

ESL 23: American Culture Through Television

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Class Meeting: Mondays & Wednesdays, 2 – 4:20 pm

Location: Haines 122

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a specialized four-unit course designed to support non-native speakers of English in developing aural/oral speaking skills and understandings of American culture through systematic analyses of television media. This particular section will focus on the theme “The Black & Brown Age of Television: POC Experiences in the US.” Using a wide-ranging cross-section of contemporary television media, we will examine how people of color navigate, engage with, and contribute to American culture. We will situate these interactions against America’s founding doctrines: capitalism, settler colonialism, and anti-blackness.

The language focus of this course varies depending on the saliency of the selected material, but predominately centers around expanding one’s vocabulary, developing an understanding idiomatic language and building analytical skills to critically engage with various forms of American culture and media. Students will improve language skills through television observation, group work designed to build communication skills, and assignments designed to test oral/aural/reading comprehension. Students will leave this class with more complex, nuanced understandings of the different worlds, lives, and positionalities inhabited by people in the United States.

CLASS MATERIALS

Materials will be made available in class or through email (so make sure that you check your email regularly). These will include links for background on television content, as well as handouts for analyzing the historical and cultural contexts of selected television episodes. You will need to purchase 1 Blue Book from the campus bookstore for the Reflection Diary.

ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING

In-Class Participation	30%
Reflection Diary	20%
Mid-Term Panel Presentation	20%
Final Presentation	24%
Instructor Evaluation	1%

COURSE COMPONENTS

In-Class Participation – As your instructor, I am committed to creating the most active, earnest, and collaborative learning environment that best serves your needs and goals as language learners. In return, I request *your* active, earnest, and collaborative engagement with the course, your fellow language learners, and me. Regular attendance, thoughtful participation, and punctuality are essential for this course, as in-class activities like class discussion, free-writing exercises, worksheets, and group activities cannot be made up outside of class. Missing class or arriving late will affect your overall course grade.

ESL 23: American Culture Through Television

Reflection Diary – After each viewing session, you will be assigned materials that critically analyze the television show and concepts discussed in class. After reading/viewing these materials, you will write a short reflection (2 pages, double-spaced). In these reflections, you can explore a cultural point that you learned, were surprised by, or are confused by. Questions to consider: What did you learn about American culture from the material you engaged with? What questions about American culture do you have? Think about the sources. How does this source engage with the media landscape? What are its strengths, weaknesses, biases, limitations? I'll collect Blue Books and review your responses at the beginning of each class so that our class discussion can be primarily driven by your ideas.

Mid-Term Panel Presentations – During the third week of class, we will be holding panel discussions on various themes explored in American television media. We will decide on panel themes together during the second class of this course. Students will then sign up to participate in a panel of their interest. In the class before the panel discussion, we will dedicate half of class time to serve as a workshop session for panelists to decide on an agenda, main discussion topics, research additional materials, and prepare answers for questions they anticipate audience members will pose. During the Mid-Term Panel Presentation day, each panel participant will speak for 5 minutes. During this time, the participant will share their perspective/opinion on the panel theme, draw references to materials viewed in class, and introduce the class to one new material (another television show, film, short, YouTube series, book, poem, song, academic study, news report, etc.). The panel will then be open to questions from the audience for 5 – 7 minutes.

Final Presentation - The last day of class will be dedicated to oral student presentations. During the fourth week of class, you will select another piece of American art (television show, film, short, YouTube series, book, poem, song, painting, play, music video, culinary dish, etc.) you plan to deconstruct, analyze, and present to the class. In the class before the final presentation, we will dedicate half of class time to serve as a workshop session to develop your final project and receive feedback from your peers. During your presentation, you will teach the class about the particular historical, socio-cultural, political, and critical discourses that shape your selected piece, and highlight any aspects of the piece that elicit reactions/responses (visual, aural, tactile, intellectual, emotional, etc.). What does this piece contribute to broad understandings and discussions of American culture? What does this piece contribute to *your* understanding of American culture?

POLICIES

1. Respect each other and your instructor.
2. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of section as part of your In-Class Participation grade.
3. To the best of my ability, I will answer all emails within a 48-hour window. Please include “**ESL 97A**” in the subject line of all emails.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

UCLA's policy on academic integrity is available online at <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/>.

ESL 23: American Culture Through Television

Schedule of Assignments

<i>Week</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
<p>1: August 5th & 7th</p> <p>Black/Brown Experiences in the United States</p>	<p><u>Class Admin:</u></p> <p>Instructor & Classmate Introduction</p> <p>Ice Breakers: get to know each other, the instructor, the department, and university</p> <p>Syllabus Review</p> <p>Mid-term Panel Presentations Overview</p> <p>In-Class Writing Exercise: What do you know about American culture? What do you want to know?</p> <p><u>Television:</u></p> <p><i>black-ish</i>, S4 E1, “Juneteenth”; clips from <i>Everyone Loves Raymond & Roseanne</i></p> <p><u>Themes:</u> musical genre, US history, settler colonialism, forced diaspora, slavery, minority representation, anti-blackness</p> <p><u>HW:</u></p> <p>Read “black-ish Season Premiere Recap: We Built This”</p> <p>Write journal entry #1</p>	<p><u>Class Admin:</u></p> <p>Ice Breakers: get to know each other, the instructor, the department, and university</p> <p>Establish Community Standards</p> <p>Mid-term Panel Themes Brainstorm & Sign-ups</p> <p><u>Television:</u></p> <p><i>Fresh Off the Boat</i>, S3 E1, “Coming From America”; clips from <i>Modern Family & Full House</i></p> <p><u>Themes:</u> sitcom genre, diaspora, home(land), class mobility, language, transnationalism, colorism, globalization</p> <p><u>HW:</u></p> <p>Read “Why Fresh Off the Boat Matters”</p> <p>Write journal entry #2</p>
<p>2: August 12th and 14th</p>	<p><u>Class Admin:</u></p> <p>Ice Breakers: get to know each other, the instructor, the department, and university</p>	<p><u>Class Admin:</u></p> <p>Ice Breakers: get to know each other, the instructor, the department, and university</p> <p>Mid-term Check-in, Q&A</p>

