

Make a list of the memorable moments you remember having watched on television.

- truly remarkable invention
- in just over half a century, television has covered the planet, becoming a global power with a profound impact on everything from buying habits and fashion styles to politics and language

Think about how TV affects your daily life: write a brief summary.

Ponder the following questions:

- Does television breed violence?
- Is it a dumbing and addictive drug?
- Is it educating the world or driving us crazy?
- Is it destroying society or bringing us closer together?

Thinking on censorship, discuss the following:

- Are the nude talk shows and soft porn found on some cable stations eating away at the core of American morality?
- What about the lyrics and sexual innuendos of MTV rock videos?
- What about the fundamentalist evangelists, filling the air with consternation, outrage, and pleas for more money?

Television was once expected to cement the family as an institution. Give your opinion.

Sitcoms:

☒ Early TV filled with sight gags, slapstick, stand-up comics, and sketch comedy—mixing moments of low-brow corn with high hilarity

☒ Another type of TV comedy right from the very beginning, a transplant from radio: the situation comedy or sitcom

☒ Format varied very little over the years

- Same basic cast, week after week, play the same characters—families, neighbors, or co-workers getting stuck in various and sundry small-scale crises
- Soon backslides into silliness—Families become very strange—*Munsters*, *Addams Family*, *My Favorite Martian*
- Remarkable change comes about in the 70s.: truth in comedy, the satire of making fun of bigotry and hate and racial discrimination

Breakthrough comedy:

○ *All In The Family* outrageous prejudices of Archie Bunker and his run-ins with liberal son-in-law Mike mirrored what was happening in an America embroiled in struggles over civil rights, poverty, sexual equality, and the Vietnam War

○ MTM Enterprises (*Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Rhoda*, *Bob Newhart Show*) perfected the form of the family situation comedy that brought to television intelligence, wit, and a far more open look at personal relationships.

○ Today, sitcoms preaching about acceptance and equality and... and increased self-awareness of the medium itself—the knowing jokes that let us know that they know, hey this is TV.

Drama:

- Follows basic good guy vs. bad guy formula, started with public fascination with the Old West
- Episodic drama with plenty of action
- Dennis Potter said that television drama “ought to be able to remind you of your own sovereignty as a human being—that is, that the next minute is in your hands, even when it feels as if it isn’t.”
- Follows the idea that if you tell good stories which identify drama in the rhythms of people’s lives as they’re lived, an audience will respond
- Part of the reality that these shows are presenting is that life is not all drama or comedy, it’s a mixture of both

Game Shows:

- Have always managed to rivet a home audience’s attention
- Produced a lot more simply than situation comedies or movies for television and people enjoy them
- Capture the audience’s imagination with increasingly larger cash prizes and contestants with fascinating stories or phenomenal memories for esoteric information.
- Combine surprise, a spirit of competition—both at home and in the studio—prize money and a somewhat unhealthy desire to see other people make spectacles of themselves.

News Shows:

- For 3 1/2 days in November, 1963, virtually everyone in the nation was doing the same thing—they were glued to their TV sets as the incredible events of the JFK’s assassination unfolded.
- It was during this time that we realized the importance and power of network news—keeps us in instant touch with

what is going on and allows us to share in a period of national sorrow and healing

- **Television news is one of the primary reasons for the very existence of the commercial networks—with their enormous resources and technical capabilities, they can get us to just about any part of the world in seconds**
- **Television shapes the way we perceive events, and in so doing, it often affects those events themselves**

Can you think of any of these instances?

- **Nowadays, they let the pictures do most of the talking---in-depth commentary is a thing of the past. Reserved for when there aren't very many pictures.**
- **No matter how much we know, the public wants to know more—despite problems they face—it is likely the news will continue to grow and become more thorough and valuable than ever.**

TV EVENTS:

- **JFK assassination**
- **MLK assassination**
- **RFK assassination**
- **Cuban Missile Crisis**
- **Princess Di and Prince Charles's wedding**
- **Princess Di's death**
- **JFK Jr.'s death**
- **War with Iraq**

Science Fiction:

- **Allows the audience to “go where no man has gone before”**
- **Allows the imagination to soar beyond all boundaries and**

limitations of real life as we know it

- **Presents situations that brings us into the deep dark recesses of another's brains**
- **Use scientific fact and allows us to skew it to fit what we want with it**
- **Allows us to satire/parody events in our actual lives without attacking anyone or anything head-on**

Reality Shows

- **Fun to watch other people do what we only imagine we would do**
- **Cash prizes exaggerate people's desire to win**
- **As they progress, they are getting zanier and zanier**
- **Newest trend is putting celebrities in these embarrassing situations and letting the audience sit back and watch them be all too human**

Mystery/Detective Shows:

- **The mystery rings (see presentation on Smart Board)**
- **Endless source of diversion and delight for fans everywhere**
- **TV has provided an endless stream of colorful characters over the years and into the present (Perry Mason, Simon Templar (The Saint), Lieutenant Columbo, Jim Rockford, Jessica Fletcher**
- **Crime fiction: police procedural, surfaced in 1940s in literature and coincided perfectly with the advent of television. Differed from other styles of crime writing because of its realistic portrayal of police methods. Stories always presented from the point of view of the police, usually in a gritty, realistic style**

Cartoons:

- **Concerns about the levels of violence**
- **Satire on real life problems, events, situations**
- **Desensitizes our children?**
- **Mindless, colorful noise? Or lesson learning?**

I LOVE LUCY:

With so many men in the service during WWII, there was a shortage of civilian laborers in America.

