

To Boldly Go Where No History Teacher Has Gone Before

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FOR SEVERAL DECADES, teachers have utilized film, music, and other media sources to enhance the classroom experience. Some use film clips or various sounds to engage students and provide them some insight into the feelings, attitudes, or sensibilities of the historical period under investigation. Others perhaps employ them as part of a pedagogical effort to help students develop critical thinking skills.¹ While for many years, films have dominated the classroom, more recently, television has begun to attract the attention of scholars and teachers.² Shows like *The Simpsons*, *The Wire*, or *The Apprentice* have made their way into college classrooms, especially those taught by sociologists, criminologists, or business faculty.³ The discipline of history, however, has been much slower to integrate television into the classroom beyond PBS documentaries or the occasional use of shows like *Leave it to Beaver* to showcase 1950s conformity or *All in the Family* to address the upheaval of the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴ While television series like these can be helpful, they largely are limited to rather short historical periods. The science fiction series *Star Trek*, however, is one exception that can enrich the history classroom with a far wider reach.

This article will discuss how teachers can use the *Star Trek* franchise to explore American history in the post-World War II era. I will demonstrate the unique value of *Star Trek* and briefly describe how I integrate it into

my teaching of recent American history. I will also discuss in more depth a few topics—race, terrorism, gender, and AIDS—and how I weave *Star Trek* into the classroom. The article concludes with examples of in-class discussion prompts and formal writing assignments that draw on specific episodes and a *Star Trek* novel.

***Star Trek* and Science Fiction in American History**

Before discussing how *Star Trek* can be used in the classroom, I would like to make the case for its relevance and utility to teaching American history. One advantage *Star Trek* offers is that the franchise spans nearly five decades, something that no other show, including the long-running series *The Simpsons*, can claim. This allows teachers to use *Star Trek* (also known as *Star Trek: The Original Series*, and hereafter referred to as *TOS*) when examining the 1960s, and subsequent iterations of the franchise to explore the 1980s to the early 2000s. Second, science fiction shows like *Star Trek* offer a unique avenue to investigate important issues or ideas because the genre has traditionally attracted authors and artists who wish to offer social and political commentary. *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry, for example, consciously developed his series to address important issues like war, race, sex, technology, and the human condition that 1960s television largely ignored.⁵ Moreover, the *Star Trek* television franchise offers a rich library of more than 700 hour-long episodes from which to draw.⁶ Teachers can find numerous episodes, each offering its own perspective or point of view on any number of topics or historical issues.

Yet *Star Trek* is more than just an interesting television series. Aside from its five television series, a short-lived early 1970s Saturday morning cartoon, and its twelve feature films, *Star Trek* is deeply embedded in American culture. Even those who have never watched a minute of the show know who Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock are or have heard the phrase “Beam me up, Scotty.” Beyond the sheer scale and lasting power of the shows and movies, *Star Trek* has produced more than a thousand novels and comic books as well as spawned fanzines and fan-produced full-length, web-based episodes. It has been parodied by *Saturday Night Live*, *The Simpsons*, *In Living Color*, and it is a significant part of the humor in the television comedy *The Big Bang Theory*.⁷ Moreover, the passion of its fans is legendary. Since the early 1970s, *Star Trek* conventions have attracted thousands of Trekkies or Trekkers to hotel ballrooms and convention centers throughout the United States and even to locales as far away as Europe and Asia. In 2006, fans flocked to New York for a special Christie’s auction of *Star Trek* memorabilia that brought in millions of dollars, including a \$500,000 bid for a model of the starship USS *Enterprise*.⁸ For more

than a decade, the Las Vegas Hilton hosted “*Star Trek: The Experience*,” where visitors could take *Star Trek*-inspired simulated rides and dine at a wonderful re-creation of Quark’s Bar from the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* series. Finally, even academics, ranging from sociologists and physicists to religious studies scholars, have produced numerous articles, books, and dissertations scrutinizing the meaning and impact of *Star Trek*.⁹

Recognizing the potential of using *Star Trek* in the classroom, I developed an entire course at San Diego State University centered on the series as a way to engage students in American history since World War II. Entitled “*Star Trek, Culture, and History*,” the course uses *Star Trek* to examine central issues in recent U.S. history by situating the episodes in the larger historical context of the times (see Appendix A for weekly topics).¹⁰ The course, however, is not a film analysis course or simply a history of the *Star Trek* franchise. On the first day of class, I explain to students that this is a history course first and foremost and that they will be evaluated more on their understanding of the particular historical issues or topics than of how *Star Trek* handled them. After a couple of attempts, I found that the two-day-per-week, seventy-five-minute class schedule works best because it allows me to devote the first day to historical background necessary to analyze the episode we watch on the second day. The first week introduces students to the history of the *Star Trek* franchise, since most students have only some familiarity with the five series. Having taught the course three times, I have found that about two-thirds of the class had watched some *Star Trek*—in particular, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Around twenty percent admit that they had never watched a single full episode, while the remaining ten to fifteen percent consider themselves fans having watched at least three series. In order to alleviate any anxiety students may have about their knowledge of *Star Trek*, I briefly explain the nature of each series and offer an optional reading on the franchise for those who wish to learn more.¹¹

