

the smothers brothers comedy hour

The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour: A Trailblazer in Television Comedy and Social Commentary

the smothers brothers comedy hour stands as one of the most iconic and influential variety shows in American television history. Premiering in 1967 on CBS, this groundbreaking program combined sharp political satire, musical performances, and irreverent comedy, capturing the spirit of a turbulent era. The Smothers Brothers—Tom and Dick—used their platform not only to entertain but also to challenge the status quo, making the show a cultural touchstone that resonated with viewers and left a lasting impact on comedy and television alike.

The Origins of The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour

Before diving into the show's revolutionary content, it's essential to understand who the Smothers Brothers were. Tom and Dick Smothers began their careers as a folk-comedy duo in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Their blend of musical talent, witty banter, and slapstick humor quickly earned them a dedicated following. CBS recognized their unique appeal and gave them a variety show platform that allowed them to expand their creative reach.

The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour debuted on CBS in 1967, initially framed as a lighthearted variety show featuring comedy sketches, folk music, and guest stars. However, it soon evolved into something far more provocative and socially conscious, reflecting the rapidly changing American landscape during the late 1960s.

How The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour Shaped Television Comedy

What set the Smothers Brothers apart from other variety shows of the time was their fearless approach to controversial topics. At a time when television was often cautious and sanitized, the Smothers Brothers pushed boundaries by addressing political issues such as the Vietnam War, civil rights, and government censorship.

Political Satire Meets Variety Show

The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour masterfully blended comedy and political

commentary. The show featured sharp sketches and monologues that satirized prominent political figures and policies. This approach was groundbreaking because it brought topical issues directly into American living rooms, often provoking strong reactions from network executives and government officials alike.

The show's writers included future comedy legends like Steve Martin and Rob Reiner, who contributed to the program's edgy and innovative humor. Through clever writing and fearless performance, the Smothers Brothers created a new template for comedy that embraced social relevance without sacrificing humor.

Musical Guests and Cultural Impact

Another hallmark of the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour was its impressive roster of musical guests. The show featured performances by some of the most influential artists of the 1960s, including Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, The Doors, and Jimi Hendrix. These performances were not just entertainment—they often carried powerful messages aligned with the show's social and political themes.

The inclusion of folk, rock, and protest music helped the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour become a cultural hub for the youth counterculture movement. By giving a platform to these artists, the show bridged the gap between comedy, music, and activism, creating a unique television experience that was both entertaining and thought-provoking.

The Controversies and Challenges Behind the Scenes

The bold content of the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour inevitably brought it into conflict with CBS executives and sponsors. The network frequently censored or cut segments deemed too controversial, especially those criticizing the Vietnam War or the Nixon administration. This censorship battle became a defining aspect of the show's history.

Conflicts with CBS and Censorship Issues

CBS wielded significant control over the show's content and often demanded edits or removals of politically sensitive material. The Smothers Brothers resisted these restrictions, leading to a tumultuous relationship with the network. The brothers fought for creative freedom, sometimes defying censorship orders by airing controversial segments anyway or calling out the network's interference on air.

This ongoing struggle culminated in CBS abruptly canceling the show in 1969, despite its popularity. The cancellation sparked public debate about freedom of expression and the role of television in political discourse, making the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour a symbol of resistance against corporate and governmental control.

Legacy of Resistance and Influence on Future Comedy

Though the show lasted only three seasons, its impact was profound. The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour inspired countless comedians and writers to tackle political and social issues in their work. It paved the way for later shows like Saturday Night Live and The Daily Show, which continue the tradition of combining comedy with sharp social commentary.

The brothers themselves remained active in entertainment, always known for their willingness to push boundaries and challenge authority. Their stand against censorship is often cited as a landmark moment in television history.

Why The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour Still Matters Today

In today's media landscape, where political satire and socially conscious comedy are more prevalent than ever, revisiting the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour reveals how foundational the show was to this evolution. Its fearless approach to controversial topics set a precedent that many modern comedians and writers follow.

Lessons from the Smothers Brothers' Bold Approach

For anyone interested in comedy, television production, or media studies, the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour offers valuable insights:

- **Balancing humor with message:** The show demonstrated that comedy could be a powerful vehicle for social and political commentary without losing entertainment value.
- **Standing up to censorship:** The brothers' resistance to network control highlights the importance of creative freedom in the arts.
- **Integrating diverse voices:** Their inclusion of emerging musical talents and writers showed how variety shows could be platforms for cultural change.

