David Lynch recently told the Sydney Morning Herald that *Inland Empire* (2006) would be his last feature film. The auteur said in the interview that, “Things that were doing well at the box office weren’t the things that I would want to do.” Meanwhile, television’s modes of content creation, distribution, and consumption are changing rapidly. Some, like Lynch, would argue that television has usurped film as the preeminent visual medium of our age. Alternative modes of production and distribution allow for a plethora of diverse shows that no longer have to “play in Peoria.” Concurrently, issues of race, gender, and class on television are more prominent and pervasive than ever. But is increased representation—of minority, female, and LGBTQ characters—enough? What is “good” representation? It is not the intention of this course to provide a broad history of television, a history of a televisual format, or a genre. Rather, we will be reading each object with a set of tools that can be used to crack future texts open as well. Television has long been viewed as too unwieldy for sustained textual analysis, so we will bounce around in a pantomime of changing the channel. Like a fine wine and a piece of dark chocolate, we will put these objects and texts together, but not necessarily in the ways we expect.

**Requirements:**

1. Class participation, *one* teaching session, and *five* discussion board posts 35%
2. Creative Assignment, Fan Fiction Piece 20%
3. Mapping the Emmy Awards Project 20%
4. Wikipedia Article 25%

More information about requirements and assessments is available at the end of the syllabus.

**Note About the Syllabus:**

This syllabus is a living and breathing Google Document. Each week includes a number of suggested texts, but these are by no means the limits of the course. One class per week will be taught by the instructor, while the second class will be turned over to students. Students will be responsible for deciding which of the texts most interest them, what they want to focus on, and what they want to subtract or remove.
Week 1: INTRODUCTION


Week 2: RACIAL ERASURE ON THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW


Week 3: JEWISH-GENTILE INTERMARRIAGE IN BRIDGET LOVES BERNIE


Week 4: COLORBLIND CASTING AND THE SHONDA RHIMES ERA


Week 5: BLACK RESPECTABILITY IN BLACK-ISH


Week 6: PARTICIPATORY VIEWING: FAN FICTION, QUEERNESS, AND “-SHIPPING”


WEBSITE: www.FanFiction.net


Fan Fiction Creative Piece Due
Week 7: NOIR, ABSENT MOTHERS, AND FEMINISM IN VERONICA MARS, ALIAS, AND JESSICA JONES


**TV EPISODE:** “Ladies Night.” *Jessica Jones.* Netflix, 2015-Present.

Week 8: REPRESENTATION BEHIND THE CAMERA


**Emmy Awards Project Due**

Week 9: ASPIRATIONAL CLASS AND TELEVISUAL PLACE


**TV EPISODE:** “Sex and the City.” *Sex and the City.* HBO, 1998-2004.


**TV EPISODE:** “Pilot.” *Gossip Girl.* The CW, 2007-2012.

Week 10: THE CLASS WAR WILL BE TELEVISED

Nolan Feeney. “Veronica Mars: One of TV’S Realest Depictions of Wealth Inequality.” *The
From Mayberry to “Netflix and Chill”: Topics in Television, Race, Gender, and Class


Wikipedia Article Due

Assessments:

1. Class participation, one teaching session, and five discussion board posts -35%
   • Discussion board posts may be done prior to any class session. You should complete five by the end of the semester, no more than 200 words each.
   • You will teach half of one class session with a partner and are encouraged to utilize cutting-edge pedagogical techniques (which we’ll discuss in class!). You and your partner are in charge of determining the reading and focus for that class session. The weekly reading list is merely a suggestion, and you are welcome to riff upon it or add to it. Please edit this syllabus to reflect your focus so that students can come to the class session prepared.

2. Creative Assignment, Fan Fiction Piece -20%
   • After exploring the website www.fanfiction.net, you will be tasked with writing your own piece of fan fiction for the television show of your choice (approximately 1500 words). Please use a piece of existing fan fiction as your model, but otherwise, let your creativity reign! (See above, Week 6).

3. Mapping the Emmy Awards Project -20%
   • This is a short article modeled off of the Women’s Media Center report on the 2016 Emmy Nominations. You will write one for the 2017 Emmy Nominations (See above, Week 8). Further instructions to follow (approximately 1000 words).

4. Wikipedia Article -25%
   • The objective of the Wikipedia article is for you to contribute to the current dialogue on television. You will be tasked with selecting a television episode of your choice and writing a short Wikipedia article for that episode (examples will be provided). The article should include a brief synopsis of the episode, as well as a short critical analysis of some of the race, gender, and/or class issues raised by the piece (approximately 1500 words).