

# Graduate Syllabus

## *Doctor Who*

**CCSA, London Winter, 12/26/2011-1/8/2012**

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**Dr. David Lavery** is Professor of English at MTSU (1993- ). The author of one hundred and fifty published essays, chapters, and reviews, he is author / co-author / editor / co-editor of twenty three books, including *The Essential Cult Television Reader* and a textbook, *Television Art* (Blackwell) and books on *Lost* (2), *Twin Peaks*, *X-Files*, *The Sopranos* (a trilogy), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Teleparody*, *Seinfeld*, *Deadwood*, *My So-Called Life*, *Gilmore Girls*, *Heroes*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Supernatural*, TV Finales, and *Crying*. The organizer of international conferences on the Whedonverses, *Lost*, and *The Sopranos*, a founding co-editor of the journals *Slayage: The Journal of the Whedon Studies Association* and *Critical Studies in Television*, he has lectured around the world on the subject of television (Australia, Turkey, the UK, Portugal, New Zealand, Ireland, Germany) and has been a guest/source for the BBC, NPR, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *The New York Times*, *A Folha de Sao Paulo* (Brazil), *Publica* (Portugal), AP, *The Toronto Star*, *USA Today*. From 2006-2008, he taught at Brunel University in London. His website is <http://davidlavery.net>. E-mail him here: [david.lavery@gmail.com](mailto:david.lavery@gmail.com).

### **About the Course**

One of the longest running television series in the world, [Doctor Who](#) (BBC, 1963- ) chronicles the adventure of an ageless, extraterrestrial time-lord, the last of his race, who travels the universe in The TARDIS (an acronym for Time and Relative Dimensions in Space), his spaceship/time machine, which appears from the outside in the guise of a 1950s British police call box. The Doctor (we never learn his actual name) has always exhibited a profound interest in the UK, which needs frequent rescue from a wide variety of cosmic threats. A series originally intended as educational (hence the Doctor's frequent visits to moments in history and encounters with famous Brits) but also capable of scaring children for several generations, *Doctor Who* rebooted in 2005 under the control of Russell T. Davies, who, under the influence of American cult TV shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, brought the series into the 21st century and extended *Who's* global reach.

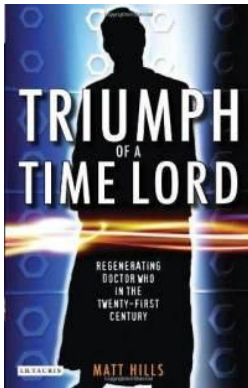
Focusing primarily on the new *Doctor Who* (2005- ), we will:

- Examine the history of *Doctor Who*.
- Track the Doctor's many reincarnations/transformations.

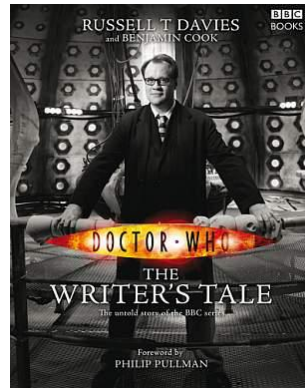
- Compare and contrast the British and American television industries.
- Compare and contrast British and American series.
- Trace cultural and media influences on the *Who* reboot.
- Compare and contrast the new *Who* under the control of its two showrunners: Davies and now Steven Moffat.
- Explore *Who*'s key themes.
- Understand the nature of the Doctor's many "companions."
- Investigate the *Who* fandom.
- Consider *Who* as science fiction television.
- Consider *Who* as an example of cult television.
- Explore *Who*'s Britishness.
- Map *Who*'s locations (visiting several settings in and around London).
- Apply the latest insights of methods like semiotics and narratology to *Doctor Who*.
- Place *Who* as an example of a "multi-platform" popular culture phenomenon.
- Consider *Who* as an international television phenomenon.

## Books

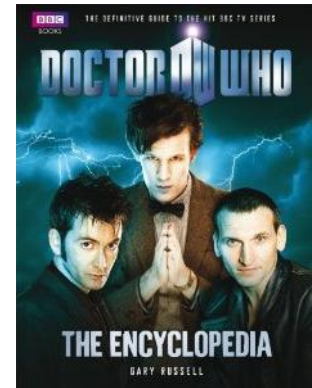
Click on each cover to order from Amazon.