These lessons remain relevant for creators navigating the complexities of modern media and audience expectations.

Rediscovering Classic Episodes

For fans of classic television or those curious about the roots of modern comedy, many episodes of the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour are available through streaming services, DVD collections, and archives. Watching these shows offers a fascinating glimpse into the 1960s counterculture and the early days of political satire on TV.

Moreover, the show's blend of humor, music, and social critique continues to entertain and inspire new generations. Whether you're a comedy enthusiast, history buff, or music lover, the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour has something to offer.

The Enduring Charm of the Smothers Brothers' On-Screen Chemistry

At the heart of the show's success was the undeniable chemistry between Tom and Dick Smothers. Their playful sibling rivalry, musical interplay, and quick wit created a warm and engaging atmosphere that made the show accessible even when tackling challenging topics.

This dynamic helped the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour strike a unique tone—one that was both approachable and provocative. Their ability to blend comedy with heartfelt moments made the show not only entertaining but also relatable.

The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour remains a landmark in television history, remembered for its daring blend of comedy, music, and social commentary. Its legacy continues to influence comedians and audiences, reminding us of the power of humor to challenge, inspire, and entertain.

Frequently Asked Questions

What was 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour' about?

'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour' was a 1960s American variety show featuring musical performances, comedy sketches, and satirical commentary, known for its political and social satire.

When did 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour' originally air?

'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour' originally aired from 1967 to 1969 on CBS.

Who were the main stars of 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour'?

The main stars of the show were Tom and Dick Smothers, also known as The Smothers Brothers.

Why was 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour' controversial?

The show was controversial due to its bold political satire and criticism of the Vietnam War, which led to frequent clashes with the CBS network and eventual cancellation.

How did 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour' influence television comedy?

The show pushed boundaries in television comedy by addressing political and social issues openly, paving the way for future satirical and socially conscious comedy programs.

What role did music play in 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour'?

Music was a central element, featuring performances by contemporary artists alongside the Smothers Brothers' own musical comedy routines.

Which famous musical guests appeared on 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour'?

Notable musical guests included The Beatles, Joan Baez, The Doors, Pete Seeger, and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.

Why was 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour' canceled?

The show was canceled by CBS in 1969 due to ongoing conflicts over its controversial content and censorship issues.

Did 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour' win any awards?

Yes, the show won several Emmy Awards, including Outstanding Writing and Outstanding Variety Series.

Has 'The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour' been influential in modern comedy?

Yes, it is considered a groundbreaking show that influenced later comedians and variety shows by combining humor with political and social commentary.

Additional Resources

The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour: A Pioneering Force in Television Satire

the smothers brothers comedy hour stands as a landmark television program that redefined the boundaries of American variety shows during the tumultuous late 1960s. Airing from 1967 to 1969 on CBS, the series combined musical performances, sketch comedy, and political satire in a way that challenged the status quo of network television. Known for its sharp wit, edgy content, and a willingness to confront controversial social issues, The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour left an indelible mark on television history and popular culture.

Historical Context and Genesis of The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour

Before the show's debut, Tom and Dick Smothers had already established themselves as successful folk-comedy performers. Their blend of music and humor made them a natural fit for television variety formats. However, The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour distinguished itself from contemporaries by embracing a countercultural ethos during an era marked by the Vietnam War, civil rights struggles, and widespread generational conflict.

CBS executives initially envisioned the program as a lighthearted, family-friendly variety show. Yet, as the Smothers Brothers gained creative control, the content evolved into a platform for political commentary and social criticism. This shift would eventually lead to significant clashes with network censors and executives, reflecting broader tensions between entertainment and free expression during the period.

Innovative Format and Unique Features

The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour blended traditional variety show elements with provocative satire and musical performances from prominent artists. Unlike typical variety shows, which focused primarily on entertainment without addressing contentious issues, this program used humor as a vehicle for critique.

Comedy and Political Satire

The show's sketches frequently parodied politicians, government policies, and societal norms. The Smothers Brothers themselves played off their "straight man and zany brother" dynamic, providing a comedic framework for more serious undertones. The humor was often surreal and absurdist, yet it effectively highlighted the contradictions and hypocrisies of the era. The program's willingness to tackle taboo subjects made it a unique voice during a time when television was generally cautious about political content.

