That’s Entertainment!
A Survey of American & British Television
Jung & Dewhurst
Final Exam

- 50 questions
  - 25 on American TV, 25 on British TV
  - 10 questions: True or False
  - 40 questions: multiple choice

- *Teilnahmeschein* students can use their notes.
- *Leistungsschein* students (and students under the new system) *cannot* use their notes.
- Everyone can use their dictionaries.
AMERICAN TELEVISION
Early TV in America

TV was in an experimental phase until 1940s

Early TV networks: CBS, NBC, ABC, DUM

Early TV Genres

- news
- quiz and game shows
- sports particularly boxing & wrestling (*The Gillette Cavalcade of Sports*)
- drama (*The Lone Ranger*)
- sitcoms (*The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*)
Structure of American Television
Production of TV Shows

TV Shows (crew, camera, actors, etc.)

Production Company (~ network)

Network (e.g., ABC, NBC, CBS)

TV Stations

consumer
cable
Cable System

TV Shows \((\text{crew, camera, actors, etc.})\)

\[ \downarrow \]

Production Company \((\sim \text{network})\)

\[ \downarrow \]

Cable Network \((\text{e.g., MTV, CNN})\)

\[ \downarrow \]

TV Stations

consumer

\[ \downarrow \]

Cable Company
Funding for Commercial TV

TV Shows (crew, camera, actors, etc.)

Production Company (~ network)

Network (e.g., ABC, NBC, CBS)

Advertisement (based on ratings)
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

- established by the Communications Act of 1934
- regulates all radio and television broadcasting and all interstate communications
- issues licenses to TV stations
- censors profanity on public TV and radio
- TV Warning Labels
**TV-Y ALL CHILDREN**
- This program is designed to be appropriate for all children.

**TV-Y7 DIRECTED TO OLDER CHILDREN**
- This program is suitable for children older than 7.

**TV-G GENERAL AUDIENCE**
- Most parents would find this program suitable for all ages.

**TV-PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED**
- This program may contain some material that some parents would find unsuitable for younger children.

**TV-14 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED**
- This program may contain some material that many parents would find unsuitable for children under 14 years of age.

**TV-M MATURE AUDIENCE ONLY**
- This program is specially designed to be viewed by adults and therefore may be unsuitable for children under 17.
American Broadcast Networks

3 Major Broadcast Networks
- CBS
- NBC
- ABC

Other Broadcast Networks
- PBS
- Fox
- WB
- UPN
British Television
What is the BBC?

When was it founded?
The British Broadcasting Corporation

- 1922: BBC founded as radio broadcaster
- 1932: *Empire Service* begins
- 1936: First television pictures broadcast
Rise of Independent Television in Great Britain

- Launched in 1955
- Won audiences from BBC with its populist TV programming
- Social realism: *Coronation Street* (1960-)
British Television Stations
Differences between British & American TV

**British**
- more public services broadcasting (BBC)
- TV license fee
- satellite TV more popular
- more documentaries
- shows less violence
- less time allotted for advertisement

**American**
- mostly commercial TV (except PBS)
- no TV license fee
- cable more popular than satellite
- less documentaries
- tends to show more violence
- commercial breaks built in to TV programs (dramas)
Market Share in the US: Cable TV vs. Satellite TV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cable TV</th>
<th>Satellite TV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998 Market Share</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 Market Share</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: CyberAtlas 25/8/03)

Cable Industry Statistics for North America by country. End of 2002 (in millions and as a % of homes passed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>North America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homes with TV</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>106.6</td>
<td>118.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes passed by cable</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>103.7</td>
<td>114.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with cable TV</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes passed as a % of TV Homes</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with cable as % of homes passed</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital cable customers</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with access to cable high-speed internet</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with cable high-speed internet</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes with cable high-speed internet as % of homes passed</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: eMarketer 10/7/03
Different Terms

**British**
- Ofcom (Office of Communications)
- terrestrial channels
  - BBC 1, 2, 4
  - ITV
  - Channel 4, 5

**American**
- FCC (Federal Communications Commission)
- broadcast channels
  - ABC
  - NBC
  - CBS
  - Fox
  - WB
  - UPN
  - PBS
Current Affairs
Can TV news be objective?

Complete objectivity is impossible; nevertheless, objective techniques should be upheld by every news agency.

