

Buffy Matters: Analyzing *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*
ASC 137. -- *******
MWF 11:45-12:45, A107

Willow: Wait! "Images of Pop Culture." This is good. They watch movies, TV shows, even commercials.
Buffy: For credit?
Willow: Heh. Isn't college cool?
(from *The Freshman*)

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Office Hours
MWF 10:30-11:30

Buffy + Vampire Slayer = Academia???

This seminar explores why the tv show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has become an academic breakout, spawning an online journal, multiple conferences, and perhaps a dozen critical books. We'll examine episodes from various angles, debating what Buffy says about feminism, what Xander says about masculinity, what Faith says about Nietzsche, and why high school is hell. You should emerge from this Seminar better able to closely analyze tv shows and discuss what they say about American cultural myths.

Texts

Course Reader, available at bookstore
Web selections – SL = "Slayage" (see below)

Useful Links

- "Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies" (www.slayage.tv)
- Summaries and transcripts of all episodes of *BtVS* (www.buffyworld.com)
- Terms used in film/tv criticism (<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/narratology/terms/index.html>)

Grading

Journal	45%	A	93-100	C+	78-79
Paper	20%	A-	90-92	C	73-77
Attendance/Participation	35%	B+	88-89	C-	70-72
		B	83-87	D+	68-69
		B-	80-82	D	60-67
				E	59 or below

Participation

Because we are a small, discussion-based Seminar, attendance and participation are a major component of your grade. Prepared students who speak often and thoughtfully earn the highest participation marks.

Writing

The format for all writing assignments is typed, double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font. One page should be approximately 250 words.

Paper

The final day of class you will submit a 3-page paper. I'll give you some topic choices later on, but this will be a critical analysis paper.

Journals

From Weeks 2-9, you will submit at the end of the class period a one page journal response to the episode and readings for that class. The structure of the journal is loose – it can be scattered, with multiple main ideas. The purpose is to get you responding to what you’ve seen/read and giving your input. **Do not just summarize** – summary can be a good starting point, but I’m more interested in what *you* think.

Plagiarism

As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is the representation of another person's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Students with Disabilities

Students who feel s/he may need an accommodation for a disability should contact me privately. Students should also know that the Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall; 292-3307) provides for students with documented disabilities.

Course Outline

Week 1 – Primer on Television Analysis, Cultural Mythology, & Buffy

“The Slayer’s Journey: Buffy Summers and the Hero’s Life”

(<http://www.atpobtv.com/existentialscoobies/fictionary/e011211A-RAT.shtml>)

WATCH: bits from “Welcome to the Hellmouth” & “Prophecy Girl”; “Surprise” & “Innocence”

Week 2 – Feminism

Read: SL3.1 - Holly Chandler – “Slaying the Patriarchy: Transfusions of the Vampire Metaphor in *BtVS*” – Paragraphs 1-28

“I’m Buffy and You’re History” – FtF – tough, but good discussn material – 35-44

WATCH: “Out of Mind, Out of Sight”

Week 3 – High School is Hell

Read: “High School is Hell” – B&P – 282-293 – great sum of bunch of myths

SL1.2 - Rhonda V. Wilcox – “There Will Never Be a ‘Very Special’ Buffy”: Buffy and the Monsters of Teen Life” – sum of some myths, mostly of teen sexuality

(see B&P p. 105)

WATCH: “The Zeppo”

Week 4 – Masculinity

Read: SL3.3-4 - Stevie Simkin - “Who died and made you John Wayne?”: Anxious Masculinity in *BtVS*

SL4.1-2 - Lorna Jowett – “New Men: ‘Playing the sensitive lad’” – read paragraphs 1-2, 30-38

WATCH: “Hush”

Week 5 – Fairy Tales

Read: SL3.1 - Alice Jenkins & Susan Stuart – “Extending Your Mind: Non-Standard Perlocutionary Acts in ‘Hush’”

“Whose Side...” FtF – Fairy tales in 3 eps, including “Hush” – 195-204

WATCH: bits from “This Year’s Girl” & “Who Are You”

Week 6 – Do You Gotta Have Faith?

Read: “Faith and Plato” – B&P – is Faith happy? Use w/ double body switching ep – 7-19

“Also Sprach Faith” B&P – 20-34 – Nietzsche and Faith – have them read selections of Nietzsche at bottom of 22-23

WATCH: “Restless”

Week 7 – Dreamtime

Read: SL2.3 - Rhonda V. Wilcox – “T. S. Eliot Comes to Television: Buffy's ‘Restless’”
Freudian Theory –

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/psychoanalysis/freud.html>

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/psychoanalysis/freud2.html>

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/psychoanalysis/freud3.html>

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/psychoanalysis/freud4.html>

WATCH: “The Body”

Week 8 – Grief

Read: http://www.bbc.co.uk/relationships/coping_with_grief/bereavement_physical.shtml

http://www.bbc.co.uk/relationships/coping_with_grief/bereavement_effectsadults.shtml

http://www.askmen.com/fashion/how_to_150/185_how_to.html?floc=comet-ewp-lk4-ce

“Passion and Action” – B&P – 160-172

WATCH: “The Gift”

Week 9 – What Would Buffy Do?

Read: “The Mythology and Magic of *BtVS*” – <http://www.atpobtv.com/existentialscoobies/fictionary/e010804A-DED.shtml>

“Existentialism in The Gift” – <http://www.atpobtv.com/existentialscoobies/fictionary/e010818A-DED.shtml>

SL3.1 - C. W. Marshall – “Aeneas the Vampire Slayer: A Roman Model for Why Giles Kills Ben”
(see B&P pp. 106-112 [Kant])

WATCH: watch bits from “Superstar” & “Storyteller”

Week 10 – Playing with Narrative

Read:

WATCH: “Once More with Feeling”