

READY CAMERA ONE: THE RESEARCH REPORT

Topics in Early Television History, Theory and Aesthetics: 1948-88

COMPONENTS:

1. Project topic proposals One to two paragraph description of your topic, approach, and thesis. Of course you will already have done some research at this point so the topic statement should be as detailed as you can make it. Your topic must be referenced in some way in either *The Tube of Plenty* or *TV By Design*. It also must be derived from the first 40 years of television history (1948-1988). Typed.

Due on Monday, April 18 (Week 4)

2. Critical Essay, 10-12 pages, double-spaced, typed.

A careful and thorough examination of your topic, including a brief history, background and contextual information, identification of issues, and significance (see below) of your study.

By your estimation your topic must reference at least three of the following criteria:

1. Staying power i.e., your choice had lasting impact on media history/culture,
2. Evidence of experimentation or invention within the medium at the time,
3. Archival Significance i.e., spotlights aspects of early television history that may have been neglected or forgotten,
4. Specific relevance to our critique of media representation and ideology,
5. Contribution to **your** personal study agenda (be it technical, conceptual, or theoretical).

Your critical essay should address at least three of these five criteria. Again, you must be the judge of your topic's merit and be able to demonstrate why it fulfills three or more of the above criteria. Why should we care to know more about X? How might X influence our own work this quarter? I recommend that you begin your essay with an introductory section that frames the pertinent history, context, and specific elements of your study and then go directly to writing about the criteria.

Essay is due, Monday, May 9.

3. Annotated Bibliography

Minimum: 3 books, 4 articles, reasonably complete "videography" if appropriate.

Both written and visual sources; you must utilize books and articles for the report; web research is an excellent source of anecdotal and descriptive material about popular culture but will not do the job that we need done re: an in-depth study.

Also due, Monday, May 9.

4. Presentations (Early TV Abstracts): 10 minute oral report i.e., summary of your project/concept supported by audio/visual materials with the full report available on your blog. By visual materials I mean a short video clip, an audio recording, or a series of stills. Your abstract presentation should limit a/v materials to approximately 30% although you might use your blog to direct us to other rich a/v resources.

Due Thursday, May 12. We will be meeting in Com. 326 (Screening Room) for this.

FAQ

What are some examples of appropriate topics?

*First, topics must fall within the time line of 1948-88. Your topic also must be referenced in some way in either **The Tube of Plenty** or **TV By Design**. You might choose:*

A brilliant series. A new technological idea. A single performer who transformed the medium. A point of federal regulation that transformed the medium. A social problem such as bias or stereotyping or lack of representation that problematized the medium. A single genre study. A new programming idea that effected how we view televisual culture today. And so on...The more specific you can be, the better the results.

How do will I do a blog and prepare for the Abstract Presentations?

*On Monday, May 9 we will have a workshop with Amy Greene on developing a blog in WordPress. Please bring to that meeting visual images that you have found as well as a digital copy of your research report and annotated bibliography. We will not have class on Tuesday, May 10 so that you can have extra time to prepare for the **Early TV Abstracts** session on Thursday, May. 12.*

Do I need to use footnotes?

Yes. See below for a useful resource. Or visit our friendly Writing Center if you need more help.

Where do I get information about correct formats for research reports (papers)?

Start here: <http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml>

*The MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines are always a reliable source for formatting, writing and research about media studies. If you need some other support, I recommend Timothy Corrigan's little book, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*.*

Can more than one person select the same topic?

Yes, but if you do, you must meet and make sure that your approach is distinctive with little overlap.

What is an annotated bibliography?

Here is an example:

Edgerton, Gary R. *The Columbia History of American Television*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

This collection of essays on television culture extends well beyond 1988 and covers a wide range of topics including technological invention, television and presidential politics, Ted Turner, and televising 911 and its aftermath. Of particular relevance to my study of women in the 1950s sitcom is an essay entitled, "Learning to Live with Television: Technology, Gender and America's Early TV Audiences."

Note: one of your reference books (in your annotated bibliography) must be *The Tube of Plenty* or *TV By Design*. Here you will annotate exactly how this text contributed to the development of your topic/thesis.