

UNDERSTANDING *THE PRISONER* IN LONDON AND WALES

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251 Julian Science Center
Winter Term 2008

Welcome to the world's greatest off-campus trip! Before we begin our exploration of the United Kingdom, we want to tell you a bit about *The Prisoner*, which is the inspiration for our journey.

Recognized as the ultimate cult television show, *The Prisoner* remains, forty-plus years after its original airing, a masterpiece. Viewers in 1967 well knew Patrick McGoohan, the actor who had made fictional spy John Drake a legend in the Cold War series *Secret Agent* (known as *Danger Man* in the UK). When McGoohan was announced as the star of *The Prisoner*, viewers expected an action-adventure spy series, but encountered instead an exhilarating examination of human freedom that was as profound and visually stunning as it was surreal. Set in a beautiful seaside resort known only as "the Village," *The Prisoner* depicts the fate of Number Six, an unnamed government employee who was kidnapped after resigning his post. The Village is his prison and seeks to pry his secrets from him "by hook or by crook." To maintain his self respect and identity, Number Six must resist and continue to insist, "I am not a number! I am a free man!"

As an examination of the human condition, *The Prisoner* poses religious and existential questions: what does it mean to be an individual? What does it mean to exist in society? What capacities for good and evil exist within each person? Are arrogance and cruelty the necessary counterparts to a personality that resists compromise? Is the Village a place or an existential condition? Is escape possible? The first television series to offer a concluding (albeit wildly allegorical) episode, *The Prisoner* challenges viewers to find their own answers.

In our study, we will trace the iconic set sites of *The Prisoner*, including the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, and the Village (Portmeirion, Wales). We'll also encounter the fan culture surrounding the series, as representatives from the two leading fan groups (Six of One and the Unmutuals) lead us on London and Portmeirion walkabouts and engage us in *Prisoner* brain bashes. Led by our intrepid teaching assistant Tim Fox, we'll also reenact *Prisoner* scenes on location...!

Greencastle Schedule

If you haven't taken our Religion and Film course, you'll need to attend ALL of the on-campus screenings of the seventeen episodes. NO absences are permitted if you wish to be included on the overseas trip. If you've already taken the class, you're welcome to join us for any of the episodes. Here is the schedule of screenings:

Jan. 3

10-12:00. "Arrival" and discussion

1:00-4:00. "Chimes of Big Ben," "Free for All," and "A. B. and C"

Jan 4

10-12:00. Discussion and "The Schizoid Man"

1:00-4:00. "The General," "Dance of the Dead," and "Checkmate"

Jan. 5

1:00-5:00. Discussion and "Many Happy Returns," "It's Your Funeral," and "Hammer Into Anvil"

Jan. 6

1:00-5:00 Discussion and "A Change of Mind," "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling," and "Living in Harmony"

Jan. 7

10:00-12:00. Discussion and "The Girl Who Was Death"

1:00-4:00. "Once Upon a Time," "Fall Out," and discussion.

Please note: if you'd like to consult some excellent online episode guides, see <http://www.anorakzone.com/prisoner/> and http://www.the-prisoner-6.freemove.co.uk/episode_intro.htm.

<p>REQUIRED MEETING FOR <u>ALL</u> STUDENTS:</p>

<p>Jan. 7. 251 Julian Science Center</p>

<p>4:00-6:00. Final briefing for trip; screening of "Colony 3" (<i>Danger Man</i>)</p>
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Jan. 8

No class, no meetings—get everything packed into one suitcase! Don't forget your passport.

Jan. 9

Depart for London.