Women stepped into “male” jobs.

When GIs returned, wives dutifully returned home and created the baby boom.

But seeds of change had been sown—many women discovered that their traditional roles were now unsatisfying. Dreamed of having their own identities, own money, own career.

And along comes Lucy:

- **Patron saint of frustrated housewife**
- **First female character to act out housewives’ fantasies**
- **Week after week, she risks everything—from her marriage to her dignity—to pursue independence**
- **But also represents their worst fears—she fails miserably at everything she attempts to do**
- **It could be nightmare but her flair for physical comedy made it funny instead**
- **Other success factors: witty, imaginative scripts and a sterling cast**

Characters:

Lucy and Ricky Ricardo

Ethel and Fred Mertz

Little Ricky

TWILIGHT ZONE:

- **Strange and fanciful world of odd creatures and O. Henry type twists**

FEAR FACTOR:

- **Gross out factor**
- **Real people doing real stunts**
- **Large cash award at the end for beating out everyone else**

JEOPARDY

- **High-brow intelligence**
- **Test your knowledge at home**
- **Most copied game show**

STAR TREK

- **Corny dialogue**
- **Character parodies**
- **Cheap special effects**
- **Catch phrases**
- **Cult following**

THE SIMPSONS: (Bugs Bunny? Spongebob Squarepants)

- **Satire**
- **Violence**
- **Father/son relationship**

THIRD WATCH or AMERICAN DREAMS:

- **Emotional factor**

- **Familiar characters**
- **Self-contained stories mixed with long-running plots**
- **Situations that audience can identify with but over dramatized**

LAW AND ORDER: CRIMINAL INTENT:

- **Everything already covered in class lecture**

Entering TV Land

Your mission, if you should choose to do it (and you better or you get a zero!), is to choose 5 of the following 8 mini-projects and complete them by _____. You may work by yourself or with a group. **Certain of the projects lend themselves to group work. Others don't. In which instance, if you work with someone else, you must turn in individual work (for e.g., the essay on sitcoms, the mystery viewing, the sci-fi create a land, the cartoon strip). You may turn in each piece as you finish it or turn it in as a completed whole on the due date.**

1. Sci-Fi:

Create a pretend land, something completely out of this world!!! You must write out a proposal of what this world looks like, its inhabitants, its rules, its purpose, climate and physical attributes, where it is located, the morals and ethics by which its inhabitants live, friends and enemies of the world. Once you have completed this, you will then draw a blueprint of the world complete with a legend explaining its buildings and landmarks.

2. Game Show:

Create your very own game show. What format will it be? What type of host would you need? Lay it out on paper complete with the rules and regulations, players, etc.

3. Sitcom:

Choose a popular sitcom from the 50s, 60s, or 70s and watch several episodes of the show. Then choose a sitcom popular today and do the same. Write an essay (minimum 6 paragraphs) comparing and contrasting the portrayal of societal values between the sitcoms of the past and present.

4. Reality:

Create your very own Reality Show after surveying a group of people (minimum 5)

about what they would like to see. You must present the concept, the rules and regulations, which the contestants would be and how they would be chosen (Survivor views original, creative videos from its hopefuls), your original “gimmick,” and the award for winning.

5. Cartoons:

Create your very own comic strip (minimum 15 cells) and an explanation of the archetypes, level of violence, and satire that you employed in the strip.

6. Mystery/Detective:

Analyze 2 different TV mystery shows. Identify the mystery elements such as the villain, the detective, the ratiocinative formula employed, the red herring. Use the attached form to complete this section.

7. Drama:

Dramatize a scene from everyday life. Write out the entire scene complete with descriptions of your characters, the situation, dialogue, and stage directions. Employ the story elements of conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

8. News:

With friends or a group from class, create a newscast and videotape it for presentation to the class. Your news crew must include an anchor, weather person, sports caster, human-interest reporter, and major news reporter. You may present this as a satire or as a serious presentation. It must be at least 30 minutes long, the length of a regular news show on television.

Each of your completed projects will be graded for the thought and energy put into it as well as the originality and creativity of the final product.

Extra credit opportunity: You may choose one more project than the required 5 for extra points.

DO YOUR BEST!!!