

[MC0090.S01] TV on the Internet: Private Property in the Public Eye

Spring 2007 :: Tu/Th 2:30-3:50 pm (K Hour) + M 7-10 pm (lab)
<http://tvhere.livejournal.com>

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Julie Levin Russo :: jlr@brown.edu
office hours: Tuesdays 4-5 :: 155 George St. (basement)

[course description]

Beginning from theoretical questions about the structure of media texts and their production, distribution, reception, and regulation, this course analyzes how the collision of broadcast and broadband is reshaping the media landscape. We'll explore contemporary intersections of TV and the internet, including web-based TV shows or tie-ins, political and entertainment blogging, internet fan culture, corporate web portals, and commercial and peer-to-peer online delivery.

These phenomena are examples of convergence {http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological_convergence} -- a buzzword for the trend toward combining formerly distinct media and communications channels (video, music, voice, data) into more integrated systems. These emerging multimedia networks go hand-in-hand with intensified corporate convergence in the entertainment and IT industries. But they are also associated with a breakdown in the divide between producers and consumers of entertainment, and with increased opportunities for viewer participation in and creation of the media experience. Thus, the meeting of television and the internet raises a number of complex and timely questions that we will map out in this course, such as:

- What is a medium and why is it important? How do media evolve and hybridize?
- What are the economic, legal, and social power structures shaping this changing topography? What are the challenges to existing power relations?
- How is the role of viewers and fans in entertainment being transformed? Is our labor genuinely liberating or simply reappropriated by familiar hierarchies?
- In what ways are media products private (in the sense of private property), and in what ways are they public? Compared to the spheres defined by earlier forms of mass culture, how are these boundaries in transition?

[course objectives]

This course builds a critical framework for answering the question: How is the convergence of television and the internet changing the production and consumption of media? To this end, we will engage a range of methodological tools from critical theory, cultural studies, and political economy to analyze three broad areas:

1. Texts: modes of representation, such as aesthetic, narrative and ideological conventions.
2. Reception: the social contexts and activities of audiences.
3. Production: the economic, legal, and political configuration of the media industry.

Our goal is to gain competence in using these tools to investigate the central question in its several schematic parts:

1. What are the distinctive structural and social characteristics of television and the internet?
2. In what ways is the distinction between these media forms becoming increasingly blurred?
3. What are the effects of this convergence?
4. How can we evaluate these effects and their implications for the future?

Overall, this course will promote digital media literacy, as well as general skills in critical viewing, reading, and writing that are applicable to the interpretation of any written, visual, or digital text. It is designed for students who have had some introductory exposure to media theory (there is a prerequisite of one MCM course), but no prior knowledge of the particulars of television or internet studies is assumed. Familiarity with current internet TV/video sites and cultures is a plus, but not a requirement.

In terms of more specific experience and skills, the structure and requirements of the course are devised to foster:

- understanding of critical writing as a cumulative process with several stages, from reading for questions and contradictions to formulating and communicating an argument to a clearly defined audience
- an active and collaborative learning environment, where students facilitate productive discussion with their peers and course mechanics and content are responsive to their knowledge and interests
- familiarity with the internet as a medium for interaction and creativity, both within the class and as part of a wider public

[course structure]

.readings

Students are expected to complete all readings, which are limited to approximately 5 hours/100 pages per week. Finishing the week's reading before Monday's lab is recommended. There is one required text, available at the Brown bookstore:

- Spigel, Lynn and Jan Olsson. Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition (Console-Ing Passions). Duke University Press, 2004.

All additional materials will be distributed digitally, through OCRA electronic reserves or myCourses (as noted):

{ER} = OCRA electronic reserves, <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/reserves/student/student.php?task=begin>

{MC} = myCourses, <http://mycourses.brown.edu>

{book} = Television After TV anthology

There are multiple selections assigned from several books, including:

- Lister, Martin et al. New Media: A Critical Introduction. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Palmer, Shelly. Television Disrupted: The Transition From Network to Networked TV. Focal Press, 2006.
(overview of the contemporary landscape from an industry/business perspective)
- Thorburn, David and Henry Jenkins. Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition. MIT Press, 2003.
(excellent anthology on media convergence and hybridity historically, from print on)

While these chapters will be available electronically, you may wish to own such titles if you are especially interested in the topic.

.class

Attendance at all class and lab sessions is mandatory, and participation in discussions is factored into the final grade. Grade penalties will be imposed for more than three unexcused absences.

Tuesday meetings consist of lecture on and discussion of the week's material, led by the professor. Thursday meetings are devoted to student presentations (2-3 per week), with discussions facilitated by students. Monday evening labs include some combination of screenings, web site guided tours, workshops, and informal show-and-tell.

