

Transferable skills

- Critical and analytical thinking in relation
 - Independent research skills
 - Team work
 - Clarity and effectiveness of communication, oral and written
 - Accurate, concise and persuasive writing
 - Audio-visual literacy
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (25%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (25%)
Other activity	18 hours (50%)
Total	36 hours

Private study description

Required and additional reading; additional viewing; seminar preparation; private research into module topics that goes beyond the module readings/screenings to help with assessments.

Other activity description

Other activity: Screenings

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
4,500 word essay	90%		Yes (extension)
This essay is designed to enable students to demonstrate the skills that you have developed in textual analysis and the critical reading of television texts during the module. It is an exercise in combining research, reading and textual analysis and any essay should attend to all three aspects in a meaningful and balanced way.			

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component			
Group Presentation	10%		No

Weighting**Study time****Eligible for self-
certification**

10-minute presentation providing a close analysis of one comedy sequence from a programme studied in class accompanied by (at least) one piece of relevant scholarship. Sequence should be no more than 2 minutes in length and shown as part of the presentation. Presentation delivered in class.

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Detailed written feedback will be given on the presentation and essay, along with the option of individual tutorials before submission and after grading.

Availability**Courses**

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UFIA-W620 Undergraduate Film Studies
- Year 4 of UFIA-W621 Undergraduate Film Studies (with Year Abroad)

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 4 of UFIA-QW26 Undergraduate Film and Literature (with Study Abroad)