



MIT 3222B

Radio & Television as Entertainment Media

Winter 2023

Friday, 10:30am-1:30pm, FNB 2240

Instructor: Dr. Tiara Sukhan

tsukhan@uwo.ca

Drop-In Office Hours: Thursday 7-8pm (Zoom)
Wednesday 1-2pm & Friday 2-3pm in FNB 4118

Course Description & Objectives

This course traces the historical development of the idea of “entertainment” in radio and television and situates the institutions of broadcast entertainment within wider debates around leisure, popular taste and culture. Theoretical and historical approaches to these media will be introduced.

In this course you will:

- Learn about the history and evolution of both radio and television as entertainment mediums.
- Explore the concept of entertainment as it relates to broadcast media and mass culture.
- Identify and analyse genre conventions across a broad range of examples from radio and television.
- Analyse and evaluate a variety of entertainment texts, practices and platforms.
- Pitch an idea for a television entertainment project of your own, informed by relevant course content.

Materials

- ❖ **TEXTBOOKS** (available from bookstore or you can purchase yourself online)
 - *Television: A Biography* by David Thomson
 - *Radio: Making Waves in Sound*, by Alasdair Pinkerton
- ❖ Additional short readings are provided periodically on **Owl** under “Course Content” (see schedule on page 3).

General Policies

Communication – I am available for consultation every week during my Drop-In Office Hours (see details at the top of the syllabus). Please reserve emails (see policy below) for brief queries. Substantial discussions about grades or assignments are better live (via zoom, or in person).

Check your UWO email regularly – aside from Owl, this will be the primary way that I will communicate with you as a class. Announcements made from Owl will be sent to you as emails. It is your responsibility to ensure that you don't miss important communications from me. Please avoid emailing me from outside of your UWO account as messages from webmail accounts may end up in my spam folder. Please ensure that your emails contain our course number in the subject line. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours between Monday morning and Friday afternoon. I generally will not reply to emails that I receive on Friday evening, or on the weekend, until Monday morning.

Deadlines – Some assignments in this course have flexible deadlines and you are responsible for ensuring that you know when things are due and making choices according to your own schedule where permitted. Sometimes things happen, however, which make it very difficult to meet deadlines with work you are proud of, and in most cases I am generally amenable to short-term extension requests. Please investigate appropriate channels of accommodation (medical or compassionate) as warranted if you anticipate needing more than a day or two of deadline relief. I reserve the right to apply a late penalty of 3% per day if assignments are submitted late without a reasonable explanation. If you do seek and receive medical or compassionate accommodation from academic counselling (see the appended notes from the Dean's Office) you are expected to contact me as soon as you are able to negotiate a new deadline for missed work.

Accessible Education (formerly SSD) Accommodations – all IEP accommodations need to be activated through Accessible Education. This needs to be done at the start of every semester and updated every time you make changes to your timetable. If you wish to have your accommodations applied for the midterm and final exam, which will be administered in person on campus, then you will need to request to write with Accommodated Exams each time (the deadline is 10 days beforehand). If you have flexible deadlines as one of your accommodations, it is expected that you will contact me **before** an assignment is due to discuss possible deadline relief. Should you fail to contact me in advance or fail to meet new negotiated deadlines, late penalties may still apply.

Required Course Work and Evaluation (see Owl Assignments for detailed briefs)

1. **Viewing/Listening/Thinking Journal (25%)** ongoing throughout the term (final deadline Friday, **March 31st**)
2. **Midterm (25%)** March 3rd (Week 7, in class)
3. **TV Pitch (20%)** due March 24th (Week 10); elevator pitch presentations for bonus marks scheduled for March 31st
4. **Participation (5%)**
5. **Final Exam (25%)** Scheduled in Final Exam period – will be 3 hours long and cumulative

Lecture Schedule (Pinkerton and Thomson are textbooks – all other readings are posted on Owl)

