Abstract

This thesis focuses on the history of talk show in USA with emphasis on its specific form, which is late-night talk show. The first chapter focuses on the creation of new television networks and the overall state of american broadcasting during the first era of the television talk show format. The thesis briefly describes radio broadcasting which served not only as an important source of inspiration for television but also as a starting platform for most talk show hosts. Next chapter theoretically approaches talk show as a format and establishes some of the important aspects that a talk show should fulfill. This chapter is followed by a historical insight into how talk show has evolved from the early fifties until the dawn of a new millennium. It is separated into several time periods, each of which are characterized by particular television personalities, as well as examples of important talk shows that had a greater impact on the talk show as a format. The last chapter focuses on analyzing several late-night talk shows that are still on air. These talk shows are – Late Show with David Letterman, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson, Late Night with Jimmy Fallon and Chelsea Lately. Each talk show host is briefly introduced, followed up by a detailed description of what happens during the whole show. The analysis also covers information about whether the show can be called a talk show, based on the formal definitions introduced in the beginning of this thesis.