## **Languages and Audiovisual Production**

## Prof. Cecilia Penati

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide the main tools for analysing and understanding expressive languages, forms of representation and the relative production styles of contemporary television, observed in the light of the impacts that digitalisation and new distribution opportunities have had on the medium, now extended to include the digital media environment, with on-demand audio-visual content distribution platforms (OTT) and social media in the role of audio-visual content providers.

The course aims for students to develop the skills necessary to analyse the languages of contemporary multi-platform television, in light of the expressive and productive characteristics of its texts.

Taking a reflective approach to the distinctive nature of the television text within the context of media convergence, students will learn to interpret the system of contemporary genres, both scripted and unscripted, and its ramifications for the Italian industry and in certain other key international contexts (USA and Europe). There will be a particular focus on the different configurations (from a production, expressive and distributive point of view) of the various media environments observed (linear TV, ambient, on-demand and digital). At the end of the course, as ‘macro’ learning objectives, students are expected to be able to carry out appropriate textual analysis of audio-visual products, both Italian and international, distributed by TV and digital platforms, and to frame them in the context of the macro-processes transforming the contemporary audio-visual landscape.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into the following main modules:

Contemporary television as an “extended” and transforming medium: synergies with the digital environment.

New forms of producing and distributing audio-visual content, between creativity and the industry; a focus on the structure of Italian production companies.

The television text and its analytical instruments. Methods and parameters of interpretation: construction of an analytical grid.

Television and on-demand genres as cultural practices. Theoretical assumptions and mapping of the contemporary scenario.

Mapping unscripted genres in the contemporary landscape and their production styles.

Mapping scripted-series genres: recognition of productive and distributive contexts (Italy, USA and European areas), analysis of textual forms.

***READING LIST***

Lecture notes and anthology of reading material provided by the lecturer on *Blackboard*.

M. Scaglioni-A. Sfardini (ed.), *La Televisione. Approcci teorici e percorsi d’analisi,* Carocci, Rome, 2017 (chapters specified in class and on Blackboard).

L. Ouellette-J. Gray, *Parole chiave per i media studies,* Minumum Fax, Milan, 2019.

A. Grasso-C. Penati, *La nuova fabbrica dei sogni. Miti e riti delle serie tv americane,* Il Saggiatore, Milan, 2016.

J. Mittell, *Complex Television. Teoria e tecnica dello storytelling delle serie tv*, Minimum Fax, Milan 2017 (chapters to be specified in lectures and on Blackboard).

OTHER

During the course, students will be provided with further specifications, information and additional material.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be delivered through a combination of: frontal lectures on the main theoretical and scenario-related issues covered by the syllabus; and lectures presenting and empirically analysing audio-visual case studies. During the latter, the class will also be engaged in presenting previously assigned individual and/or group work. Attendance is therefore strongly encouraged.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final exam will take place in written form and comprise a combination of multiple-choice questions and open questions. Answers must be a certain number of lines long, as specified for each question (ranging from 5 to 15 LINES, depending on the weight of the question). Students must demonstrate their theoretical knowledge of the key concepts presented on the course, appropriate use of terminology, expressive competence and the ability to analyse audio-visual texts: based on these assessment criteria, students will be awarded a final mark out of 30.

As an alternative to the written exam on the whole syllabus, students may sit two optional interim tests, designed especially for attending students. At the end of the Semester 1, in January, there will be an interim written test, comprising a written text (with a combination of multiple-choice and open questions) on Part 1 of the course. At the end of Semester 2, there will be a second written test (with a combination of multiple-choice and open questions) on Part 2 of the course, reserved for those who have already taken the first test. Moreover, attending students will have the option of submitting optional individual and/or group projects (as a PowerPoint presentation, Word document or video essay) on case studies related to the course, to be agreed with the lecturer in class and presented orally in the more seminar-like sessions. These projects may potentially serve as alternatives to the written exam.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for this course. Curiosity about and passion for audio-visual communication, cinema, TV series and documentaries, and social-media content trends are assumed. The lecturer will remedy any gaps in students’ knowledge of the history of the broadcast media by suggesting appropriate reading. The two partial tests are intended for students attending lectures.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.