

WR 320: STUDIES IN PAGE, STAGE, AND SCREEN

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Office: Moreland 314. Office Hours: MW 12-2 pm or via Zoom

MW 10-11:50 at Moreland 334. CRN 19510. 4 Course Credits

CRITICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a critical examination of *The Twilight Zone*, a television series created by Rod Serling that aired from 1959 to 1964. Students will learn about the golden age of American television, how *The Twilight Zone* squared both artistically and politically with other mid-century commercial media, and examine the work of Serling himself, an underappreciated creative force who forever changed the face of television. Students will critically examine select episodes from the series and contribute thoughtfully to classroom discussions. Building on this foundation, you will learn to write professional television reviews, paying close attention to tone, diction, pacing, and other conventions of the genre to produce entertaining and insightful reviews.

Attention Earthlings, I'm required by our university overlords to include this information on the syllabus. Give it a quick look, pretend it's all very important, and then we can return to the strange and wonderful business at hand ...

COURSE-SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Analyze** selected episodes of *The Twilight Zone* by identifying and interpreting their formal, narrative, cultural, and political features.
2. **Analyze** the conventions of television and film criticism by examining how professional reviewers use elements such as tone, diction, structure, personality, tempo, and mood.
3. **Evaluate** television and film reviews by assessing their arguments, evidence, rhetorical strategies, and effectiveness in meeting the expectations of the review genre.
4. **Apply** the conventions of television and film criticism to produce clear, engaging, and analytically substantive reviews of individual episodes of *The Twilight Zone*.
5. **Integrate** evidence from assigned readings and viewings to formulate, support, and communicate claims about television, film, writing, and culture.
6. **Revise** written work in response to feedback in order to improve its prose, analysis, organization, and effectiveness within the conventions of the assigned genre.

How Learning Will Be Verified

Student learning will be assessed through the following course assignments:

- **Free Writes (50%)** — assess students' ability to analyze assigned readings and viewings and formulate written responses supported by specific observations and ideas.
- **Review Essay 1 (25%)** — assesses students' ability to apply the conventions of the review genre to an individual episode of *The Twilight Zone*.
- **Review Essay 2 (25%)** — assesses students' ability to apply genre conventions, integrate evidence, and develop more effective analytical prose in response to feedback from the first review.

Did you make it through? Ah, yes. There you are. Take a breath and fear not. One final bit of bureaucratic ritual remains. The university overlords have named this section “Resources.” Read it carefully, nod along, and grunt thoughtfully on occasion. This will keep our masters satisfied ...

Academic Calendar

All students are subject to the registration and refund deadlines as stated in the Academic Calendar.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Oregon State University is committed to making learning experiences accessible to all, which includes consideration of the course design, course learning outcomes, and barriers experienced by the disabled student. Disability Access Services (DAS) staff and students work together to determine reasonable accommodations. Students connected with DAS who have questions about their accommodations should reach out to their DAS Adviser. Students who have not yet completed the process for setting up accommodations, please contact DAS at 541-737-4098, visit the DAS website, or email disability.services@oregonstate.edu to explore accommodations for a disability (e.g., mental health diagnoses, chronic health conditions, learning disabilities, physical conditions/injuries, etc.). Students and faculty members are encouraged to collaborate around the implementation of accommodations.

Student Conduct Expectations

Students are expected to comply with the University Code of Student Conduct.

Student Bill of Rights

OSU has twelve established student rights. They include due process in all university disciplinary processes, an equal opportunity to learn, and grading in accordance with the course syllabus.

Reach Out for Success

University students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor or academic advisor. Learn about resources that assist with wellness and academic success at oregonstate.edu/ReachOut. If you are in immediate crisis, please call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988.

**CONGRATULATIONS—YOU MADE IT THROUGH THE PIT!
PAY CLOSE ATTENTION, EARTHLINGS. THESE NEXT
SECTIONS ARE VITAL TO YOUR SUCCESS!**

