

From Lucy to Liz Lemon: A look at women in sitcoms

UGST 181-523

Syllabus

Women in Sitcoms: From Lucy to Liz Lemon

Class website – <https://womeninsitcoms.wordpress.com/>

Wednesdays 3 p.m. – 3:50 p.m. in Library Annex Room 417 C

Course Description:

The tomboy, the working-girl, the flirt, the mean girl, the supermom, the diva – women have had a role in sitcoms for decades, but how often do we *really* think about what these shows are saying about women? This class will look at some of our favorite ladies in the last 60 years of TV sitcoms and explore how these characters affect our lives and cultures.

Learning Objectives:

The course is designed to introduce students to life as a Texas A&M student. Through the lens of women in television students will be required to formulate a research topic and proposal, outline a paper, conduct research using library sources, revise their own writing and act as a peer editor, and become connected with campus resources that can enhance their quality of life and positively impact their academic success.

At the conclusion of the course students will:

- be able to think critically and analytically about the media and pop culture.
- understand the basic steps in designing and completing a research project.
- become efficient users of library resources.
- be able to write clear and concise evaluations of a television program or article.
- have experience with peer-editing and collaborative work.
- be familiar with campus programs and resources including, but not limited to: the University Writing Center, the GLBT Resource Center, and the Student Counseling Service

Instructor Information

Name: Lea Susan Engle

Telephone Number: 979.845.5193

Email Address: lengle@tamu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. in Annex 418D

Office Location: Evans Library Annex, Room 418D

Course Materials

Readings:

The instructor will provide reading assignments. No textbook required.

Television Programs:

Students will be required to view television programs that will be available to them from the University Libraries' Media and Reserves department. They may also choose to view the videos on their own via services like Hulu or Netflix. A subscription to these services is **not** required for this class. A draft list of television shows is attached. This list will grow and change as the semester progresses.

Grading Policies

Grades will be based on Attendance and Participation (attending class meetings, participating in discussions); weekly reading, viewing, and writing assignments; and the Research Paper and its components. Grades figured based on 150 points total.

Attendance/Class Participation: 25 Points Reading Assignments: 25 Points Research Paper: 100 Points

- Topic Proposal – 10
- Outline – 10
- Annotated Bibliography – 15
- Rough Draft – 15
- Final Paper – 50 points

Grading Scale Standard Letter Grading Scale:

A = 90-100 B = 80-89 C = 70-79 D =

60-69 F = <60 Points Grading Scale: Out of 150 assignable points A = 135 -150 points B = 120 – 134 points C =

105 – 119 points D = 90 – 104 points F = <89 points **Attendance and Late Work** Attendance is

mandatory. There is no substitute for class participation and article responses and discussion questions will not be accepted after the due date. Late Research Paper assignments will be dropped a full letter grade per day and will not be accepted after the second day. Example: Assignment is due Wednesday, on Thursday the highest possible grade is a B, on Friday the highest possible grade is a C. No papers for this assignment will be accepted after Friday. University excused absences are rare exceptions and must comply with the University rules (linked below), and must be discussed with the Instructor before or within 24 hours of the missed class. "The University views class attendance as the responsibility of an individual student.

Attendance is essential to complete the course successfully. University rules related to excused and unexcused absences are located on-line at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>."

Assignments

Weekly reading and viewing:

All students will be required to read/view the assigned articles and shows each week. Students will write an 150 word reaction to the materials and create one discussion question to be turned in at 11:59 p.m. on the day before class. All reactions and questions need to be posted on the class blog – womeninsitcoms.wordpress.com

Research Paper:

Students will complete a five-page paper on one of the themes discussed in class or on a theme of their choice with instructor approval. The paper will be completed in the stages outlined below.

- Topic proposal < 250 words
- Paper outline (one-page, bulleted list)
- Database exploration and annotated bibliography (5 sources)
- Rough draft of paper (3-5 pages)
- Peer-editing (in-class)
- Final paper (5 pages)

Class Schedule

8/29 – Week One: Intro to Topic

In class viewing of clips of women in sitcoms, discuss why this topic/class matters

Homework: Read, react, question. Introduce yourself and post your reaction and discussion questions by 11:59 p.m. on 9/4 –

- Introductions thread: <https://womeninsitcoms.wordpress.com/category/introductions/>
- Discussion questions #1 thread: <https://womeninsitcoms.wordpress.com/2012/08/29/question1/>

Read: Course syllabus, [Topics page](#), and Pugh Yi, R.H., & Dearfield, C.T. (2012). The status of women in the U.S. media. Retrieved from http://wmc.3cdn.net/a6b2dc282c824e903a_arm6bohk8.pdf

View: Sitcom of your choice from the list of shows womeninsitcoms.wordpress.com/shows

9/5 – Week Two: Intro to Topic II

In Class: Discuss readings

Homework: Read, react, question.

Read: Pond, M. (2011). Why I LOVE Lucy. *Bitch Magazine: Feminist Response To Pop Culture*, (52), 80. (this is a one-page comic),

Read **Women in WW II Section** of [World War II at a glance: Society's Struggles](#) from the National WW II Museum AND TWO OTHER SECTIONS (choose from African Americans, Japanese Internment, Dr. Seuss and WWII, or Political Cartoons)

Review the Libraries' research guide for this class – <http://guides.library.tamu.edu/ugst181523>

Watch: I Love Lucy any episode, Another show from the [1950's list](#)

THERE ARE TWO SEPARATE THREADS FOR HOMEWORK THIS WEEK.

