

General Education Course Information Sheet
Please submit this sheet for each proposed course

Department & Course Number
Course Title

Theater/Film and Television M98T
Staging realness: performing authenticity in reality TV

- 1 Check the recommended GE foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) for this course

Foundations of the Arts and Humanities

- Literary and Cultural Analysis _____
- Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis _____
- Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice _____

Foundations of Society and Culture

- Historical Analysis _____
- Social Analysis _____

Foundations of Scientific Inquiry

- Physical Science _____
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more) _____
- Life Science _____
With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more) _____

2. Briefly describe the rationale for assignment to foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) chosen.

Students will be analyzing television shows as cultural objects, reflecting on their social utility and cultural relevance. Although the popular culture performances analyzed are not “performance art,” we will be unpacking them with the assistance of performance theory, giving students a beginning facility with cultural and performance studies. We will also be turning a critical eye on the social practices depicted in reality television, analyzing both the performed social behavior on display in the shows and the broader social impact of reality television.

3. List faculty member(s) and teaching fellow who will serve as instructor (give academic rank):
Lindsay Brandon Hunter, Teaching Fellow
Sue-Ellen Case, Faculty Mentor, University Professor

4. Indicate what quarter you plan to teach this course:

2011-2012 Winter_____ Spring__________

5. GE Course units _____

6. Please present concise arguments for the GE principles applicable to this course.

- General Knowledge The class will introduce students to basic cultural studies and its methodologies--how to investigate and analyze media representations, esp. of race, gender and sexuality.
- Integrative Learning The course brings together performance, often encountered in the university in its practical forms, with scholarly analysis--and also forges links between the study of theater, television and digital media.
- Ethical Implications As in any examination of media representation, the ethical implications of reality television will never be far from our focus. Since the class centers around notions of authenticity and “realness,” additional ethical concerns will attach to the ways in which reality itself is constructed and performed.
- Cultural Diversity We will be examining media representations of, in some cases, a diverse social population, but more often will be confronting the problematic and overwhelming whiteness of reality television.
- Critical Thinking One of the central concerns of the course is encouraging students to trouble received ideas of what is “real” or “authentic;” to move past easy yes/no questions about what is or isn’t real into deeper analytical questions about how such things are constructed.
- Rhetorical Effectiveness Students will be required to analyze a cultural object in a final research paper, present their ideas to peers in a live presentation, and to write cogent discussion questions that engage meaningfully with the course’s assigned readings.
- Problem-solving The research process for the final paper will require students to focus tightly on a critical question or “problem,” and use existing scholarly work to support their own exploration of it.
- Library & Information Literacy Research materials for the students’ final papers will come from a variety of print and digital sources. The process of research will be emphasized as much as the final product, and MLA citation will be required.

(A) STUDENT CONTACT PER WEEK

1. Seminar:

3 (hours)

(A) TOTAL student contact per week

3 (HOURS)

(B) OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. General Review & Preparation: | <u>2</u> (hours) |
| 1. Reading | <u>4</u> (hours) |
| 1. Group Projects: | <u> </u> (hours) |
| 1. Preparation for Quizzes & Exams: | <u> </u> (hours) |
| 1. Information Literacy Exercises: | <u> </u> (hours) |
| 1. Written Assignments: | <u>1</u> (hours) |
| 1. Research Activity: | <u>4</u> (hours) |

(B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week**[12] (HOURS)****GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal 15 hours/week**

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Staging realness: performance and reality television

Spring 2012

(Cross listed in Theater & Film and Television)

Instructor: Lindsay Brandon Hunter

Office: 1319 Macgowan Hall

Office hours: Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon

Mailbox: 103 E. Melnitz

Email: lindsaybrandon@gmail.com

Course description. Reality television poses significant questions for media consumers and students of media and performance alike, especially given its prevalence in televisual programming over the last two decades. The genre's popularity regularly provokes questions about the nature of "realness," but also about sincerity, authenticity, theatricality, and the role of performance and media in staging these qualities. Over the course of a quarter, we will examine and analyze reality television as performance, with an eye toward complicating notions of realness and authenticity. We will encounter critical ideas about theatricality and performativity, and use those theories to investigate not only *how* realness and authenticity are performed, but what it means to consider these notions in terms of performance. We will discuss the implications of television's genesis in live performance, and also situate reality TV in an increasingly digital world, one in which participatory culture and media convergence are productively altering popular notions of realness.