After familiarizing the class with *Star Trek*, we briefly trace the history of science fiction film and television from Frankenstein in the 1930s to 1950s atomic monster movies and the classic television hit *The Twilight Zone*. This not only helps students understand the evolution of science fiction film and television that preceded *Star Trek*, but it also demonstrates how sci-fi often reflected the concerns, anxieties, and beliefs of society at that particular moment in history. By week three, the class finally turns to the original 1960s series. I focus on five prominent themes or issues of 1960s America, namely the cold war, race, religion, gender, and the counterculture. Each week begins with a lecture tracing the history of each theme from WWII to the mid-1960s so that when students watch the episode at the next class period, they will be able to place it in its proper historical context.¹² Because *TOS* left the air in 1969 and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* did not premiere until 1987, the

first half of the course closes by examining the cold war from Nixon to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 as well as the subsequent uncertainty and chaos that marked the early post-cold war era. As a kind of break before the second half of the course and while students work on a take-home exam, I take a week to explore the relationship fans have with *Star Trek* by way of a couple of readings and the humorous documentary *Trekkies*.

The more recent *Star Trek* series take center stage in the second half of the course. Since the four series—*Star Trek: The Next Generation (TNG)*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (DS9)*, *Star Trek: Voyager (VOY)*, and *Star Trek: Enterprise (ENT)*—overlap somewhat, I examine them together as part of U.S. history from the late 1980s to the early 2000s. To help students understand historical changes since the 1960s, the class returns to most of the same themes we addressed in the first half of the course. For example, how did the nation move from racial discord of the 1960s to accepting an African-American captain on *DS9*? Lecture that week traces how race relations evolved since the late 1960s and concludes with the controversial debate on multiculturalism in the 1990s. Likewise, the class examines how the religious focus of *DS9* reflected the impact of the evangelical revival of the 1970s and 1980s. Because the four series have so much to offer, I also introduce new topics like terrorism and contemporary social issues, such as AIDS and genetic engineering. Finally, I set aside a week to explore how *Star Trek* episode storylines use the historical past, including ancient Rome, Depression-era America, and World War II. This also offers the opportunity to address historical revisionism that is the subject of the *VOY* episode, “Living Witness.”

Star Trek and Race

To better understand how this course integrates *Star Trek* into the teaching of recent U.S. history, I will discuss a few specific examples. Race is no doubt a central theme of 1960s America, so I devote a week to it. The first day of class traces changing race relations from WWII to the late 1960s (see Appendix B for selected presentation slides). We discuss the rise of the Civil Rights movement, highlighting key moments like Little Rock and important individuals like Martin Luther King, Jr. I examine the battle at Birmingham in 1963 and subsequent achievements of the movement, namely the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act. Yet when *Star Trek* premiered in 1966, the Black Power movement had already begun to inform debates about race in the United States, so the class explores the different ideologies and tactics of Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party. Students are assigned a few readings on race and television in the 1960s to help them see how television handled race.

At this point, then, students have a good sense of what America was like when *Star Trek* took to the air in 1966.

Because this is an upper-division college history course, I do not require students to complete a film/tv analysis form. However, some instructors might find these helpful in order to help student identify key scenes or dialogue.¹³ Before watching a full episode from *TOS*, I discuss how a few other episodes dealt with race—even if just briefly. For example, I mention the famous first interracial kiss on television between Captain Kirk and Lieutenant Uhura in the episode, “Plato’s Stepchildren” and the exchange between Kirk and a crewmember regarding racial bigotry in the episode, “Balance of Terror.” The wonders of YouTube often allow me to show clips of these scenes without having to change DVDs. The class then watches the episode, “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield,” which was broadcast nine months following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. This noteworthy 1969 *TOS* episode pits two hate-filled aliens with half-black and half-white faces in a violent struggle against each other. Since in Gene Roddenberry’s 23rd century, racism has been eliminated, the *Enterprise* crew struggles to understand this hatred. The two aliens, Bele and Lokai, force Captain Kirk to take them to their planet, where they learn that this hatred had completely destroyed their home world. Despite this discovery, they both transport down to their dead planet to carry on their lethal and pointless conflict, while Kirk explains to the only black crewmember, Uhura, that this is the cost of hatred.