Musical Guests and Cultural Impact

The series featured an impressive lineup of musical guests who were influential in the counterculture movement, including Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, The Doors, and Jimi Hendrix. These performances not only enhanced the show's appeal but also aligned it with the burgeoning youth culture. The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour became a conduit for introducing socially conscious music to a broader audience, blending entertainment with activism.

Censorship Battles and Network Controversies

One of the most defining aspects of The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour was its ongoing struggle with CBS censorship. The network frequently demanded edits or outright removal of segments that criticized the Vietnam War, government officials, or addressed civil rights issues. These battles highlighted the tension between artistic freedom and corporate control in television production.

Notable Incidents

- **Political Sketches:** Several politically charged sketches were cut or altered by CBS, prompting public debates about censorship and free speech.

- **Guest Appearances:** Performances by controversial musicians such as Pete Seeger were censored due to their political affiliations.
- **Cancellation:** The show's mounting conflicts with CBS executives culminated in its cancellation in 1969, despite strong ratings and critical acclaim.

These censorship issues underscored the limitations imposed on television as a mass medium and the challenges faced by creators attempting to push artistic and cultural boundaries.

The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour's Legacy and Influence

Though its run was relatively brief, The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour had a lasting influence on television comedy and political satire. Its pioneering approach paved the way for later programs that combined humor with pointed social commentary.

Impact on Television and Comedy

The show's influence is evident in successors like Saturday Night Live, The Daily Show, and other late-night programs that use satire to engage with current events. By demonstrating that audiences were receptive to politically charged humor, The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour helped expand the scope of what television comedy could address.

Cultural Resonance

Beyond television, the program resonated with the broader cultural shifts of the late 1960s, reflecting and amplifying the voices of a generation questioning authority and advocating for change. Its blend of music, comedy, and activism captured the spirit of the era and contributed to the evolving relationship between media and social movements.

Comparative Analysis: The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour vs. Contemporary Variety Shows

When compared to contemporaneous programs like The Ed Sullivan Show or The Carol Burnett Show, The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour was markedly more

daring and politically engaged. While other variety shows tended to sidestep controversial topics to appeal to mass audiences, The Smothers Brothers embraced controversy as a means of relevance and artistic expression.

- **Content Boldness:** The Smothers Brothers tackled issues such as war protests and civil rights, whereas many variety shows remained apolitical.
- **Audience Engagement:** The show cultivated a younger, more politically conscious viewership, contrasting with the family-oriented audiences of other programs.
- **Creative Freedom:** While other shows adhered strictly to network guidelines, The Smothers Brothers pushed against censorship, even at the risk of cancellation.

This comparative stance highlights how the program was ahead of its time in blending entertainment with activism.

Technical and Production Elements

Produced in a multi-camera studio setting, The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour incorporated live performances and taped segments, maximizing its variety format. The production quality was typical of late 1960s television, but the creative team's innovative use of editing and staging enhanced the show's comedic and musical impact.

The on-air chemistry between Tom and Dick Smothers contributed significantly to the program's success. Their timing, interplay, and rapport created a natural flow that balanced humor with more serious themes. The show also benefited from a talented writing staff that included future comedy luminaries who would carry forward its legacy.

The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour remains a seminal example of television's potential to challenge cultural norms and influence public discourse. Its bold approach to satire and social commentary, combined with memorable performances and a distinctive comedic style, continue to be studied and appreciated by scholars, comedians, and audiences interested in the evolution of television entertainment.

