



*PRLS/COMM 298—Ríos
SOAP OPERA-TELENOVELA
11-12:15, ITE 127, Spring 2006*

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Goals, Objectives: We will examine the socio-cultural and other functions of soap operas, “telenovelas” and other melodramatic creations. What we call soaps are mediated serials that are constructed by commercial organizations and consumed by audiences in the U.S. and around the globe. These dramas have witnessed wide-ranging success in their countries of origin such as in the U.S., Mexico, and Brazil, and have gained important export value to countries such as Germany and Russia, and France, England.

We will explore, question and discuss why soaps and other serials have continued to be so successful. We will appreciate the melodramatic form as it functions for mass entertainment. However we will also critique the content and acknowledge the negative social impact of melodramas on society. The student should become a more discerning media consumer and/or responsible media creator, keeping in mind potential social, cultural, economic, political influences of mass media.

Class Format: The course consists of lecture, class experiential learning, and informed class discussion based on course materials. The course will make use of topical texts, articles, in-class visuals, out of class visual exposure (watching television or film individually or in groups). Grading will be based on completed, quality work, in-class discussion-participation, a midterm and final. The examinations will consist of subjective and objective sections. Students are urged to take copious notes. If you do not take notes, there is no way you can do well in this class.

Policies: This is not solely a lecture class where you sit back and just listen. Lectures will be balanced with activities to be completed in or out of the classroom. Students will be prepared for discussion that draws squarely from the readings and from other pertinent materials needed for successful participation. Extraneous commentary used to cover-up for not reading are obvious and do not count. Students will be civil, expressing points or counter-points in a collegial and professional manner. Assignments will meet due date. Assignments will be well crafted in upper division quality. Students are responsible for obtaining missed notes and info for assignments. Signing an attendance sheet for someone else under any circumstances is cheating. Cheating on assignments, exams, etc. can result in a failing grade in the course and the incident will go into your files at the department and college levels.

Students will have excellent attendance. Those with excessive absences will fail the course.

Students will know the University's Code of Conduct.

Course Requirements

- Robert C. Allen (Ed.) (1995). *To Be Continued...: Soap Operas Around the World*. NY: Routledge.
- Articles retrieved through webct
- Usage of Webct and Email
- Written Essay Assignments
- Feedback sheets
- Other materials TBA
- Selective TV and other media exposure
- Participation
- Excellent attendance

Proportion of Work

Midterm 30%

Written Assignments 20%

Participation (in class; using webct; presentations; feed-back sheets) 20%

Final 30%

SCHEDULE

Week 1. Jan. 17+ Introductions, Course Overview, What are Melodramas?

Week 2. Jan. 24+. Soap Opera and Similar Forms

- To be Continued, Intro and Ch.1
- Radway, J. (1995). Interpretive communities and variable literacies: The functions of romance reading (pp. 49-73). In J. Dimes & J. M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, race and class in media: A text reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Suggested: Galician, M. (2004). The influence of the mass media: Research and theories of mass media effects on individuals and society. In *Sex, love, and romance in the mass media: Analysis and criticism of unrealistic portrayals and their influence*. pp.81-97. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Week 3. Jan. 31+ Soap Opera and Similar Forms: Who? Why?

- To be Continued, Ch.9, 10

- Lemish, D. (1985). Soap opera viewing in college: A naturalistic inquiry. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 29, 3, pages 275-293.
- Carveth, D. & Alexander, A. (1985). Soap opera viewing motivations and the cultivation process. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 29, 3, pages 259-273.
- Suggested: Anger, D. Conclusion: Who watches, why and what soaps tell us about ourselves. In *Other worlds: Society seen through soap opera*, pages 127-144.

Week 4. Feb.7+ *Telenovelas* and Soaps

- Readings in To be Continued: Ch. 13,14, 15
- Acosta-Alzuru, C. (2003). I'm not a feminist...I only defend women as human beings: The production, representation, and consumption of feminism in a telenovela. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 20, 3, pages 269-294.
- Suggested: McAnany, E. & La Pastina, A. (1994). Telenovela Audiences: A review and methodological critique of Latin America research. *Communication Research*, 21, 6, pages 828-849.

Week 5. Feb.14+ *Telenovelas* and Soaps (*cont'd*)

Week 6. Feb.21+*Telenovelas* and Soaps

- Rios, D. I. (2003). U.S. Latino audiences of telenovelas. *Journal of Latinos in Education*, 2,1, pages 59-65.
- Mayer, V. (2003). Living telenovelas/telenovelizing life: Mexican American girls' identities and transnational telenovelas. *Journal of Communication*, 53, 3, pages 479-495.

Week 7. Feb.28+ Tuesday, Soaps and Review. MIDTERM EXAM Thursday March 2.

March 5-11 is SPRING BREAK

Week 8. March 14+. Contemp. Serialized Sexuality: Sex & the City

- Brewis, J. (2004). Sex and the city? The aspirations of the thirty-something working woman. *Urban Studies*, 41, 9, pages 1821-1838.
- Richards, H. (2003). Sex and the City: A visible flaneuse for the postmodern era? *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 17, 2, pages 147-157.

Videos: Sex and the City

Guest Speaker

Week 9. March 21+ TBA

Week 10. March 28+. TBA

Week 11. April 4+ Girls/Women Redefine Destiny: Buffy the Vampire Slayer

- Kord, S. & Krimmer, E. (2005). Vamp(ire)s and those that kill them. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Dana Scully*. In Kord, S. & Krimmer, E. *Hollywood Divas, Indie Queens, and TV Heroines*. Pages 141-159. Boulder, Colo: Rowman and Littlefield.

- O'Reilly, J. D. (2005). The wonder woman precedent: Female (super) heroism on trial. *The Journal of American Culture*, 28, 3. pages 273-283.
- McCaughy, M. & King, N. (1995). Rape education videos: Presenting mean women instead of dangerous men. *Teaching Sociology*, 23, pages 374-388.
- Stratton, J. (2005). *Buffy the Vampire Slayer; What being Jewish has to do with it.* *Television and New Media*, 6, 2, pages 176-199.

Video: Buffy

Guest Speaker

Week 12. April 11+ Girls/Women Redefine Destiny: Buffy the Vampire Slayer & Review

Week 13. April 18+Presentations, Critique of Melodrama

Week 14. April 25+. Presentations, Critique of Melodrama

Last Week of Semester

CHECK LISTINGS FOR FINAL EXAMINATIONS