Following the show, students discuss how this episode dealt with race and the message *Star Trek* writers seemingly attempted to promote (see Appendix C for discussion questions). We explore the dialogue as well as key scenes that clue the viewer to the larger message. For example, in one scene, Lokai preaches a more militant view of his situation to younger *Enterprise* crewmembers, which clearly mirrored the more radical rhetoric of black power advocates in the late 1960s. In another scene, Bele chases Lokai around the ship as viewers see brief cutaways to real black and white images of burning buildings and chaos quite reminiscent of the 1965 Watts Riots. No doubt, the scene most students mention is a meeting of Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, and Bele in which Captain Kirk attempts to understand the dispute between the two visitors, since, to Kirk and Spock, the two look quite similar:

Kirk: You’re black on one side and white on the other.

Bele: I am black on the right side.

Kirk: I fail to see the significant difference.

Bele: Lokai is white on the right side. All of his people are white on the right side.

While a less than subtle attempt to challenge the absurd use of skin color to denote social difference and justify oppression, *Star Trek*, in a disarming and indirect manner, encourages viewers to question society's cultural assumptions. Moreover, by placing such controversial issues in the future in the far reaches of space, Roddenberry was able to escape network censors' efforts to silence his critique of American society.

Star Trek and Terrorism

Despite the campy nature of *TOS*, with its foam rocks and its preachy dialogue that provokes more than one chuckle in class, students do see how the series often reflected the values and ideas of the times. When the franchise was relaunched in 1987 with *The Next Generation*, *Star Trek's* production levels improved greatly and its story lines were more sophisticated and complex. Absent the fear of network censors, writers felt free to tackle more controversial topics, ranging from sexuality and AIDS to terrorism and politics. *Star Trek* is particularly good at tracing the complexity of terrorism in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. I begin this topic by reviewing the history of terrorism from the growing prominence of terrorism in the 1960s and early 1970s, both at home and abroad. We talk about the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts that captured the world's attention at the 1972 Munich Olympics as well as domestic terrorism best exemplified by the Weather Underground. In the 1980s, international terrorism had touched the nation directly with the 1983 bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut and the downing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988. By the mid-1990s, Americans began to experience firsthand the threat of terrorism on their own soil with the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and, of course, the 2001 September 11th attacks.

After establishing the historical context, I briefly explore several episodes, beginning with *TNG* in the early 1990s through the post-9/11 *Enterprise* series.¹⁴ In its third season, *TNG* began to touch on terrorism, though it did not become a more prominent theme until producers began to establish the background for their next series, *Deep Space Nine*. *DS9* perhaps offered the best examination of terrorism. When *DS9* premiered in 1993, two years after Gene Roddenberry's death, producers chose to portray a darker and complex world, in contrast to *TNG's* more optimistic outlook. *DS9* depicts a sympathetic Bajoran society that had engaged in terrorism to resist Cardassian occupation of its home world. As the series proceeds, viewers learn about Bajor's tragic past through the personal struggles of Bajoran liaison Major Kira Nerys, and in doing so, encounter a more complicated examination of terrorism. At first, the Federation appears as a mere bystander that is indirectly affected by terrorism, but as

the series evolves, the Federation becomes increasingly enmeshed in the terrorist activities of other species as well as its own citizens. Clips from several episodes highlight the efforts of *Star Trek*'s creative staff to provide a complex view of terrorism that reflected the real world of the late 20th century (see Appendix D for a selection of terrorism-related episodes). Two years after 9/11, *ENT* writers devised a storyline that in many ways mirrored the Bush administration's declared war on terrorism. Captain Archer and his crew undertake a mission to thwart another attack by aliens called the Xindi, who had earlier launched an unprovoked attack against Earth. The Federation, however, takes the war to the Xindi homeland—much like the United States did to Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

While there are nearly a dozen good episodes where terrorism is a central focus, I usually use the 1990 episode, "The High Ground," from *TNG*. While delivering humanitarian aid to the Rutians, the *Enterprise*'s Dr. Crusher is taken hostage by a charismatic terrorist named Finn. As leader of the Ansata, Finn detains Crusher in order to pressure the Federation to intervene in his people's independence movement against the ruling Rutians. Finn believes that by capturing Dr. Crusher, Captain Jean-Luc Picard and the Federation will intercede in order to get her back. Deliberately drawing upon real events in Northern Ireland, *Star Trek* creators attempted to explore the complicated nature of terrorism by making Finn a sympathetic figure. While an unrepentant terrorist, Finn is also an artist who is attracted to Crusher, thus adding depth to his character. Rutia, in contrast, is portrayed as an oppressive, rigid society with leaders who willingly engage in widespread arrests of Ansatans, sometimes subjecting them to torture, in order to crush the rebellion.

As the story proceeds, viewers learn that the Rutian leader's hardened attitude toward the Ansata comes from witnessing terrorist attacks, including the bombing of a shuttle bus that killed sixty children. What makes this episode more effective is the struggle of the *Enterprise* crew to understand the use of terrorism to achieve political ends. When questioned by Crusher, Finn suggests that American revolutionary leader George Washington could be viewed as a terrorist:

Finn: This is a war for independence, and I am no better or different than your own George Washington.

