

CALL FOR PAPERS

CFP: Television and the Family Aesthetic

An area of multiple panels for the 2014 *Film & History* Conference:

Golden Ages: Styles and Personalities, Genres and Histories

October 29-November 2, 2014

The Madison Concourse Hotel and Governor's Club

Madison, WI (USA)

DEADLINE for abstracts: June 1, 2014

AREA: Television and the Family Aesthetic

As Horace Newcomb once observed, the television aesthetic is, in part, about the family. While this is certainly true of such overt examples as "Ozzie and Harriet," "Leave it to Beaver," "Bonanza," "The Waltons," "All in the Family," and "Modern Family," it is also true of shows in which work place bonds served as surrogate. Thus, the WJM newsroom became home and family for single Mary Richards on "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," just as the precinct house became a friendly support system for the cops of "Law and Order: SUV."

This family aesthetic, which has its roots in comic strips and radio, was certainly reinforced by the 1952 National Association of Broadcasters Code, which defined television as a "family medium," and further noting that "It is the responsibility of television to bear constantly in mind that the audience is primarily a home audience, and consequently that television's relationship to viewers is that between guest and host." The question thus becomes how have nearly 70 years of television families, in their myriad forms and varieties, been portrayed to and received by its hosts?

This area invites 20-minute papers dealing with all aspects of the interrelationship between television and the family aesthetic. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Newspaper and radio roots of the "family" aesthetic in comedy and drama, such as "The Gumps" or "The Goldbergs."
- The homogenization of the early TV family images as white, suburban, and middle class.
- The family in Westerns, such as the Cartwrights of "Bonanza" and the Barclays of "The Big Valley."
- TVs single fathers, which displaced the reality of the single-female headed household with the comedy of single-dad run families such as "Bachelor Father," "My Three Sons," "The Courtship of Eddie's Father," and "Full House."
- The contentious family, from "The Honeymooners" to "All in the Family" to "Rosanne."
- The workplace as family in comedy and drama.
- The family in reality TV, from "An American Family" to "American Chopper."
- The future of the television family.

Proposals for individual papers or complete panels (three related presentations) are welcome. All proposals must include an abstract, contact information, including email for each presenter. For updates and registration information about the upcoming meeting see the Film & History website (www.filmandhistory.org).

Please email your 200-word proposal by 1 June 2014 to the area chair:

Dr. Michael Kassel
The University of Michigan-Flint
mkassel@umflint.edu