Throughout the course, students will develop and exercise strategies for critical reading, viewing and writing, and will apply critical theories of media and performance in written assignments, in-class discussion, and presentations.

Required texts.

Murray, Susan, and Laurie Ouellette, eds. *Reality TV: remaking television culture*. 2nd edition. NYU Press, 2008. Print.

Friedman, James, ed. *Reality Squared: Televisual Discourse on the Real*. Rutgers University Press, 2002. Print.

Other required readings will be provided for download from the course website; all required journal articles can be accessed through UCLA's subscription to online databases.

A note on viewing. In class, we will view clips from various reality TV programs to catalyze and ground our discussion, but they will be brief. Viewing assigned as homework will be on reserve at the IML. In addition, students will be required to watch the entirety of one season of a reality TV show (see below).

Course requirements.

1. **Discussion.** In order to facilitate discussion, each week students will arrive prepared with, and turn in, a substantial, critical discussion question (about a paragraph, typed) which engages the readings due for that week's class. The question may synthesize the readings, read them against one another, or focus on a single issue relevant to the week's theme. While I may or may not call upon you to pose your discussion question to the class, writing it should help you organize your thoughts on the material.

In addition, each week a student or pair of students will facilitate group discussion of the week's theme and assigned readings (sign-ups for this will be circulated at the first class). A discussion board will be made available on the class website as well; posts discussing the reading are

not required, but may be helpful if you have questions in advance of class or want to continue pursuing discussion after class has ended. Please bring all relevant texts to each class.

Participation in class discussion is imperative for the success of the course and your success within it. Please plan to contribute and respond each week as an engaged and vocal member of the class.

2. Pick a show. Each student will choose a reality television show as an object of study. The show may be current or past, but it should be one to which you have access to all episodes (Hulu.com, various cable on-demand services, iTunes or Amazon video subscriptions, and/or purchased DVD sets may be helpful). You must meet with me to discuss your choice prior to week three, at which time you will hand in a brief statement (2-3 paragraphs) describing your choice and your analytical interest in the show. The show will serve as the object of analysis for your final research paper and your final presentation to the class in week ten.

3. Presentations. During week ten, each of you will give a ten minute presentation on your analysis of your chosen reality television show. This brief presentation should acquaint your classmates with the gist of your analysis; your presentation may include *brief* clips relevant to your analysis, especially if you are working with a show we haven't discussed in seminar.

4. Final paper. You will complete an analytical research paper over the course of the quarter, which will analyze a reality television show in terms of the theories and arguments of reality television scholars, including those covered in the course readings and others of your choosing. After selecting your show in week three, you should prepare a brief overview (1-

2) pages of your intended research paper for week five, along with an annotated bibliography of at least five sources useful for your specific topic. A beginning draft of 7-10 pages is due by the end of week seven; drafts will be returned, with comments, in class week nine. The final 12-15 page paper will be due at the end of finals week, and must be submitted through turnitin.com.

Grading.	In-class participation	15%
	Critical questions on reading	10%
	Discussion facilitation	10%
	Final presentation	15%
	Final research paper	50%
	On-time selection of show	5%
	Overview and annotated bibliography	5%
	Rough draft	15%
	Final draft	25%

Class policies.

Absence and late assignments. While attendance itself is not graded, you cannot participate if absent, and regular absenteeism or lateness will substantially affect your participation grade. If your absence causes you to miss an assignment deadline, know that I will accept late assignments only due to illness (a doctor's note is required), bereavement, or a truly exceptional circumstance. Please note that such exceptions are rare and given only at my discretion.

Technology. Use of email, instant messaging, texting, "facebooking" or any form of electronic gaming, communication or research not expressly encouraged by the instructor is inappropriate during class time. If you are

“digitally absent” during class, your participation grade will suffer and repeat offenders may be asked to leave.

Weekly schedule and overview. Readings indicated are to be completed in advance of the class date. “In class” viewings happen in class, “assigned” viewings are on reserve at the IML and should be watched before the class date.

4/5/2012: Complicating the reality TV question.