[The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour](#)

the smothers brothers comedy hour: *Groove Tube* Aniko Bodroghkozy, 2001-02-08 Television

of the 60s and its attempts to deal with youth culture.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour , 1967

the smothers brothers comedy hour: The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour , 1967

the smothers brothers comedy hour: You Can't Air That David S. Silverman, 2007-10-24 In this illuminating book, David S. Silverman assesses four controversial television programs from the perspective of media history, assessing the censorship present at all four networks and the political and intellectual inertia it produces in broadcast television. Beginning with The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour in the sixties, the author also examines The Richard Pryor Show, TV Nation, and Politically Incorrect. Drawing on firsthand accounts by the writers, producers, and performers of these programs, Silverman offers an unbiased view of the ways in which censorship, sponsor intimidation, regulation, and network tampering force all American broadcasters to manipulate creative talent and stifle genuine controversy. Shedding new light on the prevalence of censorship in broadcast television, this book reinvigorates the subject of free speech in American society.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: Ein Tribut an Steve Martin Lisa Frey, 2022-11-24

Stephen Glenn Martin, geboren am 14. August 1945, ist ein amerikanischer Schauspieler, Komiker, Autor, Produzent und Musiker. Er hat fünf Grammy Awards und einen Primetime Emmy Award gewonnen und wurde 2013 mit einem Ehren-Oscar ausgezeichnet. Außerdem wurde er 2016 für zwei Tony Awards für sein Musical Bright Star nominiert. Neben vielen anderen Auszeichnungen wurde er mit dem Mark Twain Prize for American Humor, den Kennedy Center Honors und einem AFI Life Achievement Award geehrt. Im Jahr 2004 wurde Martin von Comedy Central auf den sechsten Platz einer Liste der 100 größten Stand-up-Comics gesetzt. The Guardian nannte ihn einen der besten Schauspieler, die nie eine Oscar-Nominierung erhalten haben.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: Outrageous Kliph Nesteroff, 2023-11-28 From the preeminent historian of comedy, an expansive history of show business and the battles over culture that have echoed through the decades and changed the United States "Outrageous is required reading. An essential book of the social history of the United States—with laughs." (Steve Martin) There is a common belief that we live in unprecedented times, that nobody got offended in the past, that people are simply too sensitive today, that racism and sexism were once widely accepted without objection. The truth is precisely the opposite. With every step of our cultural history, minorities have pushed back against racist portrayals, women have fought for respect, and people have sought to change the world of entertainment and beyond through a combination of censorship, advocacy, or protest. Likewise, opposing forces have sought to sway public opinion and shape culture through violence and political and economic pressure. Kliph Nesteroff, author of *The Comedians* and *We Had a Little Real Estate Problem*, presents a deep dive into the history of show business and illustrates both how our world has changed and how the fierce battlegrounds of today are reflected in our past. *Outrageous* is a crucial and timeless book filled with surprising details, remarkable anecdotes, and unforgettable characters, including figures we think we know, such as Mae West, Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, and Stan Laurel (who tried to bury his wife alive but still wasn't "cancelled"), and others readers may never have heard of.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: 100 Entertainers Who Changed America Robert C. Sickels, 2013-08-08 This fascinating and thought-provoking read challenges readers to consider entertainers and entertainment in new ways, and highlights figures from outside the worlds of film, television, and music as influential pop stars. Comprising approximately 100 entries from more than 50 contributors from a variety of fields, this book covers a wide historical swath of entertainment figures chosen primarily for their lasting influence on American popular culture, not their popularity. The result is a unique collection that spotlights a vastly different array of figures than would normally be included in a collection of this nature—and appeals to readers ranging from high school students to professionals researching specific entertainers. Each subject individual's influence on popular culture is analyzed from the context of his or her time to the present in a lively and engaging way and through a variety of intellectual approaches. Many entries examine commonly discussed figures' influence on popular culture in ways not normally seen—for example, the