**Techniques for objectivity** (Creeber, *TV Genre Book*, 117)

- Use of facts that can be verified (quality)
- Use of lots of facts and details (quantity)
- Live reports on location to show events as they happen
- A clear separation of fact from personal opinion
- Including more than one point-of-view in a debate
BBC Editorial Guidelines

The editorial guidelines codify the BBC’s commitment to:-

- **Truth and Accuracy**
- **Impartiality and Diversity of Opinion**
- **Editorial Integrity and Independence**
- **Serving the Public Interest**
- **Fairness, Privacy and Accountability**
News Values

- **Negativity** - bad news involving death, tragedy, violence, damage, natural disasters, political upheaval, extreme weather conditions
- **Proximity** (closeness to home) - audiences relate more to stories that are close to them geographically
- **Recency** - revealing stories as they happen
- **Currency** - stories in the public eye for some time
- **Continuity** – events with continuing impact (war, sports tournament)
- **Uniqueness** - unique or unusual event
- **Simplicity** - easy to explain
- **Personality** - particularly involving celebrities
- **Predictability** - conforming to the preconceived ideas
- **Elite Nations/People** - covering important, powerful nations
- **Exclusivity** – stories exclusive to the network or channel
- **Size** - the bigger impact a story has, the higher its value.
TV News as Entertainment

"TV news, for one thing, is both journalism and show business ... Television worries about pleasing and entertaining the ordinary citizen in a way that the New York Times does not."

(Gitlin. Watching Television, 11-15)
Entertainment and Infotainment

Events make attractive news items if they:-

- contain good pictures
- are short and dramatic and can be sensationalised
- have novelty value
- are open to simple reporting
- occur on a grand scale
- are negative or contain violence, crime, confrontation or catastrophe
- are either highly unexpected, or contain things that one would not expect to happen
- have meaning and relevance to the audience
- are similar to events already in the news
- contain elite people or nations or they allow an event to be reported in *personal or human interest* terms.
Name these British Current Affairs Journalists...

- Jeremy Paxman hosting BBC Newsnight
- Sir Trevor McDonald, OBE (1939-)
- Martin Bell
- Kate Adie, OBE (1945-)
Who are these famous American TV anchors?

Dan Rather (CBS)

Peter Jennings (ABC)

Tom Brokaw (NBC)

Edward R. Murrow
Types of American Newscasts

- morning news
- morning news (talk) shows
  - *Good Morning America* (ABC)
  - *Today* (NBC)
  - *CBS Morning News*
- early evening local news
- network evening news (CBS, NBC, ABC)
- late night news
- news magazines
  - *60 Minutes* on CBS
  - *Dateline NBC*
  - *20/20* on ABC
first all-news network

- founded in 1980 by Ted Turner and Reese Schonfeld
- later cable networks imitated its techniques including Sky TV, Fox News and BBC World
- CNN brought about the globalisation of certain news techniques
  - 24 hour news coverage
  - “rolling update” format (distension, repetition, news-talk)
  - news ticker
Types of British News Programme

本地新闻
- 本地兴趣故事
- “And finally...”

早晨新闻
- 流行焦点；“起居室”背景
- “谈话”之间记者和天气播报员
- “早餐电视” — 新闻部分广泛范围的节目

24小时滚动新闻服务
- Sky News, BBC 24, ITV News

杂志风格节目：Newsnight (BBC2), Here and Now (BBC1); Tonight with Trevor McDonald (ITV)
Characteristics particular to American TV News
Populism & the Puritan Work Ethic of American TV news

- The individual as hero
  - TV journalist
  - TV anchor
  - the common American

- Puritan Work Ethic
  - journalists working hard to bring you the truth
  - stories about people working hard, people putting their lives back together after a natural catastrophe, etc.
Television
Drama
Characteristics of a Modern Drama

- focus more on plot and character development than on humor (sitcom)
- melodramatic features
  - expression of emotions
  - music to add effect
  - camera angles (close-up shots)
- fictional stories that depict realistic situations
- deals with difficult topics and social issues
- faster-paced
- propagate the myth of the “hero”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Series (episodic)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Serials</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>main characters &amp; settings recycled</td>
<td>main characters &amp; settings recycled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new conflict introduced each episode</td>
<td>ongoing conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focus primarily on resolution of the conflict</td>
<td>focus primarily on character development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conflict is resolved within the episode</td>
<td>conflict is not resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new characters introduced each episode</td>
<td>fewer new characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>separate plotlines (e.g., two separate murder cases)</td>
<td>intertwined plotlines, sudden plot twists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crime/detective/cop dramas</td>
<td>soap operas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
American TV Drama
Types of American Dramas

- Early Dramas
  (single plays, Westerns)
- Spy Dramas
- Police/Detective/Crime Dramas
- Hospital Dramas
- Science-Fiction Dramas
- Teenage Dramas
- Post-Modern Dramas
- Presidential Dramas
Types of British Dramas

