In recent decades, television has been dramatically transformed by new technologies, shifts in media industry structures and practices, a range of deregulatory acts, as well changing formal-aesthetic traits and representational practices. These developments in infrastructure, industry, policy, style, and representation have given rise to what is now commonly called the post-network era of television.

In this course, we will survey a variety of theories and methods used to examine the current post-network era, including approaches to new technologies and infrastructures, media industries, corporate and government policies, emergent modes of audience engagement, and formal textual practices. Among the topics to be covered during the semester include: industrial transformations and their ramifications, the impact of diverse national and international policies on creative practices, changing global patterns in the circulation of content, the ascent of “connected viewing” and the impact of the streaming ecosystem on legacy media forms, the politics of digital platforms, and shifting modes of representation emerging in conjunction with the rise of a more niche-oriented media landscape.

The course will draw on recent scholarship in the area of post-network television, including selections from We Now Interrupt This Broadcast: How Cable Transformed Television and the Internet Revolutionized It All (Amanda Lotz, 2018), Netflix Nations: The Geography of Digital Distribution (Ramon Lobato, 2019), Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling (Jason Mittell, 2015), Legitimizing Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status (Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine, 2011), YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture (Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, 2018), Connected Viewing: Selling, Streaming, and Sharing Media in the Digital Age (edited by Jennifer Holt and Kevin Sanson, 2014), Wired TV: Laboring Over an Interactive Future (edited by Denise Mann and Derek Johnson, 2014), and others.