widespread appeal of Woody Allen's essay collections to other comedians; or the effect of cinematic adaptations of Tennessee Williams' plays in breaking down Hollywood censorship.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: *Satire & The State* Matt Fotis, 2020-03-31 *Satire & The State* focuses on performance-based satire, most often seen in sketch comedy, from 1960 to the present, and explores how sketch comedy has shaped the way Americans view the president and themselves. Numerous sketch comedy portrayals of presidents that have seeped into the American consciousness – Chevy Chase's Gerald Ford, Dana Carvey's George H.W. Bush, and Will Ferrell's George W. Bush all worked to shape the actual politician's public persona. The book analyzes these sketches and many others, illustrating how comedy is at the heart of the health and function of American democracy. At its best, satire aimed at the presidency can work as a populist check on executive power, becoming one of the most important weapons for everyday Americans against tyranny and political corruption. At its worst, satire can reflect and promote racism, misogyny, and homophobia in America. Written for students of Theatre, Performance, Political Science, and Media Studies courses, as well as readers with an interest in political comedy, *Satire & The State* offers a deeper understanding of the relationship between comedy and the presidency, and the ways in which satire becomes a window into the culture, principles, and beliefs of a country.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: *Inside Comedy* David Steinberg, 2023-06-06 David Steinberg's name has been synonymous with comedy for decades. The Canadian-born comedian, producer, writer, director, and author has been called a comic institution himself by the New York Times. He appeared on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* 140 times (second only to Bob Hope), and directed episodes of popular television sitcoms, including *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Seinfeld*, *Friends*, *Mad About You*, *The Golden Girls*, and *Designing Women*. From 2012-2015, Steinberg hosted the comedy documentary series *Inside Comedy*, which featured such comedy greats as Billy Crystal, Chris Rock, and Gary Shandling. In this entertaining history of comedy, Steinberg shares insightful memories of his journey through his career and takes the reader behind the curtain of the comedy scene of the last half-century. Steinberg shares amusing and often hilarious stories and anecdotes from some of the most legendary comedians in the industry—from Groucho Marx, Carol Burnett, Mel Brooks, and Richard Pryor to Lily Tomlin, Robin Williams, Jerry Seinfeld, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, and Tina Fey. *Inside Comedy* presents in-depth portraits of some of the most talented and revered comedians in the world of comedy today.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: *The Revolution Wasn't Televised* Lynn Spigel, Michael Curtin, 2013-10-08 Caricatures of sixties television--called a vast wasteland by the FCC president in the early sixties--continue to dominate our perceptions of the era and cloud popular understanding of the relationship between pop culture and larger social forces. Opposed to these conceptions, *The Revolution Wasn't Televised* explores the ways in which prime-time television was centrally involved in the social conflicts of the 1960s. It was then that television became a ubiquitous element in American homes. The contributors in this volume argue that due to TV's constant presence in everyday life, it became the object of intense debates over childraising, education, racism, gender, technology, politics, violence, and Vietnam. These essays explore the minutia of TV in relation to the macro-structure of sixties politics and society, attempting to understand the struggles that took place over representation the nation's most popular communications media during the 1960s.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: *Norman Lear* Tripp Whetsell, 2024-11-12 An in-depth telling of the Norman Lear's seven-decade career that Publishers Weekly calls a lovingly detailed portrait and a fitting tribute to a consequential figure in television history" and Booklist praises as an extensive and comprehensive look at a comedic legend. Beginning in the 1970s, writer and producer Norman Lear forever altered the television landscape with such groundbreaking situation comedies as *All in the Family*, *Maude*, *Good Times*, *Sanford and Son*, *The Jeffersons*, and *One Day at a Time*. For over half a century his body of work boldly tackled race, class, sexuality, politics, and religion—topics previously considered too taboo to be the subject of comedy on the small screen. *Norman Lear: His Life and Times* is the unforgettable story of an extraordinary seven-decade career.

Veteran author and entertainment journalist Tripp Whetsell offers an intimate portrait of Lear that is the product of years of research and numerous interviews. Whetsell shows how Lear created the gold standard for television comedies, producing shows that were the first to give underrepresented members of society an authentic prime-time voice, while encouraging audiences to confront their own humanity and shortcomings. In the process, he explores one of television's most transformative periods, detailing Lear's legacy as one of its chief architects and catalysts. This affectionate and candid tribute combines show-business history with an illuminating consideration of the inner workings of "the man in the white hat"—a figure who singlehandedly redefined an entire medium by reflecting the world around him.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: Tragedy Plus Time Philip Scepanski, 2021-04-06

Following the most solemn moments in recent American history, comedians have tested the limits of how soon is "too soon" to joke about tragedy. Comics confront the horrifying events and shocking moments that capture national attention and probe the acceptable, or "sayable," boundaries of expression that shape our cultural memory. In *Tragedy Plus Time*, Philip Scepanski examines the role of humor, particularly televised comedy, in constructing and policing group identity and memory in the wake of large-scale events. *Tragedy Plus Time* is the first comprehensive work to investigate tragedy-driven comedy in the aftermaths of such traumas as the JFK assassination and 9/11, as well as during the administration of Donald Trump. Focusing on the mass publicization of television comedy, Scepanski considers issues of censorship and memory construction in the ways comedians negotiate emotions, politics, war, race, and Islamophobia. Amid the media frenzy and conflicting expressions of grief following a public tragedy, comedians provoke or risk controversy to grapple publicly with national traumas that all Americans are trying to understand for themselves.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: Conservative Bias Bryan H. Thrift, 2016-09-27