- Early Drama (Single Play)
- Police/Detective/Crime/Spy Drama
- Hospital Drama
- Historical/Heritage/Costume Drama
- Drama Documentary
- Social Issues Drama
- Distinction: Author-Driven Dramas
  - Consumer-Driven Dramas
Anthology Dramas

a series of single play dramas

American examples

- *Kraft Television Theater* (NBC, 1947)
- *The Ford Theater* (CBS/NBC/ABC 1948-57)
- *Studio One* (CBS, 1948-58)

British example

- *Armchair Theatre*
WESTERNs

BONANZA

THE LONE RANGER

CLAYTON MOORE

JAY SILVERHEELS

Tonto
TV Westerns

- quick rise and fall on TV
  - rise in the early 1950s
  - peak between 1957-1959
  - decline in the 1960s
  - by 1970s only a few shows (*Gunsmoke*)

- contributed to the integration of network television and Hollywood studios (1955s)

- Western setting, plot, characters
What type of dramas were these shows?
What 1980 American drama was a landmark in the history of American drama series?
**Hill Street Blues**

- large cast (13-14 characters)
  - multi-ethnic cast
  - strong female characters
- multiple narrative strands
- overlapping dialogue
- documentary style camerawork
- liberal attitude towards policing & social issues
- often lack of resolution of the conflict
Name the following British dramas.

- Edge of Darkness
- Z Cars (1962-78)
- I, Claudius, 1976
- Casualty
- Miss Marple, 1984-94
Social Realist Drama

- Anthology series: Armchair Theatre, The Wednesday Play
- Directed by Sydney Newman
- Social realism; ‘kitchen sink drama’
- To be relevant to mainstream audience: ‘agitational contemporaneity’ (Newman)
- Famous productions: Up the Junction (1965), Cathy Come Home (1966):
- ‘Golden Age’ of British drama
Literary Adaptations

Lady Chatterley’s Lover, 1993

The Buddha of Suburbia, 1993

The Darling Buds of May, 1991-3
TV Sitcoms
American Sitcom Formula
(David Marc)

- familiar status quo (equilibrium)
- ritual error made (disequilibrium)
- ritual lesson learned
- familiar status quo (equilibrium)
American Sitcoms

- most sitcoms were family sitcoms
  - blood family
  - melded family
  - metaphorical family
  - nuclear family vs. non-standard family
  - monster families
  - vampire families
  - alien families

- focus on internal family conflicts and set in the “home”
Functions of an American Sitcom

- to uphold the status quo
- to express ideological conflicts in a non-aggressive way
  - class (*The Beverly Hillbillies*)
  - race (*All in the Family*)
  - liberals vs. conservatives (*Family Ties*)
  - homosexuality (*Ellen*)
- static vs. flexible characters
What is an American “Mirror of Reality” sitcom?

- celebrities placed in fictional setting
- characters match their real lives
- *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*
- “mirror of reality” sitcoms died out by the 1960s (exception: *I Love Lucy*)
What American norms were typical for 1950s sitcoms?
The 1950s Sitcom

- **norms**: suburban, middle-class, hard-working, white, patriarchal
- **setting**: the suburban home
- **focus on the nuclear family
- traditional role of women**
- subsequent sitcoms challenged these norms
What’s the name of this sitcom and who produced it?

All in the Family

Norman Lear
Functions of a British Sitcom

To reinforce or challenge the audience’s prejudices and expectations

Concerns:

Class conflicts and social structures

Other ideological conflicts

- race (*It Ain’t Half Hot Mum*)
- liberals vs. conservatives (*Open All Hours*)
- gender (*Men Behaving Badly*)
Characteristics of British Sitcoms

- Produced by one or two writers instead of a team of writers (American style)
- Structured approach to plot and character development
- More sustained character-led or plot-led humour, rather than quick-fire gags
- Black comedy, satire, farce or bathos, bawdiness and innuendo, wordplay
- Large variety of styles and settings: realist, hyperrealist, historical, fantastical
British Realist Sitcoms

centered on **family structures**:
  • *Steptoe and Son*
  • *Till Death Us Do Part*
  • *One Foot in the Grave*

centered on **the workplace**:
  *Fawlty Towers* (hotel)

centered on **living arrangements**:
  • *The Liver Birds*
  • *Citizen Smith*
  • *Rising Damp*
  • *The Young Ones*
Name the British sitcom...