Crusher: Washington was a military general, not a terrorist.

Finn: The difference between generals and terrorists is only the difference between winners and losers. If you win you are called a general, if you lose...

Crusher: You are killing innocent people!

Writers also use the android character Data to challenge Picard's rejection of terrorism as a valid vehicle to achieve freedom. While Data comments on the historical evidence of terrorism as an effective strategy, Picard responds: "Yes, it can be. But I have never subscribed to the idea that political power flows from the barrel of a gun." After Finn captures Picard, a rescue mission ends the hostage crisis, resulting in the death of Finn, who is then declared by the Rutian leader to be a martyr to the Ansatan cause.

After watching this episode, students likewise express some sympathy towards Finn even though he is a terrorist (see Appendix E for discussion questions). The ambivalence displayed in this episode, I remind the class, largely mirrored the mixed feelings that Americans had towards international terrorism during the early 1990s. Like the Federation, American leaders were reluctant to get directly involved in disputes that plagued the Middle East in the 1980s. When Commander Riker wonders why the Ansata would choose to take a Federation officer considering that their fight did not involve the Federation, Lieutenant Worf responds, "It does now." To the American public, seizure of hostages and bombing of public spaces occurred elsewhere in the world and did not directly involve the United States. Paralleling Finn's suggestion about the Federation, Americans could not seem to fathom that the presence of U.S. troops in places like Lebanon or the nation's longtime interference in the Middle East meant that they were, as Worf noted, embroiled in the fight.

***Star Trek* and Gender**

Gender is another fruitful topic for which *Star Trek* can help instructors illustrate the rather significant social and cultural changes that the United States has experienced since the 1960s. When *TOS* left the air in 1969, the feminist movement was just picking up steam and would not fully blossom until the early 1970s. Gender was one issue for which *Star Trek* did not challenge the social norms of 1960s America. Because of this and due to time constraints, I address this theme during the week when we also explore the counterculture—though I often urge students to pay attention for *Star Trek*'s handling of gender in all episodes we watch. In class, I highlight the sexism and chauvinism in *TOS*, from the short mini-skirts the women on the *Enterprise* crew wear to Captain Kirk's numerous sexual conquests of alien women. I show a few clips from the last *TOS* episode, "Turnabout Intruder," where a Starfleet female officer uses unique technology to switch bodies with Kirk. We later learn that she is jealous of Kirk for his success, which she felt she was denied. While potentially a promising episode, Roddenberry and the writers borrow sexual stereotypes to portray her—in her body and Kirk's—as overly emotional and unstable.

The advantage of addressing gender in *TOS*, even if in conjunction with the hippies, is that it helps students see the significant social change that occurred by the time the later *Star Trek* series took to the airways by the late 1980s and early 1990s. During this week, I lecture on the historical evolution of gender and sexuality in the U.S. since the late 1960s. I pay particular attention to the feminist movement, including women's liberation and more radical strands of feminism. I show numerous clips of popular 1970s television shows like *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Maude*, as well as the classic Enjoli commercial where women bring home the bacon and fry it up in a pan. Lecture ends with post-feminism and conservative backlash of 1980s and 1990s. I then address the more prominent and powerful roles women assume on the more recent series, especially *VOY*, with the first female captain, Kathryn Janeway. Yet I note that some of these prominent career women, like *TNG*'s Doctor Beverly Crusher and ship counselor Deanna Troi, seem to occupy positions that emphasize nurturing and more stereotypical women's roles.

After watching several clips that demonstrate a more complicated view of gender relations, the class views the *TNG* episode, "The Outcast." While there may be a few other episodes that focus specifically on gender, "The Outcast" explores the complicated relationship between gender and sexuality. In this case, Commander William Riker falls in love with a member of an alien race called the J'naii. The J'naii, however, have an androgynous society that officially exists without gender. The episode explores the meaning and significance of gender through interactions between Riker and the J'naii citizen Soren, as well as among the *Enterprise* crew. What complicates this episode is that Riker falls in love with Soren, who appears more female and is part of a small subset of J'naii society who recognize gender difference. Like the historical treatment of gays, J'naii leaders believe that Soren needs correcting and they use something akin to psychotherapy to cure her of this supposed aberrant behavior. This rich episode encourages students to examine societal beliefs and their own prejudices by momentarily stepping outside their own cultural environment.

