

**Tompkins Cortland Community College**  
**Master Course Syllabus**

**Course Discipline and Number: SOCI/ENGL 218**  
**Course Title: Smart TV**

**Year: 2023-2024**  
**Credit Hours: 3**

**Attendance Policy:** *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

**Services for Students with Disabilities:** *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

**Course Description**

The social sciences study relationships between individual perceptions and behaviors and social and historical contexts. The humanities study the multiple ways that humans create and express meaning. This cross-disciplinary course uses a critically acclaimed television series as text to explore the complexity and representation of human experience through the twin lenses of the humanities and social sciences. Prerequisite: MATH 090 if required by placement testing; prior completion or concurrent enrollment in RDNG 116 if required by placement testing; prior completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 101. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall semester.

**Course Context/Audience**

This course should transfer to four-year colleges as a Liberal Arts – Social Sciences or Liberal Arts – Humanities elective (depending on the course emphasis). Students in social science, criminal justice, humanities, creative writing, and communications programs may be interested in this course as an elective.

**Series Specific Description: HBO's *The Wire***

David Simon's *The Wire*, which aired on HBO for five seasons between 2002 and 2008 and has subsequently been rerun on BET, is an example of "smart television," and in this class, we will be using *The Wire* as our text in order to examine the relationships between individuals and their social and historical context, as well as how these relationships are expressed through the vision and art of David Simon. Ostensibly a crime show about the urban drug trade, *The Wire* is far more complex than this simple description. The show depicts life in modern Baltimore, MD by examining the relationships of its characters to each other and – more importantly – to larger social structures and institutions, including the police, courts, city government and politics, the public school system, the economy, unions, and the media. Over the course of its five seasons, *The Wire* illustrates the impact of these social structures and institutions (context) on the characters/residents of Baltimore (individuals), particularly their impact on the characters' actions and thoughts as they live out their lives. The show also depicts the attempts of individuals to make changes to the structure and institutions of Baltimore through their individual and collective actions and shows the challenges and difficulties they face in these endeavors.

**Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations**

**Writing:** WC College level writing skills are required. See course co-requisites or pre-requisites.  
**Math:** M2 If required, the student must have successfully completed MATH 090.

**Reading:** R3 The student should be taking RDNG 116 if needed. The course requires reading of mostly beginning college-level materials and limited higher college level materials that will also be covered in class.

### Course Goal

To use critical analysis of a selected dramatic television series to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of the complexity and representation of human experience and expression.

### Course Objectives/Topics

Objective/Topic:	% Course <sup>1</sup>
Social and historical context	25-75%
Artistic expression	25-75%
Literary and/or Social Scientific Analysis	25-75%

### General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness

CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues.</li><li>➤ gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information.</li><li>➤ reach informed conclusions and solutions.</li><li>➤ consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others.</li></ul>	<p>Smart TV series highlight various social issues. Students will be asked to develop questions around these issues and to consider both the constraints and possibilities for their resolution.</p> <p>Students will consider the viewpoint of the series' creators and writers, the viewpoints of their classmates and instructors, and be encouraged to reflect on and reconsider their own in light of the others.</p>
SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live.</li><li>➤ Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences.</li></ul>	<p>Promoting a more nuanced understanding of the complexity and representation of human experience and expression is the central goal of the course. Nearly all learning activities are designed to support its development.</p>

<sup>1</sup> The weight given to either social/historical context or artistic expression and social scientific or literary analysis will vary depending on whether the course is taught by faculty in the social sciences or the humanities.

**Instructional Methods**

Series viewing, class discussions, guest talks, collaborative learning.

**Methods of Assessment/Evaluation**

Method	% Course Grade
Viewing/response journal	10-30%
Comparison/contrast project – multiple formats (“smart” TV vs. “mainstream” TV)	0-30%
Conceptual theme maps	0-30%
Episode analysis	0-30%
Character study	0-30%
Episode scenes (written scenes and/or storyboards)	0-30%
Oral presentation	0-30%
Performance or visual art	0-30%

**Text(s)**

Series specific resources.

**Bibliography**

Series specific resources

**Other Learning Resources**

<b>Audiovisual</b> Series (The library is purchasing <i>The Wire</i> )
<b>Electronic</b> No resources specified
<b>Other</b> No resources specified