Special Topics: Television and the Space Age

Professor Dr. Herman Howard
Email herman.howard@angelo.edu
Office Phone 325-486-6081
Office LIB/COMM OFF 3RD FLOOR

Class Meeting Times TUES 6 pm - 9 pm
Class Location Third Floor, Library, Room 301
Office Hours M-F 9AM-5PM

And by appointment

ABOUT THE COURSE
This course will introduce students into how the medium of television has covered the space age from 1961-present. Students will learn the historical, scientific and space missions beginning from the Mercury spaceflights to the end of the space shuttle era. This course will involve weekly viewings of broadcast and filmed clips, guest speakers who have worked at NASA and in the media during this time. This course will also involve a class field trip to the NASA’s Houston Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. Through a series of writing projects, students will engage in historical and scientific research.

OBJECTIVES
At the end of the course, students should be able to:

Understand the history of the American space program and television’s coverage of it;
Write academic reports on the scientific, historical and media coverage involving the relationship between the media and the space program
Analyze how television was able to broadcast the historic space moments

COURSE TEXTS:
Various academic articles submitted via email to the class from the professor

COURSE EXPECTATIONS
Be in class, be on time, and be prepared. As an undergraduate seminar course, I expect that you will be present for every class meeting. It’s critical that you are prepared for each class period. If you are not prepared for class, you are absent. If you are absent, you will lose 10% of your final grade for each day. Due to the nature of the class, the Professor is unable to loan out any tapes of the broadcast material if you are absent.

Be connected. You should be checking your Angelo State University email on a daily basis. You are responsible for any material sent via email. This means that if you know you are experiencing e-mail problems, you should ask someone in class if she or he might let you in on any e-mail correspondence pertaining to class.

Be respectful. In order to provide class members the opportunity to do their best work, and to provide a relatively comfortable environment for giving presentations and learning, students need to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times.
ASSIGNMENTS

Report on an American astronaut – 100 points (DUE OCTOBER 3, 2017)
You will be assigned to provide a short 3-4 page research paper on the career of one American astronaut. These papers are designed to develop your research project throughout the semester. You are asked to share your paper contents with other classmates during class meetings. Your short paper assignments include, not limited to, topic paper, research design analysis paper, research rationale, annotated bibliography, literature review, definitions (conceptual/operational), research question(s), data collection method(s), research proposal, and future development. All assignments must be completed by their due dates or you will fail the entire course.

Each student will present on an American space mission from 1961-2011. Each student will pick from a “lottery draw,” at the beginning of the semester to determine what week each student will present. We will have one Seminar presentation per week during the semester. The topics will be based upon the one’s area of research interest. For each presentation, please send to me your Power Point or presentation to me prior to the class setting. Your presentation should be 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of questions from the other students in the class. Your presentation will be critiqued by the other students in the class. You must come prepared to report on your seminar project.

Media/Television/Film Journals WORTH 300 POINTS (DUE: DECEMBER 12, 2017)
Throughout the semester, you will keep a media journal and write a media journal for each film or broadcast that a film is presented in class. You will turn in your media journal at the end of the Fall 2017 semester.

For each media journal, your written report should be brief 1-2 pages typewritten essay, summarizing your reaction to each film viewed in class. You can submit your entries in a bounded journal such as in a large white packet. You will be critiquing each weekly showing from an academic perspective. Please apply relevant examples and other supporting evidence in your review. It is best to take notes while you watch the film. Your journal should describe these elements.

ORGANIZATION:

Introduction: Briefly identify the film you reacting to, including title and other information. Discuss elements of the program that illustrate typical or unusual characteristics.

Reaction: Describe appropriate features of the film. What is your reaction to such factors as:
1) The plot
2) How well does the film tell the story? Is it Interesting? What are the high points?
3) Setting
4) Acting
5) Conflict  
6) Symbolism—what are the symbols from the program  
7) Ideology—politics or message  
8) Realism—what is put into the scene  
10) Your overall analysis of the viewing.  

**TURN IN ON DECEMBER 12, 2017**

**Final Paper – 400 points**  
At the end of the semester, you are to submit a 5-7 double-spaced page, formal, and data-driven historical/critical research paper. For this project, pick one element of media (newspapers, radio, television and social media), and from there, discuss how that one medium covered one space mission. For example, “**How did the New York Times cover the John Glenn 1962 space flight.**” In your report, explain, a) What was reported? ; b) What were the main objectives in the overall reporting; c) Provide your critique of the medium; d) What are the strengths and weak parts of your review; e) What would you change as a result of reporting this to the class? You are to present your paper in a conference presentation format at the end of the semester (10-12 minutes). **This will be presented on the Final Exam date of Tuesday, December 12, 2017 at 6pm according to the Angelo State University Final Exam Schedule**

**FINAL COURSE GRADES**  
All of the course assignments add up to 1,000 points. Final grades will be calculated using the following pointscale.

- **Total Points**
  - 900-1000 A  
  - 800-899 B  
  - 700-799 C  
  - 600-699 D  
  - 599 and below F
OTHER INFORMATION

Academic Integrity
Violations of academic integrity are very serious matters and are clearly documented in the ASU Student Handbook. The work a student submits in a class is expected to be the student's own work and must be work completed for that particular assignment. Plagiarism means intentionally or knowingly representing words or ideas of another as one's own. This may include your own previous work. Plagiarism includes quoting or paraphrasing from other sources without acknowledging/citing the source of your information or presenting quoted material as your own words. You must be very clear about attribution of sources and you must know how to cite sources in a paper. Plagiarism in this course will result in automatic failure (F) for the entire course.

Americans with Disabilities Act
Angelo State University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Dean of Student Life and Student Services at 942-2191. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Campus Closures
If the University is officially closed when we are scheduled to meet, then we obviously will not be meeting. If that happens, plan on picking up where we left off before the closure the next class meeting.

Religious Observances
A student wishing to observe a religious holy day must notify me via email at least 14 days prior to the classes scheduled on dates the student will be absent. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.