Steptoe and Son, 1962-5

Blackadder (1983-9)

Fawlty Towers (1975-9)

Absolutely Fabulous, 1992-5
FANTASY & SCI-FI
Characteristics of Fantasy

- suspension of reality
- setting: an alternate form of reality on Earth (past or present) OR a world other than Earth
- fantastical elements & features
  - magic, transformations, divination, mind-reading, fabulous beasts, new civilizations
- characters often have magical or supernatural abilities
Characteristics of Sci-Fi

- developed alongside the improvements in science and technology
- society can be present-day, past or an imagined/future society
- technology can be based on real or imagined science
- plot involves space travel, the future, new or imagined technology, mental/biological changes in humans, time travel, or aliens
Types of Sci-Fi/Fantasy Storyline

- **Aliens on Earth** – *ALF, Mork and Mindy*
- **Alien invasion** – *War of the Worlds, The X-Files*
- **Anthologies** – *The Twilight Zone/Outer Limits*
- **Children's series** – *Chucky, Power Rangers*
- **Crime fighting** – *The Avengers, Alien Nation*
- **Disaster and destruction** – *Doomwatch, Thunderbirds*
- **Earthlings in alien world(s)** – *Stargate Atlantis*
- **Life in the future** – *The Jetsons, Futurama*
- **Parallel (utopian/dystopian) universes** – *Land of the Giants, Otherworld*
Types of Sci-Fi/Fantasy Storyline

- Paranormal investigations – *The X-Files, Millennium*
- Satire/comedy – *ALF, Futurama, Red Dwarf*
- Spaceship based – *Blake’s 7, Firefly, Red Dwarf, Star Trek*
- Space station based – *Babylon 5, Star Cops*
- Superhumans – *Captain Scarlet, The Six Million Dollar Man, The Incredible Hulk*
- Time travel based – *Doctor Who, Quantum Leap, Time Trax*
- Vehicle based – *Knight Rider, Stingray, Thunderbirds*
- Miscellaneous – *Quatermass, The Prisoner*
Science fiction often has a deeper purpose.

“science fiction television has a track record of addressing moral, ethical, political and philosophical themes.”

(Luke Hockley, in: Creeber, TV Genre Book, 26)
What are these American shows called?

- Star Trek
- Xena
- Fantasy Island
- V
Name these British shows.

The Tripods (BBC, 1984-5)

The Prisoner (1967-8)

Doctor Who (1963-90, 2004-)

Thunderbirds (ITV, 1965-6)
Popular Sci-Fi & Fantasy Programs

**United Kingdom**: Quatermass, Doctor Who, Blake’s 7

**United States**: Star Trek, Twilight Zone, Babylon 5, Quantum Leap, The X-Files, V, Stargate, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Fantasy Island, Futurama
Drama-Documentary/Docudrama

Drama-documentary: a drama based on fictional events, where the scenario is researched and presented in such a way that it seems believable (cf. mockumentary)

Docudrama: a drama which is generally based on real historical events, embellished and dramatised using actors
Crime Emergency Services and Investigative Programmes
Crimewatch UK (1984-)

- Reconstructs unsolved crimes and appeals to public for information
- Based on Aktenzeichen XY... Ungelöst
- Presented by Nick Ross and Fiona Bruce

- Emergency services reconstruction: 999 Lifesavers
American Crime Reenactments


- techniques
  - used surveillance equipment
  - eye-witness testimony
  - reenactments of crimes in a narrative style
  - studio and commentary from professionals
  - expert statements from emergency personnel, psychologists, policemen, etc.

- show often served a higher purpose than just entertainment
Characteristics of Reality TV

- unscripted
- ordinary people instead of professional actors
- depicts actual events (often live)
- often viewer/audience participation (i.e., voting)
- shares characteristics with other genres
Types of Reality TV

- Documentary Style
- Historical Recreation
- Dating Shows
- Law Enforcement / Courtroom / Military
- Makeover
- Celebrity Shows
- Hidden Camera
- Game Shows
- Talent Shows
An American Family (PBS, 1973)

What was this show about?
What is the longest running reality show on American TV?

COPS (FOX, 1989 – present)
What are these reality shows called?

Survivor

Judge Judy

Cops

The Apprentice

Queer Eye for the Straight Guy
Name the British Reality TV show.

- Space Cadets
- The 1900 House
- Hell's Kitchen
- What Not to Wear
How has American and British TV changed over the decades?
“I come to this moment of announcing the birth in this country, of a new art so important in its implication that it is bound to affect all society. It is an art which shines like a torch in the troubled world.”

Positive Changes

- A larger variety of TV genres available now
- Wider range of TV stations and programming available
- Since programs are now targeted for a specific audience, they cater more to the needs of the viewer.
- TV programming has become more populist (talk shows, audience participation, etc.)
Negative Changes

- more competition among the TV networks
  - leads to sensationalist programming
- more consumer-driven
  - leads to a more choosy and critical audience
- decline in the standards of quality
  - dumbing down TV
  - breaking social taboos