“Is reality TV ‘really real’”? This week we will complicate this ubiquitous and too-simple question, asking instead: on what contested notions of “realness” does reality TV depend, and for what? What potentially more interesting questions does this one obscure? (We will also introduce ourselves and go over the syllabus.)

Readings:

Friedman, *Introduction* (RS)

Murray and Ouellette, *Introduction* (RTV)

Rose and Wood, *Negotiating Authenticity* (download)

In class viewing: *An American Family*

4/12/2012: Questions of genre: documentary and reality TV

How does reality television differ and proceed from documentary? What bearing do questions of genre have on reality TV’s production and consumption? We will also consider early live television, game shows, true crime dramas and the like as the forbears of contemporary reality TV.

Readings:

Kompare, “Extraordinarily Ordinary: The Osbournes as ‘An American Family’” (RTV)

Murray, "I think we need a new name for it": The Meeting of Documentary and Reality TV "(RTV)

Optional reading:

- Caldwell, "Prime-Time Fiction Theorizes the Docu-Real "(RS)
- Corner, "Performing the Real: Documentary Diversions" (RTV))
- Any additional piece(s) from the Friedman anthology

Guest: James Friedman, editor of *Reality Squared*

4/19/2012: Constructing realness

What are the signs and indices reality TV employs to construct and ground its claim to realness, and how do they work? What are the possibilities of reality TV's claims on realness and actuality, on one hand, and, on the other, its slick production and entertainment value?

Readings:

- Couldry, "Teaching Us to Fake It "(RTV)
- Kavka and West, "Temporalities of the Real" (download)

Optional reading:

- Hearn, 'Hoaxing the Real" (RTV)

In class viewing: *Joe Schmo, The Hills*

4/26/2012: Acting and mimesis in the context of reality TV

How is theatricality both used and resisted by reality TV? We will consider the implications of using theater's vocabulary to describe reality TV performances, and examine some of the ways in which notions of theatricality and performance are staged in reality TV.

Readings:

Davis and Postlethwait, "Introduction" (from *Theatricality*, download)

Berenstein, "Acting Live: TV Performance, Intimacy, and Immediacy" (RS)

Optional reading:

Barish, Jonas. "The Antitheatrical Prejudice" (download)

Feuer, Jane. "The Concept of Live Television: Ontology as Ideology." *Regarding Television*. Ed. Ann Kaplan.. (On reserve at YRL)

Guest: JD Cullum, actor and reality TV show participant

5/3/2012: Video and mediatization; reproduction and simulation

How do technologies of mediatization—and for the purposes of this class, especially video—challenge or complicate notions of realness? We will consider the complex relationships between liveness, authenticity, and mediatization, and how these are framed in reality TV products.

Reading:

Feitveit, "Reality TV in the Digital Era: A Paradox in Visual Culture?" (RS)

Baudrillard, *The Precession of Simulacra* (available online)

Optional reading:

Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (available online; see course website for URL)

5/10/2012: Sexuality and gender in reality TV

How are gender and sexuality performed and constructed in reality TV? What does it mean to understand reality television as a site where the “realities” of sex and gender are not only represented, but assembled and produced?

Readings:

Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” (download)

Gray, “Cinderella Burps: Gender, Performativity and the Dating Show” (RTV)

Pullen, “The household, the basement , and The Real World: gay identity in the constructed reality environment” (download)

Optional reading: Voskuil, *Gender and Reality Television—Classical Gender Ideology in ABC’s The Bachelor* (download)

In class viewing: *The Real World* (San Francisco), *Survivor*, *The Bachelor*

5/17/2012: Performativity and affect on “true-love” television

What opportunities do “true-love” shows give us to trouble notions of compulsory heterosexuality and romantic love? How is affect performed, and how does its performativity work to support or undermine those notions?

Readings:

Kavka, “Real-Love TV: Romantic Epistemologies” (download)

Optional reading:

Aslama and Pantti, “Talking alone ”(download)

In class viewing: *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*

5/24/2011: Reality TV, participatory culture & media convergence.

How is reality TV situated within a larger context of participatory culture? We will examine both reality TV’s democratizing promise and the ways in which this

promise remains unfulfilled, as well as its relationship with the media convergence Jenkins describes.