We will be maintaining a course blog: <http://tvhere.livejournal.com>. While LiveJournal has a reputation as the self-absorbed teenager of blog platforms, it is ideal for the purposes of this course because it encompasses the most robust combination of publishing and social networking features. Unlike profile-centric social sites such as MySpace, the blog is LiveJournal's core component. But unlike standalone content frameworks such as Blogger, Wordpress, and wikis, LiveJournal is integrated with a broader community, including some of the most active elements of online TV fandom. Its architecture incorporates messageboard-style threaded comments, tagging and memories for organization, and news aggregation -- all of which we will be utilizing.

.assignments

Each student will be responsible for a final paper, a webzine article, and two seminar presentations, and will also serve as the respondent for two other presentations. There is a handout with more detailed guidelines for these assignments.

COURSE BLOG (weekly)

Students are expected to read the blog at least once a week, before Thursday's meeting. One contribution per week is required (credited as class participation), which may be in the form of:

- a comment on a fellow student's post
- a comment on professorly post seeking feedback
- a brief entry (for example a note, question, or link to a relevant article/site/video)

SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS (two, scheduled individually)

Choose an issue from your week's readings/lab to concentrate on (the professor will help allocate topics). This assignment has three parts:

1. By 10pm on Wednesday, make an informal blog entry outlining, in brief (1-2 pages), some questions, conflicts and/or connections that you're interested in addressing.
2. In class on Thursday, give an oral presentation (no more than 10 minutes) articulating your thoughts and engaging your classmates. You and your respondent will then direct a discussion about your topic.
3. One week after your class presentation (by 2:30 on Thursday), a formal write-up of your analysis (3-4 page paper) is due on the blog. The notes/presentation and the paper are weighted equally for grading.

You will be the designated respondent for someone the week before your own seminar presentation. It is the respondent's job to read the presenter's blog post carefully, and to come to Thursday's class prepared with constructive questions and observations. Sometime on Thursday (whether before or after class), the respondent must also comment on the blog post with some of their feedback.

MIDTERM PROJECT (due by 7pm on Monday, April 2)

We will be creating a portal of web-based work, with its precise form to be determined collectively by the class. Options for the project's format include articles, artworks, videos, and audio shows; organized into a webzine, a wiki, a podcast/vodcast, or another multimedia format. Each of you will select a text or activity under the umbrella of Television on the Internet to focus on (you are encouraged to choose examples not specifically covered on the syllabus, which may include: a web-related TV episode, online TV tie-in, or web series; an internet video or vlog; a TV network web site; an online video distribution platform; a TV-related blog or forum; a fan community or campaign; an advertising/marketing campaign; a legal, legislative, or regulatory debate; a popular book or article on the subject -- and if you're searching for ideas, you can explore a selection of convergence-related blogs that have been aggregated at {<http://watch-tvhere.livejournal.com/friends>}). The goal is to inform a general audience about your topic, to contextualize it in relation to larger phenomena, and to explain its importance and implications.

Although, given this structure, you don't have to reference course readings directly, the theoretical perspectives we have been studying should inform your critique.

FINAL PAPER (due by 5pm on Friday, May 18)

Revise and expand one of your three previous assignments into an 8-10 page formal term paper. You will be required to meet one-on-one with the professor during reading week to discuss your ideas. Scheduling a session with a writing fellow (before the due date!) to go over a draft is highly recommended. {http://www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Writing_Center/}

.evaluation

Overall, evaluation is based on three criteria:

- Understanding of course material
- Persuasiveness and originality of analysis
- Quality of presentation

Work is graded on a 9-point scale:

9/8 = A range

7/6 = B range

5/4 = C range

less than 4 = unsatisfactory

Grades will be weighted as follows:

18% - first seminar presentation/paper

18% - second seminar presentation/paper

18% - midterm project

27% - final paper

19% - presentation responses + class participation

[0 :: 1.25] course introduction and livejournal orientation

.readings [overview]

- Jenkins, Henry. "The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence." International Journal of Cultural Studies. Volume 7(1): (33-43) {MC}
- Spigel, Lynn. "Introduction." (1-24) {book}

[1 :: 1.29-2.01] closed circuit: this is television, your window on the world

.readings [media/spheres]

