Prof. Laurie J Ouellette

Author Overview
Basic Information

• Prof. of Communication at the University of Minnesota, also affiliated with American Studies, Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies, and Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature

• Works in area of “critical media and cultural studies”

• Interests “include television studies (especially documentary and reality TV), social and political theory, consumer culture, media and citizenship, media history and feminist studies of media and culture.”

Intellectual/career development

• Early article (1997): “Reading the Talk Show: The Politics of Talk Soup”

• First book: Viewers Like You: How Public TV Failed the People (Columbia Univ. Press, 2002)
  
  • A history of public television as an institution; not just what’s on it, but how it was created and why, how it has been paid for, etc.

  • Addresses the problem of commercialism in the public sphere

  • Argues we need to go beyond “good/high culture” vs. “commercial/bad” culture dichotomy. The mistake of Public TV was that it looked down on the popular, rather than looking for alternative, more enlightening forms of the popular.
Developing Focus on Definitions of Citizenship


Reality Television & Citizenship


• 2008 *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and PostWelfare Citizenship*, with James Hay