

Undergraduate 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.

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.

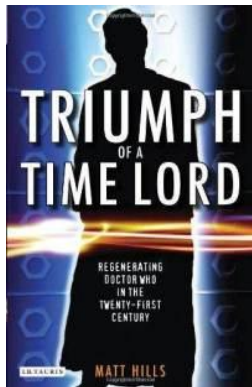
Focusing primarily on the new *Doctor Who* (2005-), we will:

- Examine the history of *Doctor Who*.

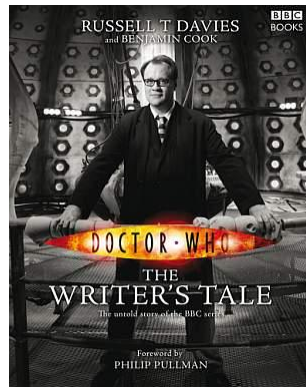
- Track the Doctor's many reincarnations/transformations.
- Compare and contrast the British and American television industries.
- Compare and contrast British and American series.
- Trace cultural and media influences on the *Who* reboot.
- Compare and contrast the new *Who* under the control of its 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

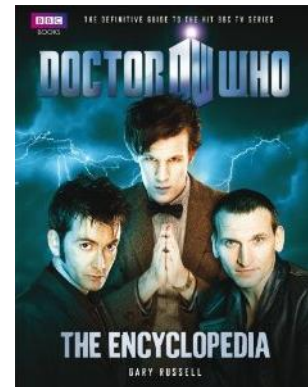
Click on each cover to order from Amazon.



Required



Optional



Optional

Course Requirements

A Journal—Students will watch at least twenty episodes either prior to or during our time in London and in a journal will record their responses to at least twelve in entries of not less than 500 words each. Due by no later than January 31, 2012 (submitted as an e-mail attachment). **Course Weight: 20%**

A Paper—Students will write a critical/analytical essay of not less than 1500 words on a particular episode of *Who*. Due by no later than January 31, 2012 (submitted as an e-mail attachment). **Course Weight: 30%**

Summative Component—Each class member will write a source paper of at least 2,000 words on some aspect of *Doctor Who* (the subject must be approved by me), making use of at least ten sources. This paper will be due by 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).

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; Trip to Forbidden Planet	"The Empty Child"—"The Doctor Dances"
F	12/30/11	3	1000-1200: Classroom Meeting; Trip to Alexandria Palace	"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: The Doctor Who Experience	"Blink"—"Sound of Drums"—"Last of the Time Lords"
Tu	1/3/12	6	100-400: Classroom Meeting—Presentation by Dr. Steven Peacock	"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 BBC Television Centre ; 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	