Conservative Bias examines one of the most notorious figures of modern American politics: Jesse Helms. Thrift shows that Helms was not merely a right-wing demagogue but rather a brilliant media mastermind who built a national movement from a little television soundstage in Raleigh.--Neil J. Young, Princeton University In this careful, thoughtful, and thoroughly researched study, Bryan Hardin Thrift provides the first comprehensive study of Jesse Helms's long career as a conservative journalist and television ideologue prior to his long tenure as a U.S. senator from North Carolina.--William A. Link, author of *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* Traces a little-known, but pivotal, phase of Helms's pre-senatorial career and explains how the future New Right leader used the power of local television broadcasts in the 1960s to forge a new ideology that moved the nation to the right.--Daniel K. Williams, author of *God's Own Party* Before Bill O'Reilly and Glenn Beck, there was Jesse Helms. From in front of a camera at WRAL-TV, Helms forged a new brand of southern conservatism long before he was a senator from North Carolina. As executive vice president of the station, Helms delivered commentaries on the evening news and directed the news and entertainment programming. He pioneered the attack on the liberal media, and his editorials were some of the first shots fired in the culture wars, criticizing the influence of immoral entertainment. Through the emerging power of the household television Helms established a blueprint and laid the foundation for the modern conservative movement. Bryan Thrift mines over 2,700 WRAL-TV Viewpoint editorials broadcast between 1960 and 1972 to offer not only a portrait of a skilled rhetorician and wordsmith but also a lens on the way the various, and at times competing, elements of modern American conservatism cohered into an ideology couched in the language of anti-elitism and traditional values. Decades prior to the invention of the blog, Helms corresponded with his viewers to select, refine, and sharpen his political message until he had reworked southern traditionalism into a national conservative movement. The realignment of southern Democrats into the Republican Party was not easy or inevitable, and by examining Helms's oft-forgotten journalism career, Thrift shows how delicately and deliberately this transition had to be cultivated. Bryan Hardin Thrift teaches history at Johnston Community College.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: Satire TV Jonathan Gray, Jeffrey P. Jones, Ethan

Thompson, 2009-04-01 A fascinating look into what happens when comedy becomes political and