Required



Required



Optional

## Course Requirements

**A Paper**—Students will write a critical/analytical essay of not less than 2000 words on a particular episode of *Who*. Due by no later than January 31, 2012 (submitted as an e-mail attachment). **Course Weight: 30%**

**Individual or Group Project / Presentation**—Graduate students will prepare one of the following. Due by no later than January 31, 2012 (submitted as an e-mail attachment). Some possibilities:

- A *Who* course syllabus
- A *Who* website
- A *Who* power point presentation
- A *Who* annotated bibliography/videography
- Another comparable *Who* project approved by me. **Course Weight: 20%**

**Summative Component**—Each class member will write a source paper of not less than 4,000 words in length. Due by no later than March 1, 2012 (submitted as an e-mail attachment). **Course Weight: 40%**

**Class Participation**—Each student's participation in the class, including leading class discussion (alone or in collaboration with another class member) of a particular *Who* episode. Will be evaluated on a scale of 1-10. **Course Weight: 10%**

## Course Policies

**Participation.** Attendance is mandatory at all class meetings and excursions, both inside and outside London. An unexcused absence will result in a letter grade reduction.

**Viewing of *Who* Episodes:** Please make every effort to watch those episodes listed on the Agenda prior to class meetings. Episodes will not be screened in class (though we will watch and discuss clips).

**Reading:** Please make every effort to read *Triumph of a Time Lord* and *A Writer's Tale* before the class begins.

**Plagiarism/Cheating:** The unacknowledged use of the words / ideas / insights / original research of another is, of course, prohibited. Should I catch you plagiarizing, or cheating in any way, you will receive a grade of "0" on the assignment in question, the violation may be reported to university authorities, and you may fail the course.

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student with a disability will be given all the rights and privileges guaranteed under the Americans with Disabilities Act if he/she (1) notifies your professor and (2) is registered with your university's disabled student services office.

**Grading Scale:** 90-100%=A | 80-89%=B | 70-79%=C | 60-69%=D | 0-59%=F.

## Agenda

| Day | Date     | Mtg | Activity   | Whos of the Day  |
|-----|----------|-----|--|--|
| M   | 12/26/11 |     | Depart for London  |  |
| Tu  | 12/27/11 |     | 400: Orientation; 530: Dinner  |  |
| W   | 12/28/11 | 1   | 900-1230: London Sightseeing (Coach 4)   | "Aliens of London"—"World War Three"                             |
| Th  | 12/29/11 | 2   | Breakfast Meeting; <a href="#">Trip to Forbidden Planet</a>  | "The Empty Child"—"The Doctor Dances"                            |
| F   | 12/30/11 | 3   | 1000-1200: Classroom Meeting; Trip to <a href="#">Alexandria Palace</a>  | "The Christmas Invasion"—"The Idiot's Lantern"                   |
| Sa  | 12/31/11 |     | 800 AM: Group Excursion to Stonehenge & Bath (Coach 3)   |  |
| Su  | 1/1/12   | 4   | Trip to Canary Wharf   | "Love & Monsters"—"Army of Ghosts"—"Doomsday"                    |
| M   | 1/2/12   | 5   | Breakfast Meeting; 300: <a href="#">The Doctor Who Experience</a>  | "Blink"—"Sound of Drums"—"Last of the Time Lords"                |
| Tu  | 1/3/12   | 6   | 100-400: Classroom Meeting—Presentation by <a href="#">Dr. Steven Peacock</a>  | "Turn Left"—"The Stolen Earth"—"Journey's End"                   |
| W   | 1/4/12   |     | Group Excursion to Cardiff (to and from Paddington Station): Out 915/1123 am; Back 725/932 pm                                |  |
| Th  | 1/5/12   | 7   | 1000: Lounge Meeting; 115: Tour of the <a href="#">BBC Television Centre</a> ; 730: <i>Wicked</i> at Apollo Victoria Theatre | "Vincent"—"The Pandorica Opens"—"The Big Bang"                   |
| F   | 1/6/12   | 8   | Breakfast Meeting  | "The Impossible Astronaut"—"Day of the Moon"—"The Doctor's Wife" |
| Sa  | 1/7/12   | 9   | 100-200: Classroom Meeting—Evaluations   | "Let's Kill Hitler"—"Closing Time"—"The Wedding of River Song"   |
| Su  | 1/8/12   |     | Depart for the United States   |  |