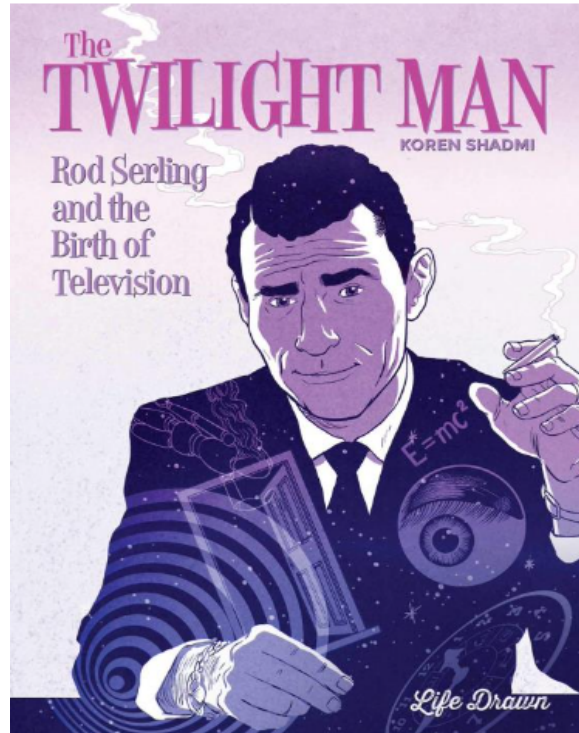


You unlock this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension: a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed over into ... *the Twilight Zone Class*. The following set of tasks and assignments are **YOUR** responsibility.



COURSE TEXT

Koren Shadmi's *The Twilight Man: Rod Serling and the Birth of Television* is a graphic biography of Rod Serling, creator of *The Twilight Zone*. Blending biography, history, and visual storytelling, Shadmi explores Serling's life, career, and struggles with the television industry while illuminating the cultural and political forces that shaped his groundbreaking work.



Purchase at the OSU Bookstore —OR— find a used version online

Access to The Twilight Zone!

Episodes of *The Twilight Zone* will be shown during class, but you will need access to them again to write your reviews. You have several options:

- Pluto TV: free access to every episode
- Paramount+ subscription
- DVD box set

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK POLICY

1. **ATTENDANCE POLICY:** You are allowed 2 “sick days” this term. Every absence beyond the 2 allotted sick days will reduce your course grade by 3%. Please email me if you are facing a serious health crisis or death in the family.

- 3 absences = 3%
- 4 absences = 6%
- 5 absences = 9%

2. **TARDINESS POLICY:** You should be seated at your desk when class begins. Tardiness is not only disrespectful, it disrupts the lesson. For this reason, every 3 tardies will result in a 5% penalty to your grade in the class.

- 3 tardies = 5%
- 6 tardies = 10%
- 9 tardies = 15%

If you cannot make it to class on time regularly, due to a schedule conflict or any other reason, I recommend not taking this class, as the tardiness policy will be upheld regardless of your personal circumstances.

3. **LATE WORK POLICY:** Every day that a Review Essay is late, it will receive a 10% penalty. For this reason, it is essential that you anticipate due dates and plan accordingly. You will not be granted an extension unless you face truly extenuating circumstances, such as a major health crisis or death in the family.

- 1 day late = 10%
- 2 days late = 20%
- 3 days late = 30%



GRADING SCALE, ASSIGNMENTS & PERCENTAGES

Participation Assignments: 50%

Review Essay 1: 25%

Review Essay 2: 25%

Grade Scale

97-100	A+
94-96	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-68	D
60-63	D-
59 and below	F

PARTICIPATION ASSIGNMENTS

There will be a Participation Assignment every class period (today excluded). In the first two weeks, they will take various forms, but starting in Week 3, Participation Assignments will be based on the two episodes we watch every class period. After each viewing, you will complete the following tasks:

1. Free Write: You will have 5-10 minutes to record your initial thoughts, questions, and observations about the episode, usually in response to a prompt.
2. Small-Group Discussion: After the free write, you will have 5 minutes to discuss your responses in small groups of 4. Be prepared to share what you wrote, explain your observations, and engage your classmates in thoughtful discussion.
3. Class-Wide Discussion: After small-group discussions, we will discuss the episode together as a class.

To receive credit for this assignment, you must be present in class and actively engage in the exercise. This is a participation grade, so late submissions will not be accepted.

REVIEW ESSAYS

Your Review Essays should emulate the style and form of the television reviews examined in Week 2 of the course, presenting a thoughtful analysis and evaluation in an accessible and entertaining writing style. Reviews should analyze the meaning and quality of the episode, but they should also analyze how those elements are achieved through visuals, camera work, sound, and performance. As the TV critic Matt Zoller Seitz explains:

“Movies and TV are stories told via pictures, sound and performance. They are not purely literary media. Don’t just write about the characters and themes. Write about how the show makes its points, because sometimes the how is the point. If you didn’t go to film school, don’t worry. It is not necessary to guess what sort of lens a director used or whether a backdrop is real or created on a

computer. I'm talking about the mood or style of the show, the pace, the music or absence of music, whether the camera is making the people seem big and important or small and weak, and the way people and objects are arranged in the frame to convey a particular emotional effect or send a message."

Essays should be at least 3 pages in length, using standard MLA format: Times New Roman, 12-point font, and one-inch margins. Essays will be graded on the quality of your prose, the depth and precision of your analysis and evaluation, and how well your essay reflects the conventions of the genre.

Review Essay 1 should be written on a single episode from Weeks 3-5.

Review Essay 2 should be written on a single episode from Weeks 6-10.