***Star Trek* and AIDS**

As in the case of gender or terrorism, *Star Trek* often returns to these important themes more than once, since they often cannot be fully addressed in a single one-hour show. Every once in a while, writers and producers tackled a narrower issue like AIDS in a single episode. *ENT* confronted this sensitive issue in a 2003 episode, "Stigma," where Vulcan First Officer T'Pol contends with the loss of her position because she had

contracted Pa'nar Syndrome through a forced mind meld. To set this up, I spend a few minutes examining the history of AIDS beginning in the 1980s in order to remind students of the fear and discrimination AIDS victims encountered in the early years of this disease. Using television news clips from the 1980s helps them comprehend the reaction to AIDS, whether it was religious leaders claiming that the disease was God's retribution for being gay or a less than enlightened comedic performance by Eddie Murphy, who stated the disease could be transmitted by kissing.

In "Stigma," *Star Trek* writers liken Pa'nar Syndrome to AIDS, since one would expect that the disease had been eliminated by the 22nd century. Viewers learn that one hundred years before Spock, mind melders were an ostracized segment of Vulcan society because of what Vulcan officials claimed was their deviant behavior. Students quickly pick up on the similar language and attitudes of the Vulcan leaders that mirror contemporary views of some opponents of homosexuality. Like AIDS, Pa'nar Syndrome is transmitted through intimate acts. T'Pol, however, was a victim of a forced mind meld and thus mirrors hemophiliacs or straight people who contract the disease from those with HIV. Many students find this episode an excellent way to explore this controversial topic because it involves characters with whom they sympathize. Others, however, note that the episode would have been more powerful had writers not portrayed T'Pol as an "innocent" victim, which seems to skirt the issue of homosexuality.¹⁵

Writing Skills and Assignments

While group discussions of episodes like "Stigma" can encourage critical thinking and enliven the classroom, *Star Trek* novels can be used to further develop student writing skills. In my course, I assign David Mack's *Star Trek: A Time to Heal*, which is an allegory of the early years of the Iraq War. Mack explores Starfleet's occupation of the planet Tezwa, which is in the midst of an ongoing civil war following a devastating attack by the Klingons. The novel's storyline includes indigenous attacks on Starfleet troops, a Federation conspiracy reminiscent of the Bush administration's case for weapons of mass destruction, and characters whose personalities and actions resembled key actors in this conflict, like Vice President Richard Cheney and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Along with the novel, students read several online sources detailing the first couple of years of the Iraq War (see Appendix F for novel analysis assignment). Following the model of our classroom discussion, they write a formal analysis of the novel tying its themes, characters, and events to real events from Iraq. The more than 500 *Star Trek* novels offer instructors

numerous themes and issues relevant to recent American history, including environmentalism, religion, and technology.

Like the novel, *Star Trek* episodes can be woven into writing assignments. One of the first assignments in my class requires students to watch three *TOS* episodes that in some way deal with ambivalence toward technology. Though *Star Trek* in the 1960s showcased the technological possibilities the future offered, numerous episodes seemingly questioned humankind's reliance or dependence on technology. The assignment requires students to analyze how *Star Trek* writers reflected society's ambivalence towards technology by marshaling evidence from the show's storyline and dialogue. Not only does this assignment develop students' writing skills, it also helps prepare students for class discussions and exams. Both the midterm and final exam, for example, require students to address in detail the historical context and background of a particular theme or issue and then explain how certain episodes reflected or commented on that theme (see Appendix G for sample exam question and rubric). Since this is a history class, I remind students that demonstrating their understanding of the history is more important than showing their command of *Star Trek*. Whether it is a paper assignment, class discussion, or midterm exam, *Star Trek* offers a unique avenue to exploring major ideas, issues, events, and anxieties of post-World War II American society.

Conclusion

Clearly, no television show or feature film can fully capture a particular historical moment or issue. What *Star Trek* can do is offer teachers another way to explore the recent past and encourage critical thinking in their students. By placing these issues and events in a different time and space, *Star Trek* can help students overcome stereotypes or personal biases. They do not necessarily see gays and intolerant politicians when watching "Stigma," but instead see a sympathetic character T'Pol facing off against narrow-minded Vulcan officials. Instead of immediately accusing terrorism, they cannot help but see Finn's point of view even if they, like Picard, oppose his methods. As numerous studies have shown, encouraging or developing historical empathy in students is crucial to student learning.¹⁶ Teachers have traditionally used speeches, journals, and other primary sources to achieve this goal. *Star Trek*, I would argue, can serve the same purpose. Whether through a few brief clips or the viewing of entire episodes, bringing *Star Trek* into the classroom will let students boldly go where few have gone before.

Notes

1. Alan S. Marcus and Jeremy D. Stoddard, "Tinsel Town as Teacher: Hollywood Film in the High School Classroom," *The History Teacher* 40, no. 3 (May 2007): 303-330; Adam Woelders, "Using Film to Conduct Historical Inquiry with Middle School Students," *The History Teacher* 40, no. 3 (May 2007): 363-395; Paul B. Weinstein, "Movies as the Gateway to History: The History and Film Project," *The History Teacher* 35, no. 1 (November 2001): 27-48.

2. Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Horace Newcomb, ed., *Television: The Critical View*, seventh ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Groove Tube: Sixties Television and the Youth Rebellion* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Josh Ozersky, *Archie Bunker's America: TV in the Era of Change, 1968-1978* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003); Horace Newcomb, "Studying Television: Same Questions, Different Contexts," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 1 (Autumn 2005): 107-111; Michele Hilmes, "The Bad Object: Television in the American Academy," *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 1 (Autumn 2005): 111-117.

3. Sarah Ashworth, "TV's 'The Wire' Gets New Life in College Classrooms," National Public Radio, 15 April 2010, <<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126021569>>; Jodie A. Kreider, Meghan K. Winchell, eds., *Buffy in the Classroom: Essays on Teaching with the Vampire Slayer* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2010); "You're Fired: NIU Brings Excitement of 'The Apprentice' to the Classroom," News Release, Northern Illinois University, <<http://www.niu.edu/PubAffairs/RELEASES/2004/sept/apprentice.shtml>>; Susan P. Eisner, "Apprentice Watch: Learning Through Reality TV," <<http://phobos.ramapo.edu/~seisner/docs/Apprentice%20Watch.pdf>>; Karmen Waltonen and Denise Du Vernay, *The Simpsons in the Classroom: Embiggening the Learning Experience with the Wisdom of Springfield* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2010); Stephen J. Scanlan and Seth L. Feinberg, "The Cartoon Society: Using *The Simpsons* to Teach and Learn Sociology," *Teaching Sociology* 28, no. 2 (April 2000): 127-139.

4. For an interesting study of television and feminism in early post-World War America, see James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, Vol. 2, sixth ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2010), Ch. 14.

5. Jan Johnson-Smith, *American Science Fiction TV: Star Trek, Stargate, and Beyond* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 59. Rod Serling likewise saw *The Twilight Zone* as a vehicle for social commentary.

6. Netflix currently offers all five series both in the form of DVDs and streaming video.

7. The *Star Trek* wiki site *Memory Alpha*, has an exhaustive list of "Star Trek parodies and pop culture references," <http://en.memory-alpha.org/wiki/Star_Trek_parodies_and_pop_culture_references>.

8. See "Christie's underestimates Trekkies, pulls \$7.1 million," 7 October 2006, <http://articles.cnn.com/2006-10-07/entertainment/startrek.auction_1_cbs-paramount-television-studios-three-day-auction-christie?_s=PM:SHOWBIZ> and "Christie's 40 Years of Star Trek: The Collection," <<http://www.startrekauction.com>>.

9. For example, see Daniel Leonard Bernardi, *Star Trek and History: Race-ing Toward a White Future* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Robert Chairs and Bradley Chilton, eds., *Star Trek Visions of Law and Justice* (Dallas, TX: Adios Press, 2003); Jennifer E. Porter and Darcee L. McLaren, eds., *Star Trek and Sacred Ground:*

Explorations of Star Trek, Religion, and American Culture (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999); Lincoln Geraghty, *Living With Star Trek: American Culture and the Star Trek Universe* (London, United Kingdom: I. B. Tauris and Co., 2007).

10. A link to the course website can be found on my website, <<http://www.rohan.sdsu.edu/~jputman>>.

11. Ina Rae Park, *Star Trek* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008).

12. I will discuss a few specific examples in more detail later in this article.

13. See Karen Klebbe's adaptation of a television analysis worksheet for example: <<http://www.usd116.org/ProfDev/AHTC/lessons/Klebbe06/TVAW.pdf>>.

14. For a more detailed discussion of *Star Trek* and terrorism, see my chapter "Terrorizing Space: *Star Trek*, Terrorism, and History," in *Star Trek and History* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, forthcoming).

15. This controversy over "innocent" victims was reminiscent of public discourse following the announcement that a teenage hemophiliac Ryan White tested positive for HIV in the mid-1980s.

16. Kaya Yilmaz, "Historical Empathy and Its Implications for Classroom Practices in Schools," *The History Teacher* 40, no. 3 (May 2007): 331-337.

Appendix A

Weekly Course Topics and Corresponding *Star Trek* Episode

COMMIES AND KLINGONS: ORIGINS OF *STAR TREK*

Episode: *TOS*, “A Private Little War” (1968)

BLACK, WHITE, AND RED: *STAR TREK* AND RACE IN THE 1960S

Episode: *TOS*, “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield” (1969)

MINI-SKIRTS AND HIPPIES: *STAR TREK*, FEMINISM, AND THE COUNTERCULTURE

Episode: *TOS*, “The Way to Eden” (1969)

IS THERE A GOD?: *STAR TREK*, RELIGION, AND HUMANITY IN THE 1960S

Episode: *TOS*, “Who Mourns for Adonais?” (1967)

STAR TREK AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR

Episode: *TNG*, “The Wounded” (1991)