Readings:

Jenkins, "Introduction" and "Spoilering Survivor" (download)

Optional readings:

Jenkins, "Buying Into American Idol: How We Are Being Sold on Reality Television" (RTV)

5/31/2011: The work of being watched—reality TV and surveillance

What part does reality TV have in popularizing and normalizing what Andrejevic calls "the work of being watched"? We will compare his view of participatory culture with Jenkins', and consider the relationship between reality TV, surveillance, and voyeurism.

Readings:

Andrejevic, "Between the New Medium and the Old" and
"The Promise of the Digital Revolution"

Assigned viewing:

We Live In Public (on reserve at IML)

6/06/2012: Presentations.

Final paper due to my mailbox and via turnitin.com by 3:00 p.m. Friday, June 15.



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New Course Proposal

Theater M98T

Staging Realness: Performance and Reality Television

Course Number Theater M98T

Multiple Listed With Film and Television M98T

Title Staging Realness: Performance and Reality Television

Short Title STAGING REALNESS

Units Fixed: 5

Grading Basis Letter grade only

Instructional Format Seminar - 3 hours per week

TIE Code SEMT - Seminar (Topical) [T]

GE Requirement Yes

Major or Minor Requirement No

Requisites Satisfaction of entry-level Writing requirement. Freshmen and sophomores preferred.

Course Description (Same as Film and Television M98T.) Seminar, three hours. Enforced requisite: satisfaction of Entry-Level Writing requirement. Freshmen/sophomores preferred. Examination of reality television as performance. Engagement with scholarship on media and televisuality to investigate how realness and authenticity are staged in reality television and what it means to consider these notions in terms of performance. Letter grading.

Justification Part of the series of seminars offered through the Collegium of University Teaching Fellows.

Syllabus File [Theater 98T syllabus.doc](#) was previously uploaded. You may view the file by clicking on the file name.

Supplemental Information Professor Sue-Ellen Case is the faculty mentor for this seminar.

Grading Structure In-class participation 15%
Critical questions on reading 10%
Discussion facilitation 10%
Final presentation 15%
Final research paper 50%
On-time selection of show 5%
Overview and annotated bibliography 5%
Rough draft 15%
Final draft 25%

Effective Date Spring 2012

Discontinue Date Summer 1 2012

Instructor Name

Lindsay Brandon Hunter Title

Teaching Fellow

Quarters Taught Fall Winter Spring Summer

Department Theater

Contact Name

CATHERINE GENTILE

E-mail

cgentile@oid.ucla.edu

Routing Help

ROUTING STATUS

Role: Registrar's Office

Status: Processing Completed

Role: Registrar's Publications Office - Hennig, Leann Jean (lhennig@registrar.ucla.edu) - 56704

Status: Added to SRS on 6/22/2011 11:40:15 AM

Changes: Description

Comments: Edited course description into official version.

Role: Registrar's Scheduling Office - Bartholomew, Janet Gosser (jbartholomew@registrar.ucla.edu) - 51441

Status: Added to SRS on 6/15/2011 9:35:20 AM

Changes: Short Title

Comments: Entered a short title.

Role: FEC School Coordinator - Soh, Michael Young (msoh@college.ucla.edu) - 65282

Status: Returned for Additional Info on 6/10/2011 9:43:49 AM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: Routing to Registrar's Office

Role: FEC Chair or Designee - Mcclendon, Muriel C (mcclendo@history.ucla.edu) - 53918

Status: Approved on 6/10/2011 8:38:43 AM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: No Comments

Role: L&S FEC Coordinator - Soh, Michael Young (msoh@college.ucla.edu) - 65282

Status: Returned for Additional Info on 6/9/2011 2:54:33 PM

Changes: Title

Comments: Routing to Vice Chair Muriel McClendon for FEC approval

Role: CUTF Coordinator - Gentile, Catherine (cgentile@oid.ucla.edu) - 68998

Status: Approved on 6/8/2011 3:02:46 PM

Changes: No Changes Made

Comments: on behalf of Professor Kathleen Komar, chair, Collegium of University Teaching Fellows

Role: Initiator/Submitter - Gentile, Catherine (cgentile@oid.ucla.edu) - 68998

Status: Submitted on 6/8/2011 3:01:20 PM

Comments: Initiated a New Course Proposal

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