

Your first blog entry, which you will post on the newly launched website www.NetflixStudies.com, is due before **5:00 p.m. Thursday, May 17**. Before posting your comments (which should be roughly **600 words**), you should complete the following textbook readings (listed on your syllabus for Wednesday and Thursday):

- **WEDNESDAY READING:** Cameron Lindsey, “Questioning Netflix’s Revolutionary Impact: Changes in the Business and Consumption of Television” (*The Netflix Effect*, p. 173-184)
- **THURSDAY READING:** Gerald Sim, “Individual Disruptors and Economic Gamechangers: Netflix, New Media, and Neoliberalism” (*The Netflix Effect*, p. 185-201)

Additionally, before blogging you should have listened to the first episode of the Podcast **Business Wars**, which concerns the battle between Netflix and Blockbuster. That 30-minute podcast episode — the first of eight in the “**Netflix vs. Blockbuster**” series — is entitled “**Sudden Death**,” and introduces you to some of the main players (including John Antioco and Reed Hastings) in the much-publicized wrangling between two media giants struggling for dominance in the competitive field of online entertainment. You can find that episode here (in addition to iTunes):

<https://art19.com/shows/business-wars?page=4>

Based on the information that you encountered in the above texts, write a think piece/blog that highlights some of the reasons why Netflix has succeeded while many of its competitors, most notably Blockbuster, have failed. Besides Blockbuster, which other media entities have been the main rivals for Reed Hastings and other executives at Netflix? What are the advantages that this online streaming service has over its competitors (and vice-versa), and what are some of the problems that lay ahead? Is Netflix’s business model sustainable for the foreseeable future, and what kinds of suggestions does Cameron Lindsey make if the company is to fully embrace or exploit the “democratizing” and “monetizing” potential of new media?

Why, according to Gerald Sim, might words like “democratizing” actually obscure our understanding of the transactional relationship between Netflix and its customers/subscribers? Which other expressions, appearing in many reports about Netflix’s disruption of existing production and distribution structures, does Sim single out as being problematic? In what ways has the streaming service — far from bringing about the “demise” of the television industry — developed a symbiotic, mutually beneficial relationship with older networks and cable channels? Do you believe that Netflix liberates digitally enabled audiences from older/restrictive/linear types of cultural consumption? Or do you think that such liberationist discourse is premature and short-sighted, failing to acknowledge how an abundance of “consumer niche choices” ironically contributes to the creation of neoliberal subjects for whom “democracy” is simply synonymous with the free market?

You **DO NOT** have to answer all of the above questions, but you should write in such a way as to indicate that **you have read the assigned chapters and listened to the podcast**. These questions should steer you toward a thoughtful, well-written assessment of Netflix’s triumphs and failures in recent years. Feel free to **write in a more informal/playful way** than you do for the Reading Responses, but with the understanding that there will likely be many other people (outside of class) reading your work. Strive to make your writing as error-free as possible (proofread it carefully)!