A BLACK CAPTAIN: *STAR TREK* AND RACE IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

Episode: *DS9*, “Far Beyond the Stars” (1998)

FUNDAMENTALISM GONE AWRY: *STAR TREK* AND RELIGION IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

Episode: *DS9*, “In the Hands of the Prophets” (1993)

SEX AND THE PERFECT WOMAN: *STAR TREK*, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

Episode: *TNG*, “The Outcast” (1992)

THE BEST GOVERNMENT IS....: *STAR TREK*, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY

Episode: *DS9*, “Past Tense, Part 1” (1995)

NAZIS AND HISTORICAL REVISIONISM: *STAR TREK* AND HISTORY

Episode: *TOS*, “Patterns of Force” (1968) and *VOY*, “Living Witness” (1998)

TERRORIZING SPACE: *STAR TREK* AND TERRORISM

Episode: *TNG*, “The High Ground” (1990)

PERFECTING HUMANS: *STAR TREK* AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES I

Episode: *VOY*, “Lineage” (2001)

A SCARLET LETTER: *STAR TREK* AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES II

Episode: *ENT*, “Stigma” (2003)

Appendix B

PowerPoint Lecture on Civil Rights, Black Power, Race, and *Star Trek*

Black, White, and Red

Star Trek and Race in the 1960s

Civil Rights Movement



- **WWII**
 - war industries increased urbanization
 - Four Freedoms
- **Cold War rhetoric**
- **Brown v. Board of Education (1954)**
 - separate is unequal
- **Little Rock (1957)**
 - federal gov't intervenes
- **Montgomery Bus Boycott**
 - rise of MLK and role of the church
 - mass movement

Civil Rights in the 60s

- *Student Nonviolent Coordinating Comm*
 - *sit-ins and entrance of youth*
- 1963
 - *Birmingham* etc.
 - *March on Washington*
 - *Kennedy assassination*
- *Liberalism and Race*
 - *Civil Rights Act of 1964*
 - *banned segregation in public places and discrimination in employment*
 - *Voting Rights Act of 1965*
 - *permitted fed. gov't to aid black voting*



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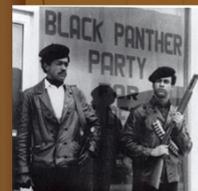


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Black Power

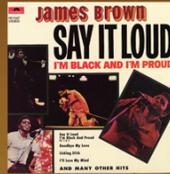
- Malcolm X
 - Nation of Islam
 - Mecca experience
- Black Power
 - sense of pride
 - amass pol and econ. power of black community
- Black Panthers
 - Seale and Newton
 - 10 point program (jobs, exemption from military service, end police brutality)



Race, Popular Culture, and Demise of Liberalism

■ Race and 1968

- MLK Assassination
- Robert Kennedy
- "I'm Black and I'm Proud"
- Olympics and Black Power



■ TV and Race

- I Spy and Bill Cosby



Star Trek and Race



■ Star Trek and Race

- Star Trek Diversity
- "The Savage Curtain" (3/69)
 - Racism doesn't exist in 23rd century
- "Balance of Terror" (12/66)
 - Challenging bigotry
- "Paradise Syndrome" (10/68)
 - Kirk and romanticizing Indians
- "Plato's Stepchildren" (11/68)
 - Interracial kiss
- "Let That Be Your Last Battlefield" (Jan. 1969)

Appendix C

“Let That Be Your Last Battlefield” Discussion Questions

What symbols or markers are used to refer to race/racism in the episode?

What do you think is the significance of the dialogue between Lokai, Sulu, Chekov, and other crewmembers?

Why does Lokai’s plea not seem to work or convince others? What beyond his words might concern the crew?

Why do you think Kirk and the crew do not favor Lokai’s position or believe that he is justified to do what he needs to do?

Do you get a sense of which side, if any, the crew and other *Enterprise* leaders favor? What might this tell us about the writers’ perspective?

What aspect of the civil rights movement does the conflict between Lokai and Bele reflect in the U.S. at this time?

Who might Kirk, Lokai, and Bele represent from the 1960s?

Why is the actual film or images of the burning of Cheron significant? What is the larger message of Cheron’s destruction?

What is the meaning of the last scene where Uhura wonders about the nature of hate? Why is using her character to do this so significant?

Appendix D

Selection of Terrorism-Related Episodes

TNG, “The High Ground” (1990)

TNG, “Ensign Ro” (1991)

DS9, “Past Prologue” (1993)

DS9, “The Maquis” (1994)

TNG, “Preemptive Strike” (1994)

DS9, “For The Cause” (1996)

ENT, “The Expanse” (2003)

Appendix E

“The High Ground” Discussion Questions

How do *Star Trek* creators handle or see terrorism in this episode?

How do writers help you see the episode as inspired by Northern Ireland? What else might have some viewers thought episode about?

