GEND 3076 Reality TV and the Politics of Difference
Fall 2019

Take home midterm worth 30% of course grade
Grade will be assigned out of 100 points
Due in class October 8 2019

Submission format:

Be sure to put your name, year and major on the first page. Title page is optional.

Double-space, 12 point font, 1 inch / 2.54 cm margins, page numbering, staple left hand corner

You must use complete sentences in your answers (no point form allowed).

Please edit your final submission for correct grammar, sentence structure and spelling. A penalty of up to 10 points (out of a total of 100 points) will be applied to submissions containing poor grammar and / or spelling errors.

Edit for clarity, succinctness and unnecessary repetition.

Reference list is not required, but be sure that all direct quotations are placed within quotation marks with author and page number made clear in-text. For example: Ouellette (2009) claims that makeover programs “enlist friends, neighbors, and experts in their quest to teach people how to make ‘better’ fashion and decorating choices” (224).

General writing tips for all written assignments:

Direct quotations must be introduced by a signal phrase and cannot stand alone as independent sentences: As McCoy and Scarborough (2014) write, “______” (42).

Refer only to authors in-text, never article or book titles.

The period follows an in-text citation (Peters, 2018).

TV series are italicized and episode titles are placed within quotation marks.

Avoid comma splices. This is when you join two complete sentences with a comma. When editing your work, look to the left of a comma and then to the right. If you see complete sentences on both sides then you need to change the comma to a period or a semi-colon if the two sentences are strongly interrelated.

Rely on the course readings, not the online course notes (unless you are referring to something only covered in class).
PART 1: Short answer
Characteristics of Reality TV
Two questions with a value of 10 points each = 20 points

1. According to Ouellette and Murray (2009), why it is important to study reality TV and what are two characteristics that define it as a distinct genre?

2. According to Madger (2009), what are three political and economic factors that contributed to the proliferation of reality TV series on television?

PART 2: Argument identification
Four questions with a value 20 points each = 80 points

In relation to each of the articles by McCoy and Scarborough (2014), Kraszewski (2009), Fox (2013) and Ouellette (2009), and in approximately 350 words per article, summarize / identify:

1. the topic
2. main argument
3. two supporting claims
4. one key concept, with a definition.

The topic is the most general description of the subject of the article. For example, “This article is a consideration of how viewers who have high levels of cultural capital respond to television series they regard as ‘bad.’ The authors interview…”

The main argument is the most focused and concise summation of the point of the essay. Authors are typically trying to convince you of something: What is it? For example, “Kraszewski argues that Big Brother presents racism as…”

Most well developed arguments will be supported by secondary claims. These are assertions meant to support the central argument and convince you, the reader, that this is a good argument. For example, “Kraszewski provides evidence of systemic racism in MTV’s own history” or “McCoy and Scarborough find that viewers provide excuses and justifications…”

Key concepts are technical terms and ideas that go with the field of analysis. For example, political economy, inferential racism, cultural capital, neoliberalism or the entertaining real.

Each summary should be written in your own words with some quotations. Do not copy an abstract or over-rely on quotations. See notes on reverse side regarding in-text citations.

It is most important that you demonstrate that you understand the article.