politics becomes comedy Satirical TV has become mandatory viewing for citizens wishing to make sense of the bizarre contemporary state of political life. Shifts in industry economics and audience tastes have re-made television comedy, once considered a wasteland of escapist humor, into what is arguably the most popular source of political critique. From fake news and pundit shows to animated sitcoms and mash-up videos, satire has become an important avenue for processing politics in informative and entertaining ways, and satire TV is now its own thriving, viable television genre. Satire TV examines what happens when comedy becomes political, and politics become funny. A series of original essays focus on a range of programs, from The Daily Show to South Park, Da Ali G Show to The Colbert Report, The Boondocks to Saturday Night Live, Lil' Bush to Chappelle's Show, along with Internet D.I.Y. satire and essays on British and Canadian satire. They all offer insights into what today's class of satire tells us about the current state of politics, of television, of citizenship, all the while suggesting what satire adds to the political realm that news and documentaries cannot.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: A Concise Companion to Visual Culture A. Joan Saab, Aubrey Anable, Catherine Zuromskis, 2021-03-08 Provides an up-to-date overview of the present state Visual Cultural Studies, featuring new original content, topics, and methods The Wiley Blackwell Concise Companion to Visual Culture brings together original research by both established scholars and new voices in the dynamic field, exploring the history, current state, and possible future directions of visual cultural studies. Organized as a series of non-traditional keyword essays, this innovative volume engages readers with a diversity of ideas and perspectives to broaden and enrich their understanding of visual culture and its operations. This accessible, reader-friendly volume begins with a brief introduction to the history and practices of visual studies, featuring interviews and conversations with key figures such as W.J.T. Mitchell and Douglas Crimp. The majority of the text explores key concepts within a broad framework of history, ecologies, mediations, agencies, and politics while placing particular emphasis on interdisciplinarity and intersectionality. Essays cover keyword topics including Identities, Representation, Institutions, Architectures, Memes, Environment, Temporality, and many more. Offering a unique approach to the subject, this timely resource: Presents new work from a diverse group of scholars with a broad range of social, cultural, and generational perspectives Emphasizes the importance of activism and political urgency in humanities scholarship Discusses engaging objects and discourses beyond film and art, such as architecture, video games, political activism, and the nonhuman Highlights the diverse and interconnecting elements of visual culture scholarship Includes case studies and short introductions that provide context and reinforce core concepts The Wiley Blackwell Concise Companion to Visual Culture is essential reading for advanced undergraduate students, graduate students, and scholars in the fields of visual studies, art history, film studies, and media studies.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: The Columbia History of American Television Gary Edgerton, 2007-10-12 Television is a form of media without equal. It has revolutionized the way we learn about and communicate with the world and has reinvented the way we experience ourselves and others. More than just cheap entertainment, TV is an undeniable component of our culture and contains many clues to who we are, what we value, and where we might be headed in the future. Media historian Gary R. Edgerton follows the technological developments and increasing cultural relevance of TV from its prehistory (before 1947) to the Network Era (1948-1975) and the Cable Era (1976-1994). He begins with the laying of the first telegraph line in 1844, which gave rise to the idea that images and sounds could be transmitted over long distances. He then considers the remodeling of television's look and purpose during World War II; the gender, racial, and ethnic components of its early broadcasts and audiences; its transformation of postwar America; and its function in the political life of the country. He talks of the birth of prime time and cable, the influence of innovators like Sylvester Pat Weaver, Roone Arledge, and Ted Turner, as well as television's entrance into the international market, describing the ascent of such programs as Dallas and The Cosby Show, and the impact these exports have had on transmitting American culture abroad. Edgerton concludes with a discerning look at our current Digital Era (1995-present) and the new forms of instantaneous

communication that continue to change America's social, political, and economic landscape. Richly researched and engaging, Edgerton's history tracks television's growth into a convergent technology, a global industry, a social catalyst, a viable art form, and a complex and dynamic reflection of the American mind and character. It took only ten years for television to penetrate thirty-five million households, and by 1983, the average home kept their set on for more than seven hours a day. The Columbia History of American Television illuminates our complex relationship with this singular medium and provides historical and critical knowledge for understanding TV as a technology, an industry, an art form, and an institutional force.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: Communication in History Peter Urquhart, Paul Heyer, 2024-01-26 Comprehensive history of communication from antiquity to the present, comprised of essential texts of communication scholarship contextualized and supported by original material. Core or supplementary text for courses in Communication History, Media History, or Introduction to Communication courses in departments of Communication, Media, History, and Cultural Studies. New materials to this edition link communication to larger historical contexts, and increase the book's coverage of digital media, social issues, and non-Western contexts. New case studies explore the Black Press, the impact of photography on journalism, gender and civil rights discourses in the media, and the effects of algorithmic data on modern social media platforms.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: Politics and the American Television Comedy Doyle Greene, 2015-01-28 This work examines the unique and ever-changing relationship between politics and comedy through an analysis of several popular American television programs. Focusing on close readings of the work of Ernie Kovacs, Soupy Sales, and Andy Kaufman, as well as Green Acres and The Gong Show, the author provides a unique glimpse at the often subversive nature of avant-garde television comedy. The crisis in American television during the political unrest of the late 1960s is also studied, as represented by individual analyses of The Monkees, The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour, Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In, and All in the Family. The author also focuses on more contemporary American television, drawing a comparative analysis between the referential postmodernism of The Simpsons and the confrontational absurdity of South Park.

the smothers brothers comedy hour: Experimental Television, Test Films, Pilots and Trial Series, 1925 through 1995 Vincent Terrace, 2024-10-16 Test films, pilots, trial series, limited runs, summer tryouts--by whatever name, television networks have produced thousands of experimental shows that never made it into the regular line-up. Some were actually shown, but failed to gain an audience; many others never even made it on the air. This work includes more than 3,000 experimental television programs, both aired and unaired, that almost became a series. Entries include length, network, air date (if appropriate), a fact-filled plot synopsis, cast, guest stars, producer, director, writer, and music coordinator. Fully indexed.

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