

## Influential TV Shows Project

Our central question for this unit and this project is the following:

**In what way is TV both a reflection of social change  
& a source of change for society?**

You are going to **research ONE of the influential tv shows below and put together a presentation about your topic.** You will have roughly 2 weeks of class time to research, plan & build out your presentation. Presentations will happen the week after April break in class (you'll present to ½ of the class.)

### What are the topics? ([More info about the shows HERE](#))

- ***On-screen representations of (some shows fit in multiple categories)***
  - ***Race/Ethnicity*** (The Jeffersons, Fresh Off the Boat, Good Times, Fresh Prince, Oprah, The Mindy Project, Blackish, Atlanta, The Watchmen, Jane the Virgin, One Day at a Time, Euphoria, Kim's Convenience, Never Have I Ever, Ginny & Georgia, Gentefied, All American, Rutherford Falls, Swagger, etc.)
  - ***Sexuality & Gender*** (Will & Grace, Ellen, Pose, Queer Eye, Mary Tyler Moore Show, Charlie's Angels, Murphy Brown, Scandal, The Politician, Sex Education, Heartstopper, The Sex Lives of College Girls, etc.)
  - ***Social Class*** (Married With Children, Roseanne, Shameless)
  - ***Mental Health*** (BoJack Horseman, Homeland, Jessica Jones, Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, Adventure Time, Moon Knight, Fleabag, Spinning Out, Ted Lasso)
  - ***Disability*** (Atypical, The Good Doctor, Bones, Glee, Parenthood, Daredevil)
- ***Animated, adult TV*** (South Park, Family Guy, Simpsons, Rick & Morty, Steven Universe, Futurama, King of the Hill, Archer, Big Mouth)
- ***Breaking boundaries through science fiction*** (Twilight Zone, Star Trek, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, X-Files, The Walking Dead, American Horror Story, The Last of Us, etc.)
- ***Children's TV as a form of education*** (Sesame Street, Mr. Roger's Neighborhood, Bill Nye the Science Guy, The Magic School Bus)

### Project components:

- Notes (10 pts)
- Episode analysis (10 pts)
- Finished presentation (30 pts)
- Notes/feedback on classmates' projects (5 pts)

**For this project, you MUST use at least 3 sources.** Good resources for this project include Pop Culture Universe, U.S. History in Context, Television Academy Interviews, the Encyclopedia of Television, Entertainment Weekly, etc.. You SHOULD NOT be using Wikipedia as a source!

**Your slideshow** should be interesting and engaging. I'll be grading you on both visual presentation AND content. **A few tips for your slideshow:**

- **Templates:** if you're bored with the same stock options that Google Slides offers, try a free template site like SlidesMania, SlidesGo or SlidesCarnival. All have fun options that are easy to download and customize.
- **Font:** should be readable (don't sacrifice the class' ability to read it for it being pretty), a minimum of 20+ point font for notes, and be sure to choose a color that translates well to being projected (lighter colors and highlighter colors are hard to read)
- **Color/images:** if you're making a visual presentation, it should have VISUAL APPEAL. Do NOT build an all white background, image-less, text-heavy slideshow.
- **Video:** you're doing a presentation on a tv show, be sure to integrate clips (at least 1-2) from that tv show to illustrate what you're talking about.

**YOUR NOTES SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

(Some of the questions are more concrete, while the others require some thinking and analysis on your part. You may NOT wind up using all of these in the finished presentation, but they'll give you a good basis of information to get started.)

1. Details about the production/behind the scenes of the show:
  - a. What years did it air?
  - b. Were there any noteworthy cast members? AND/OR Are there any writers/producers/network that are worth mentioning?
2. What was the plot of the show? (storyline, relationships between characters, location, etc.)
3. Who was the target audience for the show? Who did the network want to watch it?
4. What did people think about the show when it was on the air? How do we know that? (Ratings? Reviews? Number of seasons?)
5. What made this show influential/significant? (Consider, was this show like any other shows at the time or was it different in some way? Explain.)
6. What was going on in America historically/culturally at the time the show aired? How did the show connect to that?
7. What can we learn about America, it's values & culture through this TV show?
8. If it's an older show, how did the show influence TV after it? (What parallels/influence can you see in today's television?) If it's still on, what effect do you think this show will have on tv moving forward?

As part of your research, you will watch at least one full episode of the show and do an episode analysis to get a better sense of what your show is about. (Let me know if you have trouble accessing an episode on YouTube, Netflix, Amazon, Disney+, Hulu, justwatch.com, Kanopy or Hoopla, or other online sources.)

***As with everything we study this year, it is critical that you CONNECT the topic to the times.***

(i.e., How is the show(s) changing with or reflective of the times? Why did people find it entertaining? What need did it serve? How was it an outgrowth of the time in which it was made?)

***Make sure your notes & the presentation itself include this analytical element.***