Announcer ([00:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3.21)):

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap ([00:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=10.039)):

Created by Emmy Award-winning executive producers, Greg Daniels and Michael Schur, “Parks and Recreation” was a TV sitcom. It aired on NBC for seven seasons, from 2009-2015. The series starred Amy Poehler as Leslie Knope, a perky, mid-level bureaucrat in the Parks Department of Pawnee, a fictional town in Indiana. I’m Emily Yeap.

In an homage to the show, [Dr. Holly Holladay’s](https://search.missouristate.edu/people/hollyholladay) new book, “[Parks and Recreation](https://www.wsupress.wayne.edu/books/detail/parks-and-recreation)” explores how the show evolved as a traditional network sitcom in a post-network era. Holladay, an associate professor of [media, journalism and film](https://mjf.missouristate.edu/) at Missouri State University, joins me to talk about the book.

Holly Holladay ([00:52](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=52.81)):

One of my big goals in doing the research I do is to turn a critical eye to things that are popular and have a critical look at those things to see the way that they're in a lot of ways writing the narratives and giving us an insight into what our culture is like, what some of the major trends are with media, but also as I talk about in the book, some of the sociocultural things that come to light through popular media.

“Parks and Recreation” was a television program first that was very personal to me. It began right before I started my PhD program and ended a month or two before I defended my dissertation. And so, it felt in a lot of ways, number one and in a personal way, like getting to write a love letter to a television show that was so important to me in what was a really difficult time in my life. And so, I saw this perfect opportunity to write about a show that was so special and important to me, but to write about a sitcom that is not something that we tend to place in discourses of quote unquote important television

Emily Yeap ([01:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=118.84)):

Holiday shares that the overall thesis of the book is to make an argument for why “Parks and Rec” is a television milestone.

Holly Holladay ([02:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=126.41)):

One of the things I talk about in both the introduction in the first chapter, is that we do tend to disparage, especially contemporary sitcom. And a lot of the situation comedies that have become quality are often times not on broadcast television the way “Parks and Recreation” is. They are really niche and really specific and a little bit dark, but “Parks and Recreation” is just a standard broadcast sitcom that has a lot to tell us about culture, but also makes us feel really good both for me personally and I think as I talk about in the book, that tone of optimism was something that was really important, the politics of it, which is a whole chapter. The series was contained entirely within the Barack Obama presidency from 2009 to 2015. And so, I have a chapter in the book that deals with it being sort of a perfect time capsule for how we we understand politics in the era. It was a show doing so much that is such a perfect time capsule of the era in which it aired.

Emily Yeap ([03:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=188.7)):

She offers an overview of the show.

Holly Holladay ([03:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=191.04)):

“Parks and Recreation” is a workplace comedy. We are engaging with the ins and outs of small-town government, but we're also engaging with lots of sort of interpersonal relationships and interpersonal conflicts. It's very much just a microcosm of small-town life using city government as a backdrop to sort of explore those workplace issues and interpersonal conflicts. But the heart of the show, I think is this undercurrent of optimism and thinking about how things change and how we can look toward the future. And Michael Schur, the creator of the show, really put that piece in there on purpose.

Emily Yeap ([03:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=231.07)):

What does Holladay want readers to get from her book?

Holly Holladay ([03:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=234.23)):

I am arguing that “Parks and Recreation” is a television milestone because it is reflective of this particular moment in American history, in part media related. So we're thinking about the move from traditional broadcast and cable to streaming and to all of these niche platforms and “Parks and Rec” is still a broadcast sitcom aiming to generate the highest number, most heterogeneous audience, which is inherent in the term broadcast. And so, it has all of these challenges that it has to deal with in the changing television landscape, in the changing media landscape.

One of the chapters is about fandom and participatory culture and the way that we move from the television show itself to online digital spaces to share our fandom, whether that is through memes or gif sets or fan fiction or simply engaging in discussions with other fans. And so, thinking about the media piece, but also thinking about the sociocultural piece. Ultimately, what I'm arguing is, for “Parks and Recreation's” inclusion in the pantheon of television series that should be considered milestones.

Emily Yeap ([05:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=306.16)):

Holladay’s new book is available for purchase online at Wayne State University Press. I'm Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Announcer ([05:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/3DKaih0peqxUfz0cGQksTGWPV8AfTJJaJut8cfEwLtghVVPuMegsc4BJZ_V_mQGKz7Khfd56MXeSBKWLwj4-CfutjGg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=315.2)):

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