ESL 23: American Culture Through Television

<p>Black/Brown Experiences in the United States</p>	<p><u>Television:</u> <i>Jane the Virgin</i>, S3 E17, “Chapter 61”; clips from <i>Days of Our Lives</i> & <i>Gossip Girl</i></p> <p><u>Themes:</u> telenovela/soap opera genre, citizenship and belonging, fear of government institutions, secrecy, friendship, sexuality</p> <p><u>HW:</u> Read “‘Jane The Virgin’ Tackles Immigration As Alba Worries About Her Green Card Under Trump”</p> <p>Complete journal entry #3</p>	<p><u>Television:</u> <i>Ramy</i>, S1 E7, “Ne Me Quitte Pas”; clips from <i>Man Seeking Woman</i> & <i>You’re The Worst</i></p> <p><u>Themes:</u> short story genre, first-generation immigrant experiences, depression, loneliness, motherhood, long-term romantic relationships</p> <p><u>HW:</u> Watch “Ramy Youssef: I Wish Muslims Prayed on Sunday” & “Ramy Youssef: What does it mean to be Arab American Muslim”</p> <p>Complete journal entry #4</p>
<p>3: August 19th & 21st</p>	<p><u>Mid-term Panel Presentation Workshop:</u> in small groups, brainstorm panel topics and any questions/concerns about the project you may have; work on your discussion points individually, then share your progress with your team; classroom Q&A</p> <p><u>Field Trip:</u> Visit resources for international students on campus (Dashew Center, CAPS, LGBT Campus Resource Center, Writing Center); coffee & donuts to celebrate our productivity!</p> <p><u>HW:</u> Prepare for mid-term panel presentations</p>	<p><u>Class Admin:</u> Final Presentation Overview</p> <p><u>Mid-term Panel Presentations</u></p> <p><u>HW:</u> Research and decide on an art piece to analyze for your final presentation</p>

ESL 23: American Culture Through Television

<p>4: August 26th & 28th</p> <p>Female Experiences in the United States</p>	<p><u>Class Admin:</u></p> <p>Mid-term Panel Presentation Debrief: What did you like? What didn't you like? What would you change? Why?</p> <p>Final Presentation Sign-ups</p> <p><u>Television:</u></p> <p><i>Living Single</i>, S3 E17, "Chapter 61"; clips from <i>Friends</i> & <i>The Big Bang Theory</i></p> <p><u>Themes:</u> laugh-track sitcom genre, early adulthood, roommates, dating, New York City, personal development, interpersonal conflict & resolution</p> <p><u>HW:</u></p> <p>Read "<u>How the '90s Kinda World of Living Single Still Lives on Today</u>"</p> <p>Complete journal entry #5</p>	<p><u>Class Admin:</u></p> <p>Engaging with Media Online: forums, commenting on news articles, podcasts, social media</p> <p><u>Television:</u></p> <p><i>Insecure</i>, S3 E6, "Ready-Like"</p> <p><u>Themes:</u> prestige dramedy genre, young professionals, the workplace, Los Angeles, music, romantic/sexual relationships, masculinity, major life events</p> <p><u>HW:</u></p> <p>Read "<u>The Radical Importance of Issa Rae's 'Insecure'</u>"</p> <p>Complete journal entry #6</p>
<p>5: September 2nd & 4th</p>	<p><u>Class Admin:</u></p> <p>Final Presentation Check-in, Q&A</p> <p>Class Picnic – Potluck Sign-up</p> <p><u>Television:</u></p> <p><i>Tuca & Bertie</i>, S1 E1, "The Sugar Bowl"; clips from <i>The Simpsons</i> & <i>Futurama</i></p> <p><u>Themes:</u> animated series genre, symbolism, roommates, moving in with a romantic partner, living alone, guilt, trust, growing up</p>	<p><u>Class Admin:</u></p> <p>In-Class Writing Exercise: What have you learned about American culture from this class? What are you still curious about?</p> <p><u>Television:</u></p> <p><i>Brown Girls</i> (<u>webseries</u>), Episode 1 – 7; clips from <i>Broad City</i> & <i>Girls</i></p> <p><u>Themes:</u> webseries genre, roommates, sexuality, queerness, Chicago, family, fear, insecurity, black/brown friendships, music, mother/daughter relationships</p>

ESL 23: American Culture Through Television

	<p><u>HW:</u></p> <p>Read “Tuca & Bertie Creator Lisa Hanawalt on Blurring the Line Between Real and Surreal”</p> <p>Complete journal entry #7</p>	<p><u>HW:</u></p> <p>Read “All the Brown Girls on TV”</p> <p>Complete journal entry #8</p>
<p>6: September 9th & 11th</p>	<p><u>Final Presentation Workshop:</u> develop your final project and receive feedback from your peers</p> <p><u>Class Picnic!</u></p> <p><u>HW:</u></p> <p>Prepare for final presentation</p>	<p><u>Final Presentations</u></p> <p><u>Final Presentation Debrief:</u> what did you like? What didn't you like? What would you change? Why?</p> <p><u>Au revoir, mes amies!:</u> exchange ways to stay in contact</p>