- Keenan, Thomas. "Windows: of vulnerability." The Phantom Public Sphere. Ed. Social Text Collective and Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. (121-141) {MC}
- Spigel, Lynn. "The Suburban Home Companion: Television and the Neighborhood Ideal in Post-War America." Feminist Television Criticism, a Reader. Ed. Brunson, D'Acci, and Spigel. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. (211-234) {ER}
- McCarthy, Anna. "The Rhythms of the Reception Area: Crisis, Capitalism, and the Waiting Room TV." (183-209) {book}
- Friedberg, Anne. "The Virtual Window." Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition (Media in Transition). Ed. David Thornburn and Henry Jenkins. MIT Press, 2003. (337-353) {ER}

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[TV] Burns and Allen (1950s)

[TV] Arrested Development, "The Cabin Show" (2005)

[TV] The West Wing, "The Debate" (2005)

[www] tie-in web pages {<http://pics.livejournal.com/cybororganize/gallery/00001db1>}

[2 :: 2.05-2.08] the neverending story: nonstop news and television ontology

.readings [TV studies 101]

- Feuer, Jane. "The Concept of Live Television: Ontology as Ideology." Regarding Television. Ed. E. Ann Kaplan. Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 1983. (12-22) {ER}
- Williams, Raymond. "Programming as Sequence or Flow." Television: Technology and Cultural Form. New York: Schocken Books, 1974. (86-97) {ER}
- White, Mimi. "Crossing Wavelengths: The Diegetic and Referential Imaginary of American Commercial Television." Cinema Journal. 25, No. 2 (1986): (51-64) {MC}
- Stam, Robert. "Television News and its Spectator." Regarding Television. Ed. E. Ann Kaplan. Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 1983. (23-43) -OR(TBD)- Morse, Margaret. "The News as Performance: The Image as Event." Virtualities: Television, Media Art, and Cyberculture. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998. (36-67) {ER}
- McPherson, Tara. "Reload: Liveness, Mobility and the Web." The Visual Culture Reader. Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2002. (458-70) {ER}

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[TV] MSNBC (selections from recent programming)

[www] <http://msnbc.com> (news and video)

[www] <http://daily. msnbc.com/>

[3 :: 2.12-2.15] the blogosphere is abuzz with outrage: networked news

.readings [digital media 101]

- Lister, Martin et al. "What Are New Media? / The Characteristics of New Media / Change and Continuity" and "Networks Users and Economics" (first half). New Media: A Critical Introduction. New York: Routledge, 2002. (9-44; 164-184) {ER}

- Galloway, Alexander. "Physical Media" and "Form." Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004. (29-78) {ER}
- Everett, Anna. "Double Click: The Million Woman March on Television and the Internet." (224-241) {book}

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- [TV] TVTV's *Four More Years* (1972)
- [www] Democracy {<http://getdemocracy.com>}
- [www] Current TV {<http://currenttv.com>}
- [www] political blogs (selections)

[3.5 :: 2.22 (no class Monday/Tuesday)] review + overflow

[4 :: 2.25-3.01] the exploding text: *Battlestar Galactica* gives it away

.readings [polysemy]

- Barthes, Roland. "Evaluation"; "Interpretation"; "Connotation: Against"; "Connotation: For, Even So." *S/Z*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974. (3-11) {ER}
- Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Image - Music - Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1999. (142-148) {<http://www.ubu.com/aspen/aspen5and6/threeEssays.html#barthes>}
- Dienst, Richard. "The Outbreak of Television." *Still Life in Real Time: Theory After Television*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994. (3-35) {ER}
- Fiske, John. "Moments of Television: Neither the Text nor the Audience." Seiter, Ellen et al. *Remote Control: Television, Audiences, and Cultural Power*. New York: Routledge, 1990. (56-77) {ER}
- Joyrich, Lynne. "Epistemology of the Console." *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 27, No. 3 (2001): (439-67) {MC}

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- [TV] *Battlestar Galactica* (2003-2007)
- [www] *Battlestar Galactica: The Resistance* (webisodes)
- [www] <http://scifi.com/battlestar> (video extras, videoblog, podcast, and other content)
- [text] "Sci Fi Creates 'Webisodes' to Lure Viewers to TV" (*NY Times*, Jonathan D. Glater, 5 September 2006) {MC}
- [text] "Battlestar Galactica Webisodes and The Tyranny of Digital Distance" (Tama, 12 September 2006) {<http://blogcritics.org/archives/2006/09/12/063843.php>}
- [text] "SciFi.com's Resistance Scores Big" (*SciFi*, 15 September 2006) {<http://www.scifi.com/scifiwire/index.php?category=2&id=38028>}

[event :: 3.02] "Reproducing Cult TV" panel with Mary McDonnell

[5 :: 3.05-3.08] the smallest screen: web TV as media hybrid

.readings [media in transition]

- Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 1969. (217-251) {<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>}
- Nichols, Bill. "The Work of Culture in the Age of Cybernetic Systems." Ed. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort. *The New Media Reader*. MIT Press, 2003. (627-641) {ER}
- McLuhan, Marshall. "Introduction"; "The Medium Is the Message"; "The Gadget Lover"; "Hybrid Energy"; "Media as Translators." *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (30th Anniversary). MIT Press, 1994. (3-21; 41-61) {ER}
- Hirsch, Eric. "New Technologies and Domestic Consumption." *The Television Studies Book*. London: Arnold, 1998. (158-174) {ER}

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[www] LonelyGirl15

[www] Girltrash {<http://www.ourchart.com/girltrash>}

[www] other web series and vlogs, TBD

[TV] Trek 2.0 {<http://g4tv.com/trek2.0>}

[6 :: 3.12-3.16] the exploding market: web tie-ins

.readings [postmodern economies]

- Marx, Karl. "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret" (part I, chapter 1, section 4). Capital, Vol. 1. {<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-cl/ch01.htm#S4>}
- Lister, Martin et al. "Networks Users and Economics" (second half). New Media: A Critical Introduction. New York: Routledge, 2002. (184-218) {ER}
- Ang, Ien. "In the Realm of Uncertainty: The Global Village and Capitalist Postmodernity." Living Room Wars. New York: Routledge, 1996. (162-180) {ER}
- Fiske, John. "Conclusion: The Popuar Economy." Television Culture. London: Routledge, 1987. (309-326) {ER}

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[TV] *The L Word* (episode 3x01, excerpt)

[www] <http://OurChart.com>

[audio] *As the World Turns* podcast

[www] *InTurn* {<http://www.cbs.com/originals/inturn/>}

[www] <http://greyswriters.com>

[www] <http://abc.go.com/primetime/lost/>

[www] more, TBD

[text] "TV Is Now Interactive, Minus Images, on the Web" (*NY Times*, Maria Aspan, 8 July 2006) {MC}

[course] discuss midterm project

[7 :: 3.19-3.22] on demand: the death of appointment viewing

.readings [technology/culture/form in transition]

- Caldwell, John. "Convergence Television: Aggregating Form and Repurposing Content in the Culture of Conglomeration." (41-74) {book}
- Uricchio, William. "Television's Next Generation: Technology/Interface Culture/Flow." (163-182) {book}
- Boddy, William. "Redefining the Home Screen: Technological Convergence as Trauma and Business Plan." Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition (Media in Transition). Ed. David Thornburn and Henry Jenkins. MIT Press, 2003. (191-200) {ER}
- Boddy, William. "Interactive Television and Advertising Form in Contemporary U.S. Television." (111-132) {book}
- Palmer, Shelly. "Introduction"; "The Businesses of Television"; "Disrupting Television Using Existing Network Technologies"; "Internet." Television Disrupted: The Transition From Network to Networked TV. Focal Press, 2006. (xi-51) {MC}

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[TV] Max Headroom, "Blipverts" (1987)

[info] TiVo, ReplayTV, EyeTV

[info] iTunes music store

[www] selection of online TV options (CBS's Innertube, NBC's Universal Video Player, ABC's Full Episode Player, TNT's DramaVision, MTV's Overdrive, Nick's TurboNick, etc.)

[www] <http://blogs.tvweek.com/category/daisy-whitney/>

[spring break :: 3.26-3.30]

[due :: 4.02] midterm project

[8 :: 4.02-4.05] superhighway robbery: illegal file sharing

.readings [private property vs. the public domain]

- Vaidyanathan, Siva. "Copyright and American Culture: Ideas, Expressions, and Democracy" and "The Digital Moment: The End of Copyright?" Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity. New York: NYU Press, 2003. (17-34; 149-184) {ER - ebrary}
- Palmer, Shelly. "Digital Rights Management and Copyright Laws." Television Disrupted: The Transition From Network to Networked TV. Focal Press, 2006. (119-134) {MC}
- [additional selection(s) TBD]

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[TV] *Global Frequency* (2004)

[www] <http://BitTorrent.com>

[video] Mark Pesce, "Piracy is Good? How Battlestar Galactica Killed Broadcast TV" (lecture)

[text] "Rejected TV Pilot Thrives on P2P" (*Wired*, Michael Grebb, 27 June 2005) {<http://www.wired.com/news/digi-wood/0,1412,67986,00.html>}

[text] "TV Download Sites Hit by Lawsuits" (BBC, 13 May 2005) {<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4545519.stm>}

[9 :: 4.09-4.12] I am television: this is your brain on YouTube

.readings [identifying commodities]

