This course will examine the role of television in American social life, including its effects on politics, economics, and human relations. We will begin by asking “What counts as television today?” and we will want to consider how today’s production, distribution, and viewing practices compare to those that defined “TV” in other eras. Using case studies of particular television series across time, we will ask how TV—as a technology, industry, and cultural form—has shaped our ideas about capitalism, race, gender, sexuality, religion, youth, age, crime, and other issues.

Required texts include *How to Watch Television, second edition*, and select readings available on the course Canvas site. In addition to readings, students will be expected to view select programs as "homework" each week. Selections will be readily available online or via streaming services, or, for those without such access, on reserve at the library.