Week/ Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
1 Jan. 13	Introduction What is Entertainment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Dyer (2002), “The Idea of Entertainment.” • Jonathan Gray (2008), “Introduction: What Is Television Entertainment?” • Peter Vorderer (2001), “It’s All Entertainment”
2 Jan. 20	Radio I: History, Theory, Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PINKERTON: Intro, and Ch.1-2
3 Jan. 27	Radio II: Nation Building & Popular Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PINKERTON: Ch.3-6
4 Feb. 3	Television I: History, Theory, Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THOMSON: Intro and Part One: The Medium (except for Ch.6)
5 Feb. 10	Television II: Form & Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THOMSON: Ch.14 “Women, Wives and Wonderers” & Ch.15 “The Loneliness of the Role Model” • Alex Cranz (2022), “Golden age of streaming wars has ended”
6 Feb. 17	The Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emily Nussbaum (2014), “The Great Divide” • https://www.vulture.com/2019/03/the-great-podcast-rush.html
READING WEEK – No Class		
7 Mar. 3	MIDTERM – in class	
8 Mar. 10	Genre: Comedy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THOMSON: Ch.6 “The Sit and the Situation” & Ch. 20 “Laugh On/Laugh Off”
9 Mar. 17	Genre: Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THOMSON: Ch.10 “A Play, For Today?” Ch.12 “Policeman, Save My Life” & Ch.19 “Long Form”
10 Mar.24	Genre: Reality Formats	<p>TV PITCH (20%) due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelefa Sannah (2011), “The Reality Principle” • Justin Kirkland (2022), “Reality TV is accurate barometer for change” • THOMSON: Ch.11 “Talking Heads,” Ch. 17 “Live” & 18 “Documentary”
11 Mar. 31	The Future	<p>ELEVATOR PITCH PRESENTATIONS (bonus marks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Dyer (2002), “The waning of entertainment” • See Owl for additional links
12 April 7	Good Friday – No Class	

Viewing / Listening / Thinking Journal (25%)

This journal can be formatted as an online blog (send me the link), in a notebook you write in by hand and submit to me for grading when ready, or you may submit files individually to Owl Assignments.

You must complete **ALL** of the “must-do” tasks and at least **ONE** “may-do” task from each colour category (1 blue + 1 green + 3 yellow = 5 required submissions in all). Additional “may-do” tasks may be completed for bonus marks.

Due: Submissions will be ongoing over the semester. Deadlines are set to ensure that you don’t wait until the end of the semester to begin and to provide temporal links between tasks and relevant course content. There is some flexibility possible for late submission, upon request. Students who are consistently unmindful of deadlines will be subject to late penalties, in fairness to those who rise to the challenge of more effective time management. You are always welcome to submit early.

Length: There is no upper word limit, but a minimum of **400 words** is required for each MUST-DO task.

Assessment: Grading will consider four elements – 1) quality of writing, 2) depth and criticality of thinking, 3) connections made with relevant course material, 4) structure, formatting and style

#	TASKS	DUE
1	<p>WATCH: <i>Radio Days</i> The film <i>Radio Days</i> (1987) is set in New York, in the 1940s, when radio was well-established as the primary entertainment technology in the home. Unlike television, not a lot of content from the radio's early days has been well-preserved and archived, so it's only through narrative re-creations like this that we are able to get a sense of how radio structured the listening habits and preferences of ordinary people. Which of the stories told by the film was most interesting to you? What did it convey about radio as an entertainment medium?</p>	<p>MAY-DO Jan. 27th</p>
2	<p>LISTEN: Radio and Nation Building Think about how contemporary radio programming uses entertainment content to contribute to nation building. What examples can you identify in Canadian radio broadcasting? What about in other countries?</p>	<p>MUST-DO Feb. 3rd</p>
3	<p>THINK: Television, Affect, Nostalgia Like all the media we consume regularly, television plays a role in shaping us – it reflects and produces aspects of our identity, both collectively and as individuals. Discuss a television program you have an emotional connection to. Contextualise the viewing experience as you describe it – how old were you, how did you watch (on a TV set, a personal viewing device, at a scheduled time, etc), who did you watch with (alone, with specific people). Try to describe the way(s) you feel this program has contributed to your sense of self.</p>	<p>MUST-DO Feb. 10th</p>

