USING THE STRUCTURE OF SERIALIZED TV, DIGITAL CONTENT TO TEACH WRITING STRATEGIES IN COMPOSITION
No one here is exactly what he appears to be.

-Ambassador G'Kar (Babylon 5)
STORYTELLING IN BITS AND PIECES

➤ “A Room of One’s Own (to Invent)”

➤ The "Pilot" is malleable just like a rough draft; in fact, it's merely an outline, a suggestion of what might come.

➤ Generally speaking, by series' end, revision and editing has been so thoroughly explored — and exploited — that the final product is almost unrecognizable from the original source material (the pilot).

➤ The pilot is the plan; the subsequent episodes are the execution of the plan.
The collaborative nature of the TV writer's room can mirror the composition classroom.

It (the classroom) should invite lively, irreverent discussions on a myriad of topics, including popular culture and news analysis.

Ideas should be constructed and deconstructed in a way that inspires "genre diving" — a deep exploration, as if working with a vast key ring where one or possibly many keys can fit the lock.

Moreover, group discussions should fuel writing prompts and vice versa.
EPISODES
BUILD A STORY ARC

➤ In television the story arc can either be self-contained, or in comic book parlance, a one-shot.

➤ More often, they are season-long, culminating in a grand season finale with cliff hanger.

➤ First-year writing can also be self-contained or season-long.

➤ Many composition courses require a series of short essays, which culminate in one large work/portfolio.
SEASONS CHANGE
Guys, where are we?

-Charlie (Lost)
STORY BORED?
It’s a leap of faith doing any serialized storytelling.

-J.J. Abrams
Life isn't about the final moments, it's about the journey, it's about process.

-J. Michael Straczynski
Process is not only the preferred method of teaching contemporary composition classes, it also best describes serialized storytelling — the spontaneity, the fluidity of carrying an idea across a vast land of possibilities.

Irene L. Clarks writes that "a process approach to writing and the teaching of writing means devoting increased attention to writers and the activities in which writers engage when they create and produce a text ..." (7)
➤ Think about TV as: writing parchment, paper, an empty computer screen ... television shows shift and change over time.

➤ There are no fixed points — nearly everything is open to invention and re-invention.

➤ Our students should consider the negative space that television engenders, whether we’re talking about episodic TV or an anthology series.

➤ Consider that writing can take an episodic or an anthology (utilizing various genres) approach.

➤ Babylon 5 wisely used a 5-season story arc; the number 5 has real relevance.
➤ 5 Seasons, 5 Senses: taste, smell, touch, hearing, and sight

➤ How do we build writing prompts that can utilize the five senses in some way?

➤ How can we create immediacy in the composition classroom?
BY MIRRORING TELEVISION STORYTELLING
Meaning is not what you start with, but what you end up with.

-Peter Elbow
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