What causal factor is missing from this episode that is often part of prominent terrorist activities in the Middle East and Northern Ireland?

What do you think about Riker’s position that the conflict “doesn’t involve us?” Is the Federation neutral?

What do you think about how Finn was portrayed? Why might he be sympathetic and why would the writers portray him this way?

What do you think about Finn’s comparison to George Washington?

How and why do the writers portray the Ansata government the way they do?

What is significance of Data and Picard’s conversation about terrorism?

Can Starfleet personnel understand or comprehend the meaning and nature of terrorism? What is the writer’s point on this matter?

What message does the final scene express?

Do you think viewing this episode in the early 1990s versus post-9/11 makes a difference?

Appendix F

***Star Trek* Novel Analysis Paper**

After reading *A Time to Heal* by David Mack, discuss how he uses his *Star Trek* novel to offer social commentary on the Iraq War. In other words, how is this novel an allegory on the current conflict? In formulating your answer, be sure to consider the role of the setting, events, people/characters, and plot when trying to illustrate how this novel reflects or comments on the war.

In your answer, do not just retell the story, but specifically tie events and characters in the novel to the actual Iraq War. Also, be sure to use character dialogue in addition to description of the plot and key scenes to support your argument.

Your paper should be at least 6-7 pages in length. You will be graded on content, organization, clarity of thought, and writing style, so you should proofread your work carefully.

Helpful suggestions:

To help you follow the story, I would suggest you consider keeping a character log as you read, indicating each character's position or place in the larger story.

If you feel you do not have a solid command of the nature and course of the Iraq War, you should consult the list of helpful websites located on the Transporter Page of the class website.

Allegory: The literary use of symbolic fictional figures and actions to express truths or generalizations about human existence; a form of extended metaphor in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative are equated with the meanings that lie outside the narrative itself—the underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance, and characters are often personifications of abstract ideas, such as charity, greed, or envy.

Appendix G

Sample Exam Question and Grading Rubric

When *Star Trek: The Original Series* first premiered in 1966, the United States was in the midst of profound social, cultural, and political change that significantly transformed the country. Unlike most television shows, *Star Trek*, using the unique features of science fiction, tackled many of these critical social and political issues and events.

In an essay, discuss how *Star Trek* both reflected and addressed 1) race and race relations; and 2) religion. In formulating your answer, be sure to discuss in detail the historical context and historic evolution/background of each issue. In other words, what historical factors, ideas, events, etc., of the post-World War II era shaped the nature or character of each issue at that moment in time? In addition, be sure to discuss how specific episodes (those mentioned in lecture and those episodes viewed in full during class) dealt with each issue or topic your essay examines. *Be sure to provide specific detail to support your argument.*

	<i>Accomplished</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
Historical Context	Identifies all key events and issues and offers explanation for all of them	Identifies most key events and issues and offers explanation for most of them	Identifies some key events and issues and offers explanation for some of them	Identifies few key events and issues and offers explanation for few or none of them
Supplementary <i>Star Trek</i> Episodes	Identifies all supplementary episodes and explains their significance fully	Identifies most supplementary episodes and explains their significance sufficiently	Identifies a few supplementary episodes and explains their significance partially	Identifies no supplementary episodes
Primary <i>Star Trek</i> Episode	Fully explains how primary episode relates to historical topic and identifies key scenes and dialogue	Largely explains how primary episode relates to historical topic and identifies some key scenes and dialogue	Somewhat explains how primary episode relates to historical topic but identifies few or no scenes and dialogue	Does not relate primary episode to historical topic



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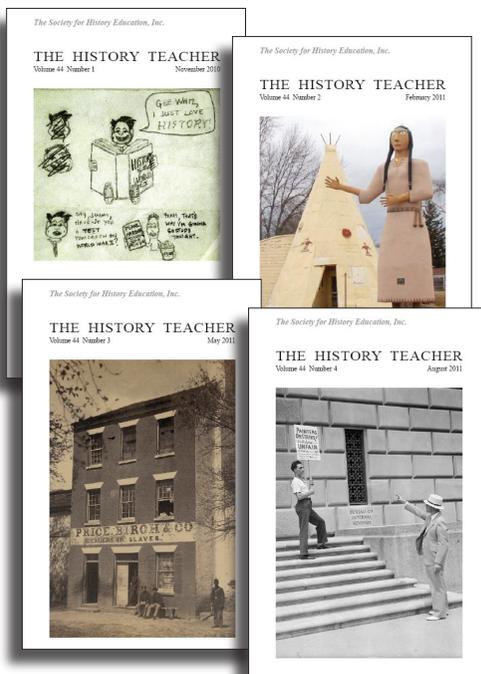
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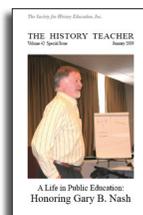
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