4	<p>WATCH: TV Representation</p> <p>What is the social or political value of representational work in entertainment television? Choose one case study from this list of contemporary programs to support your ideas: <i>Pen15</i> (CBC Gem), <i>Reservation Dogs</i> (Disney+), <i>Atlanta</i> (Disney +), <i>Grace & Frankie</i> (Netflix), <i>The White Lotus</i> (HBO/Crave), <i>Severance</i> (Apple TV+), <i>Sex Education</i> (Netflix), <i>Only Murders in the Building</i> (Disney+), <i>Our Flag Means Death</i> (HBO/Crave), <i>Ms. Marvel</i> (Disney+). Think about what is being represented, how the representation mediates between the fictional narrative and the real world, and why it matters.</p>	<p>MAY-DO</p> <p>Feb. 17th</p>
5	<p>LISTEN: Sports Radio</p> <p>“For the sports fan with a particular pattern of media consumption, sports talk radio may appear to be in the throes of a long, slow death spiral.” Read Alex Kirshner’s take on the current state of Sports Talk Radio. What do you think? Respond to Kirshner’s arguments using your own relevant examples.</p>	<p>MAY-DO</p> <p>Mar.3rd</p>
6	<p>THINK: Fan cultures</p> <p>What is the difference between a viewer and a fan? Are fans associated with particular demographics or genres? What kinds of behaviors do fans engage in: 1) while viewing; 2) outside of viewing? How have cultural perceptions of fans evolved over time?</p>	<p>MUST-DO</p> <p>Mar. 10th</p>
7	<p>WATCH: <i>The Office</i> US vs. UK (TV Comedy)</p> <p>What we laugh at is often influenced by our cultural sensibilities. If you have the time, or you have seen these shows before, then you can evaluate the entire first seasons (6 episodes each). If you are pressed for time, then just watch the US (Netflix) episodes 1 “Pilot”, 2 “Diversity Day,” 5 “Basketball” and the UK (CBC Gem) episodes 1 “Downsize,” 3 “The Quiz,” 4 “Training.” How do these two versions of the same show reflect their respective cultural environments differently? Reflect on the cultural implications of television comedy more broadly and the increasing hybridization of the sitcom genre (consider how programs like <i>The Office</i> are aesthetically different from standard sitcoms like <i>Friends</i> – what other TV genres do they borrow from?)</p>	<p>MAY-DO</p> <p>Mar.17th</p>
8	<p>THINK: Binge-watching</p> <p>Discuss the pros and cons of binge watching in the context of serialized television drama or reality TV programming (serialized programs tell an ongoing story throughout a whole season – sitcoms, anthologies and episodic reality shows are not suitable here). Use at least one program you have recently watched to inform your ideas. You are free to draw on relevant sources which might help you to develop your argument, but please resist the temptation to “borrow” from the multitude of online think pieces already in existence about this topic. I am interested in your own experiences and critical insights about them.</p>	<p>MAY-DO</p> <p>Mar.24th</p>
9	<p>WATCH: <i>Network</i></p> <p>David Thomson discusses the film <i>Network</i> (1976) in chapter seventeen of <i>Television: A Biography</i>, noting its prophetic messages in the context of the spectacle of contemporary “reality” television. View the film yourself and reflect on what it has to tell us about our current media entertainment environment. Is the message entirely bleak, or is there some hope to be found?</p>	<p>MAY-DO</p> <p>March 31st</p>

NOTES FROM THE FIMS DEAN'S OFFICE

Winter 2023

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

Accommodation Policies

Academic Accommodation

Students with disabilities work with [Accessible Education \(AE\)](#) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

Medical Consideration

Students who have medical grounds for academic consideration for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth **10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty (for FIMS students this is [Undergraduate Student Services](#)).

Students are required to provided

documentation in the form of a [Student Medical Certificate](#). It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or during office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office.

Students should also note that **individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student**, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor.

If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire, or some other exceptional crisis, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave should contact their Academic Counsellors with valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Advisor. Additional information is given in the [Western Academic Calendar](#).

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). The gender-based violence and survivor support case managers are located in Thames Hall (3114-3127 office suite.) To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness](#) for a complete list of supports.

SUPPORT SERVICES - LINKS

[FIMS UGSS](#): *academic advising; career services*

[Psychological Services](#): *Information about accessing mental health supports*

[Medical Services](#): *Student health related services*

[Office of the Registrar](#): *Financial Information, Timetable, Exam Schedules, Academic Calendar Information*

[Academic Support and Engagement](#): *Central Academic Supports, including Writing Centre, Learning Development, Transition and Leadership Supports, and Careers and Experience*

[Accessible Education](#): *Assessment and recommendations for students with disabilities*

[Accessibility Information](#): *Information to help support barrier free access, including floor plans, accessible washroom locations, service disruptions etc.*

[Indigenous Student Services](#): *Includes information about financial support, indigenous self-identification, orientation, and tutor support*

[Western International](#): *Information and support for international students and students seeking to go on exchange*

FIMS Grading Policy

FIMS Undergraduate programs now have the following class average policy:

First year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.

Second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2025, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%. The third year required (MIT 3100) is expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.

If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:

1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2. if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.

The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.

Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.