See the grading rubric on Canvas for additional guidance. See the course schedule at the end of the syllabus for due dates.

EXTRA CREDIT OPTION

To earn 20% extra credit on this assignment, you have the option to submit a video essay instead. Like a written review, video essays should present a thoughtful analysis and evaluation in an accessible, entertaining style.

In addition, your video should be carefully edited for viewing quality. Feel free to incorporate clips, still images, screen captures, graphics, music, or other appropriate audio-visual elements.

The video essay must be approximately 6–8 minutes in length and easy to view as an attachment or YouTube link. For an expert example of the kind of format and analysis I'm looking for, see [here](#). For a less impressive but perfectly acceptable example, consider my Ecampus [lectures](#).

(After viewing my lecture, you may be wondering if faux commercials are allowed. The answer is yes, they are both allowed and encouraged).

LAPTOPS, PHONES, AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

You are not allowed to use laptops, phones, or other electronic devices in my classroom. They are unnecessary, distracting, and I've discovered that many students even offload their thinking to AI chatbots. This is insane and defeats the purpose of higher education. For this reason, all Participation Assignments must be written on paper, legible, and submitted during class.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

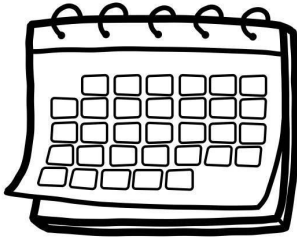
AI is not permitted in this course. All submitted work must be your own original writing and thinking. You may not use ChatGPT or other generative AI tools to write, rewrite, revise, summarize, or otherwise produce any part of your assignments.

Because this is a writing course, your television reviews must represent your own ideas, analysis, and prose. Submitting AI-generated work as your own constitutes plagiarism and violates the expectations of this course.

Violations may result in a zero on the assignment and, depending on the circumstances, failure of the course and referral under OSU's academic misconduct procedures.



**BELOW IS YOUR COURSE SCHEDULE. KEEP IT HANDY
AND REFER BACK TO IT OFTEN, I BEG OF YOU. WE CAN'T
RISK YOU GETTING LOST ... IN *THE TWILIGHT ZONE*!**



COURSE SCHEDULE



WEEK 1

MONDAY

Introduction & Name Game

WEDNESDAY

 Rod Serling American Master Documentary

Koren Shadmi, *The Twilight Man: Rod Serling and the Birth of Television*

WEEK 2

MONDAY

Brian Murray, "The Enduring Legacy of *The Twilight Zone*" (PDF on Canvas)

Chris Yogerst, "Rod Serling's Vast Promised Land" (PDF on Canvas)

Newton N. Minow, "Television and the Public Interest" (PDF on Canvas)

WEDNESDAY

Read four TV Reviews of your choice from RogerEbert.com

 Writing for Television - Conversations with Rod Serling

WEEK 3

MONDAY

"To Serve Man" (3.24 Paramount Plus)

"People are Alike All Over" (1.25)

WEDNESDAY

"Will the Real Martian Please Stand Up" (2.28)

"Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" (5.3)

WEEK 4

MONDAY

“Number Twelve Looks Just Like You” (5.17)

“Eye of the Beholder” (2.6)

WEDNESDAY

“The After Hours” (1.34)

“A World of Difference” (1.23)

WEEK 5

MONDAY

“The Shelter” (3.3)

“The Monsters are Due on Maple Street” (1.22)

WEDNESDAY

“The Obsolete Man” (2.29)

“It’s a Good Life” (3.8)

FRIDAY

Due: Review Essay 1

WEEK 6

MONDAY

“Where is Everybody” (1.1)

“The Midnight Sun” (3.10)

WEDNESDAY

“Stopover in a Quiet Town” (5.30)

“Five Characters in Search of an Exit” (3.14)

WEEK 7

MONDAY

“The Lateness of the Hour” (2.8)

“The Lonely” (1.7)

WEDNESDAY

“The Trade-Ins” (3.31)

“The Long Morrow” (5.15)

WEEK 8

MONDAY

“The Chaser” (1.31)

“A Nice Place to Visit” (1.28)

WEDNESDAY

“Long Live Walter Jameson” (1.24)

“Queen of the Nile” (5.23)

WEEK 9

MONDAY

“The Sixteen-Millimeter Shrine” (1.4)

“Static” (2.20)

WEDNESDAY

“Walking Distance” (1.5)

“A Stop at Willoughby” (1.30)

WEEK 10

MONDAY

“I Am the Night, Color Me Black” (5.26)

“The Encounter” (5.31)

WEDNESDAY

“The Odyssey of Flight 33” (2.18)

“Third From the Sun” (1.14)

FRIDAY

Due: Review Essay 2

FINALS WEEK

There are no finals in this class.