Title Sequences play a vital yet independent role in television shows. They are in an eternal limbo compared to the full framework of a television show's production. This is due to their creation being separate from that of the television show itself. Title sequences are used to inform the audience of the show what they are about to see. The most successful title sequences are those which are made with meticulous construction through the theoretical knowledge of semiotics and its relationship to text and image. The most prominent title sequences capture the attention of the audience, making the title sequence just as entertaining or important as the episode it is introducing. It allows a neutral common ground for viewers and fans to instantly interact. Title sequences offer, for the most part, a simple entry point into a separate or further interpretation of the show.

In the book, *Semiotics and Title Sequences: Text-Image Composites in Motion Graphics*, by Michael Betancourt, there are three main modes of theoretically, through semiotics, understanding and creating title sequences. The first and most simplistic mode is the Figure-Ground Mode, which can be understood as the text (figure) and the image (ground) as two completely autonomous elements on a title card. With the imagery falling to the background and the text in the foreground, these two elements are meant to not connect in a direct way. The image and text both progress throughout the title sequence without concern for one another. This attribute makes this mode the most disruptive between the text and image, with clear demarcations of the separations. The imagery depicted in this mode is frequently tangential to the overall meaning of the show, which allows for further interpretation. Type is commonly superimposed on the image and becomes unobtrusive through its placement in type holes. A type hole is an unoccupied or negative space found in the imagery, furthering its role as a non-signifying element to the rest of the show itself. The figure-ground mode is known to feature the common visual structure of montages, which create a sense of rhythmic timing.

An example of the figure-ground mode is the television title sequence for the History Channel television show, *Vikings*, created by Art Director, Audrey Davis, from the studio, The Mill. This title sequence is an aesthetic intro that is a separate entity with an indirect role of introducing each episode. The title sequence takes on its own interpretation of the television shows themes and brings in its own footage. No images of actual characters or cut scenes from the show are actually in the title sequence. The intro contains imagery that shows the *Vikings* close connection to water and violence through a montage of these brief flashes of images which symbolizes life flashing before your eyes. There are dramatic shots of boats sailing from below, weapons falling in the water, and water crashing. These all work together to show a separate interpretation of the show itself. It only adds to the overall understanding of the show to those who watch it. Also in the title sequence are the names of the main actors. The type has no interpretive meaning beyond the function of giving the actors credit. The text in unobtrusive to the imagery behind it to the point where the type becomes background and the image is the main focus.

The second mode of television title sequences is the Calligram Mode. This mode fully integrates the elements of type and image. The viewer reads the text and sees the image together in a single shot, which are entirely dependent and related elements. This mode shows the clear relationship between text and image. The clear connections in the calligram mode make the meaning simple to understand, where type and image work together to mutually reinforce one another. The two elements are linked together through the acts of telling and showing. Although this mode is the easiest to understand, both acts are completely different, so the viewer understands the elements of text and image separately through reading and seeing but are understood as dependent elements after seeing both together.

An example of the Calligram Mode is the title sequence of the television show, *Full House*. In this title sequence, all the main characters are given their own 3-second section where the name of the actor is at the bottom of the screen while the imagery is showing the corresponding character. This is an interesting example because this use of the Calligram Mode takes another step to understand, because the name displayed is not the name of the character being played in the imagery, and the imagery is depicting the character and not the actor being
themselves. Each 3-second clip has the actor in character performing a (somewhat) casual activity that their character would do and ends with the character making eye contact with the camera. This helps humanize all the characters of the show so that the audience feels more connected to the family they are about to watch. Through the use of the Calligram Mode, the family on Full House has created an immediate connection to the audience and makes them feel more welcome and at home in their lives.

The third and last mode is the Rebus Mode, which is always dependent on past experiences and the established knowledge of those viewing the title sequence. This mode presents rhetorical meanings through images that are easily understood and recognized without the need for explanation. This mode can give an exclusivity in its meaning. The audience either understands the hidden knowledge presented in the title sequence and are able to engage in the rebus and the reversed references. If the meaning is not immediately understood the viewer will simply not address what was seen and it will be skipped over.

An example of the Rebus Mode is the title sequence in the American Horror Story: Coven. In this sequence, there are flashes of images that have no direct connection to the show itself. None of the clips are actual characters, but instead, imagery that depicts themes and interpretations of the show itself. There are basic rebus examples with the depictions of black cats, voodoo dolls, and ritualistic pentagrams which all make references to the magic and witchcraft seen in this season. Looking deeper there are images of a group of people in the woods all dressed up in black outfits like that of the KKK. These clips show multiple themes in the show, such as groups working together and the underlying theme of race relations. We also see images of monsters, animals, and body parts being sewn together, which eludes to the other theme of resurrection and reanimation. This title sequence uses the Rebus Mode to inform those who from past experience can understand the underlying themes of the season and interpret more of what the season means.