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Oct
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Announcement: Screening Blackness series continues next week

by American Studies

AMS :: ATX is a blog dedicated to representing the many activities and interests of the department of American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. Together with the department's Twitter feed, this blog exists to serve the AMS and Austin communities by acting as a hub for up-to-date information on events and opportunities at UT and beyond.





One of our favorite things to do here at AMS :: ATX is to draw your attention to some of the great events happening around UT. This week was the first installment of the Screening Blackness series called “**The Black Leading Lady: Olivia Pope and ABC’s *Scandal*.**” Nicole Martin, PhD candidate in the Department of Theater and Dance, will be screening episodes of the hit ABC series *Scandal* and leading a discussion about key topics from each episode, including race, gender, and sexuality. Nicole sent along the following description of the event, which continues **next Monday, October 20 at 12:00pm in the ISESE Gallery at the Warfield Center:**

When Scandal premiered in April 2012, ABC became the first major network to feature a



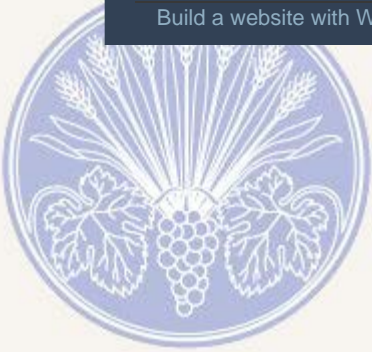
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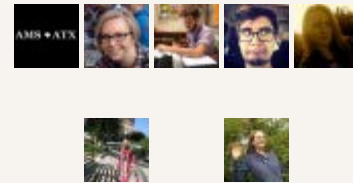
Black woman protagonist in a primetime drama in nearly forty years. The show follows Olivia Pope who, with her team of associates, manages the public relations crises of Washington D.C.'s elite while hiding her own illicit interracial affair with the President of the United States. Created by Shonda Rhimes (Grey's Anatomy, Private Practice), Scandal is one of the highest rated dramas currently on television making Olivia Pope, arguably, one of the most influential figures for contemporary Black female representation.

Week one of the series, "Desirability and Sexuality: Scripting the Black Leading Lady" focused on the construction of Olivia Pope as a black woman protagonist through the lens of sexuality. Discussion centered on the visual and embodied markers of Olivia Pope's subject position vis-à-vis elements of costuming, character interaction and narrative structure. Attending to the scriptive moments of the show revealed the series' strategic navigation of race, gender, and

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sexuality. In particular, audiences addressed the “double-reading” that occurs when observing Olivia Pope’s relationship with the President. This “doubleness” simultaneously activates a long history of sexual violence against black women’s bodies while also challenging the tropes of black womanhood that continue to dominate mainstream television.

Week 2, October 20, 2014

“Navigating Patriarchy: Black Masculinity, White Masculinity and Black Womanhood.” Watch: “A Door Marked Exit” (Season 3, Episode 10). This week will interrogate the assertion of power through character navigation of patriarchy.

Week 3, October 27, 2014

“Toward Freedom: Black Feminisms and Black Female Representation.” Watch: “The Price of a Free and Fair Election” (Season 3, Episode 18). This week will consider how to write and read for resistance in representations of black female subjectivity.

The event is sponsored by the **John L. Warfield Center For African and African American Studies**. Hope to see you there!

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