Osher Online™

A program of the Osher National Resource Center
at Northwestern University School of Professional Studies

WINTER2027

Funny You Should Mention It: TV Sitcoms in the 21st Century

In this course, we will explore the evolution of the half-hour comedy, from "I Love Lucy," "All in the Family," "Soap," "The Cosby Show," and "Seinfeld" to today's meta humor, mockumentaries, cringe comedy, and sad comedies. We will examine how sitcoms changed as American culture changed and broadcast television evolved, considering shifts in writing, structure, pacing, characters, and expectations. Together, we will ask why today's funniest half-hour comedies do not always have to be funny.



Click here to view course promo video

YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Jim McKairnes



Jim McKairnes is a former CBS Television executive who writes and teaches about the history of television. He has served on the faculties of DePaul University, Temple University, and Middle Tennessee State University. He published *All in the Decade: 70 Things About 70s TV That Turned Ten Years Into a Revolution*. Drawing on decades of experience in the industry and the classroom, McKairnes offers perspectives on how television has shaped and reflected American culture.

MONDAYS, JANUARY 25 THROUGH MARCH 1

12pmPT | 1pmMT | 2pmCT | 3pmET

Each live session is 90 minutes

- Monday, January 25
- Monday, February 1
- Monday, February 8
- Monday, February 15
- Monday, February 22
- Monday, March 1

To register, please contact your local Osher Institute.