- Terranova, Tiziana. "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy." The Politics of Information: The Electronic Mediation of Social Change. Ed. Marc Bousquet and Katherine Willis. Alt-X Press, 2003. (99-121) {MC}
- Mullen, Megan. "Surfing Through 'TV Land': Notes Toward a Theory of 'Video Bites' and Their Function on Cable TV." *The Velvet Light Trap*. 36 (1995): (60-67) {ER}
- Dovey, Jon. "Camcorder Cults." Freakshow: First Person Media and Factual Television. London: Pluto Press, 2000. (55-77) {ER - ebrary}
- Palmer, Shelly. "Content, Storytellers, Gatekeepers, and Related Skills" and "Networked Value Propositions." Television Disrupted: The Transition From Network to Networked TV. Focal Press, 2006. (75-98) {ER}

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[TV] VHI's *Web Junk 20* {http://www.vhi.com/shows/dyn/webjunk_20/series.jhtml} and/or Bravo's *Viral Videos* {http://www.bravotv.com/Viral_Videos/}

[YT] *Nobody's Watching* (unaired pilot)

[YT] *Nobody's Watching* (webisodes)

[YT] selections of viral videos, vlogs, and officially distributed content

[text] "Thanks to YouTube Fans, 'Nobody's Watching' May Return From the Dead" (Bill Carter, NY Times, 3 July 2006) {MC}

[10 :: 4.16-4.19] believe the hype: fan-driven marketing

.readings [commodifying identities]

- Meehan, Eileen. "Why We Don't Count: The Commodity Audience." Logics of Television. Ed. Patricia Mellencamp. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990. (117-137) {ER}
- Parks, Lisa. "Flexible Microcasting: Gender, Generation, and Television-Internet Convergence." (133-156) {book}
- Sconce, Jeffrey. "What If?: Charting Television's New Textual Boundaries." (93-112) {book}
- Gripsrud, Jostein. "Broadcast Television: The Chances of its Survival in a Digital Age." (210-223) {book}
- Ovalle, Priscilla Peña. "Pocho.com: Reimaging Television on the Internet." (324-341) {book}

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[www] <http://lword.fanlib.com>

[www] <http://community.livejournal.com/mydarkestsecret>

[www] MySpace TV promotion
[text] The L Word: A Fanisode {MC}
[text] <http://synecdochic.livejournal.com/96006.html>
[text] "Rewriting the Rules of Fiction" (*The Wall Street Journal*, John Jergensen, 16 September 2006) {MC}

[11 :: 4.23-4.26] labors of love: fan production

.readings [online fan culture]

- Jenkins, Henry. [selection TBD]. *Convergence Culture*. New York University Press, 2006. {ER}
- Cumberland, Sharon. "Private Uses of Cyberspace: Women, Desire and Fan Culture." *Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition* (Media in Transition). Ed. David Thornburn and Henry Jenkins. MIT Press, 2003. (261-279) {ER}
- Critical Art Ensemble. "Utopian Plagiarism, Hypertextuality, and Electronic Cultural Production." {<http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000786print.html>}
- [additional selection(s) TBD]

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[TV] *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "Hollow Pursuits" [1990]
[www] <http://televisionwithoutpity.com>
[www] selection of fan videos and fan communities, TBD

[12 :: 4.30-5.03] we the audience: interactive reality TV

.readings [synthesis: democracy or mediocracy?]

- Fetveit, Arlid. "Reality TV in the Digital Era: A Paradox in Visual Culture?" *Reality Squared: Televisual Discourse on the Real*. Ed. James Friedman. Rutgers University Press, 2002. (119-137) {ER}
- Wilson, Pamela. "Jamming *Big Brother*: Webcasting, Audience Intervention, and Narrative Activism." *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*. Ed. Susan Murray and Laurie Ouellette. New York: New York University Press, 2004. (323-343) {ER}
- Jones, Janet M. "Show Your Real Face: A Fan Study of the UK *Big Brother* Transmissions (2000, 2001, 2002)." *New Media and Society*. 5.3 (2003): (400-21) -OR(TBD)- Andrejevic, Mark. "The Kinder, Gentler Gaze of *Big Brother*: Reality TV in the Era of Digital Capitalism." *New Media and Society*. 4:2 (2002): (251-70) {MC}
- Jenkins, Henry. "Buying Into *American Idol*: How We are Being Sold on Reality TV." *Convergence Culture*. New York University Press, 2006. (59-92) {ER}

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[TV] *American Idol*
[TV] *Big Brother*
[www] reality TV web sites

[12.5 :: 5.07 (Monday only)] course conclusion

[due :: 5.18] final paper