#1 IS FOR YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ON THE RESEARCH GUIDE FOR THIS CLASS – YOU ONLY NEED ONE OR TWO SENTENCES

#2 IS FOR THE TV SHOWS, COMIC, AND WW2 MUSEUM STUFF – STANDARD POST, TELL US WHAT YOU WATCHED, THINK ABOUT THE READINGS AND SHOWS TOGETHER AND FORM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (150 WORDS-ISH)

**9/12 – Week Three: Library Instruction Session with Julie
MEET IN EVANS LIBRARY 204B**

9/19 – Week Four: Looking at the world in black and white

In class: discussion, Distribution of Research Paper Step One – Topic Proposal

Homework: Read, react, question.

Read: Haralovich M.B. (2003). Sitcoms and suburbs: Positioning the 1950s homemaker. In J. Morreale (Ed.), Critiquing the sitcom: A reader. (49 – 59). Syracuse: Syracuse University.

Watch: Donna Reed “The Ideal Wife”, and an episode or episodes related to your topic proposal

9/26 Week Five: Is this progress?

In Class: Discussion, topic proposals returned, outline assignment

Homework: Read, react, question.

Read: <https://womeninsitcoms.wordpress.com/2012/09/26/readings-for-october-3rd/>

Watch: <https://womeninsitcoms.wordpress.com/2012/09/26/viewing-assignment-for-october-3rd/>

10/3 – Week Six: You say you want a revolution

In class: Discussion, **Outline Due, Bibliography assignment distributed**

Homework: Read, react, question.

Read: none

Watch: Miss Representation (on reserve in the Annex)

10/10 – Week Seven: Catching our breath

NO CLASS – Miss Representation posts due by 11:59 p.m. 10/10

Lea out from 10/10 – 10/16

Homework: Read, react, question.

Read: none

Watch: Three episodes of the Golden Girls (if your last name starts with A-M watch episodes from an odd numbered season, N-Z even numbered)

BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE 10/15 11:59 p.m.

10/17 – Week Eight: Caftans, blue eyeshadow, and mouthy ladies

In class: Discuss, Bibliographies returned, Paper Draft Assignment distributed, **schedule appointment with**

Lea to discuss bibliography and/or paper assignment

Homework: Read, react, question.

Read: Lee, J., Dines, G., & Humez, J. (1995). Subversive sitcoms: Roseanne as inspiration for feminist resistance. *Gender, race, & class in media: a text-reader*, 469-475. (use your research skills to find it)

Watch: Roseanne S 1 Ep 19 – Workin Overtime, and two other shows from the 1990s list

10/24 – Week Nine: You were actually alive when these shows aired!

Homework: Work on draft.

Read: None

Watch: None

10/31 – Week Ten: Spooooooooky

In class: Viewing of some of the best Halloween specials

Homework: Keep working on those final papers!

11/7 – Week Eleven: Women in the new millennium

In Class: Viewing and discussion.

Homework: Read, react, question.

Read: TBD

Watch: TBD

11/12 11:59 p.m. ROUGH DRAFT DUE VIA EMAIL – LENGLE@TAMU.EDU**11/14 – Week Twelve: Help! – Visit with the University Writing Center Evans 204B**

In class: We will meet with consultants from the University Writing Center and learn about the resources they offer. We will then split into pairs and peer-edit our papers with the assistance of Writing Center staff.

Homework: Keep working on your paper! Bring proof that you attended a one-on-one session with a Writing Center consultant for a 3-point bonus on your final paper.

Read: TBD

Watch: TBD

11/21 – Week Thirteen: TV today

In class: Discussion, drafts returned; Watch: Maude

Homework: No reading or viewing. Revise your draft based on the notes.

11/28 – Week Fourteen: We've come a long way, baby!

In class: Reflection on course material and writing process, last-minute questions, evaluations, snacks

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE NOVEMBER 30TH, 11:59 P.M. – you're welcome.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides

comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>

Academic Integrity *For additional information please visit: <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>*

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

2 Responses to Syllabus

jmhallum12 says:

August 29, 2012 at 8:05 pm

Howdy! I am Jaycee Hallum and I am from Marshall, TX. You are probably thinking where on Earth is that. Well it is as far east Texas as you can possibly travel, it is about 25 minutes away from the Louisiana border. I am a first generation Aggie with a brother at Texas Tech. SSSSSSSSS. My major is Early Childhood Education/Special Education. I also love the Lord with all my heart and soul.

[Reply](#)

coppedgesarah says:

August 29, 2012 at 10:26 pm

Howdy! I'm Sarah Coppedge, an English major from Sugarland, Texas. I'm a second generation Aggie with two sisters, and a pet turtle. I love watching crime shows like CSI and Bones with my mom and I always get to the movie theater early because watching the "behind the scenes" and the previews is my favorite part.

[Reply](#)

From Lucy to Liz Lemon: A look at women in sitcoms

Create a free website or blog at WordPress.com.