

## COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

<b>Academic School/Department:</b>	Communications, Arts and Social Sciences
<b>Programme:</b>	BA in American Studies with Combined Studies
<b>FHEQ Level:</b>	5
<b>Course Title:</b>	American Television Drama
<b>Course Code:</b>	AMS 5400
<b>Course Leader:</b>	Sara Chetin
<b>Student Engagement Hours:</b>	120
Lectures:	22.5
Seminar / Tutorials:	22.5
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
<b>Semester:</b>	Fall/Spring/Summer
<b>Credits:</b>	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

### **Course Description:**

The new 'golden age' of television, which has emerged since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, has become a significant and influential part of contemporary American culture. The course explores a number of cultural and technological shifts that have shaped the medium, and considers the ways in which writers are engaging with contemporary social and political realities and examining the values and myths of a society 'conversing with itself.' The course studies the reinvention of a variety of different genres, from crime fiction to science fiction, and students will have the opportunity to analyse some ground breaking series that offer portraits of a society undergoing crisis and change.

### **Prerequisites:**

GEP 4180

### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To engage critically with key concepts and cultural theories related to television drama

- To develop an historical understanding of the development of American television drama from its first 'golden age' to today
- To examine the shifts in storytelling architecture and the literary influences on writing
- To recognize how the shifts in television networks and technology have changed audience reception and participation
- To assess a variety of political, social and gendered themes and how they both shape and are shaped by contemporary American television drama
- To examine how the contemporary television industry functions in terms of its writers, producers and actors
- To encourage a critical approach to contemporary American television drama.

### **Programme Outcomes:**

5A(i); 5A(iii); 5B(i); 5B(iii); 5C (i); 5C(iii); 5D(ii)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by the Registry and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical engagement with key theories/writers/debates in a cultural/political contextual framework. (Theoretical knowledge Base)
- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the ways in which the contemporary American television drama has evolved and been shaped by a range of political, cultural and technological developments in American society (Practical knowledge Base)
- Exercise a degree of informed critical judgement, develop thoughtful arguments and pursue independent research using theories/texts from class and own reading. (Cognitive Skills)
- Engage with a wide variety of perspectives on television production and reception and deliver work with limited supervision, reflecting good critical thinking and time management skills. (Personal Development)

### **Indicative Content:**

- Key terms, debates and theorists of television drama

- Historical contexts of television drama
- Emergent political and social themes post 9/11
- Masculinity and its discontents; new roles/rules for women
- The new structure of the television industry and the changes in storytelling architecture
- Literary and philosophical influences on writers
- Shifting technologies, audience viewing and reception

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/policies/>

**Teaching Methodology:**

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar classes. Lectures are primarily designed to give an overview of the issues and problems on a particular topic, and thereby provide guidance for seminar discussion. Seminars will be used for debates and group discussion, and are intended to provide an interactive and participatory learning environment. Clips/segments of film will be viewed and discussed in class; entire episodes should be viewed outside of class time in preparing for the appropriate week's discussion. Students are expected to do the set readings for each week, and to be prepared to contribute to class discussion. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of learning.

**Bibliography (Indicative Texts):**

Bigsby, Christopher, *Viewing America: Twenty-First Century Television Drama*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Thompson, Ethan & Jason Mittell. *How to Watch Television*, NYU Press, 2013.

*Please Note: The core and the reference texts will be reviewed at the time of designing the semester syllabus*

