

FI942-30 US Comedy Television

26/27

Department

SCAPVC – Film and Television Studies

Level

Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader

Thomas Hemingway

Credit value

30

Module duration

10 weeks

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 shows such as the stand-up special, *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 as the module will utilise the skills of analysis, criticism, and theory covered in the MA core.

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.
- Develop research questions with the module leader that intervene in or develop existing debates surrounding US comedy television.

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

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (3%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (3%)
Other activity	18 hours (6%)
Private study	264 hours (88%)
Total	300 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 formulate personal research questions.

Other activity description

Screening

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
6000 word essay	100%		Yes (extension)
Title designed by the student after consultation with the module leader. 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

Feedback on assessment

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

Availability

Courses

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 1 of TFIA-W5P1 Postgraduate Taught Film and Television Studies

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 1 of TFIA-W5P3 Postgraduate Taught Film and Television Studies (For Research)