

Course Last Updated [03/27/2024]



Detective Fiction

Section I: Course Overview

Course Code: ENG 315

Subject Area(s): English Language & Literature

Prerequisites: One 200 level English course or two 100 level English courses

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Credits: 3

Course Fees: N/A

Course Description

This course explores what makes detective fiction one of the most popular forms of literary narrative. Detective fiction contains many rich strands of ideas and socio-political issues including race, poverty and wealth, attitudes towards disabilities and gender. Class activities, lectures and assignments aim to reveal the precise definition of a detective story, and especially what makes a good detective story. Starting from the mid-19th century to the present day the course discusses the role of detection in literature, creates a critical space in which readers consider issues of violence of justice and what creates the conditions that instigate crime, thus delving into the minds of the writer and his characters. The course traces the development of the genre, the significance of the sites of criminal investigation, the political and cultural context of the texts in question, and varying characters and motives of the detectives, criminals and, just as importantly, writers and readers. By doing so the course evokes consideration of whether revealing the truth and the longing to punish the culprit are always desirable outcomes.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the history of British crime fiction and the linkages to various significant historical and cultural contexts.
- Analyze the strategies by which writers of detective fiction engage with diversity in gender, sexual orientation, social class and race.
- Explain particular devices of detective fiction and the ways in which writers appropriate and revise these.

- Compare and contrast the difference between genres of detective fiction and other relevant literary genres.

Section II: Instructor & Course Details

Instructor Details

Name: TBC

Contact Information: TBC

Term: TBC

Course Day and Time: TBC

Office Hours: TBC

Grading & Assessment

The instructor assesses students' mastery of course learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted toward the final grade. The Assessment Overview section provides further details for each.

Engagement - 20%

1750-word essay assignment - 20%

750-word Psycho-geographical Urban Exploration assignment - 20%

Presentation - 20%

Final Exam - 20%

Assessment Overview

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Forms of assessment may be slightly modified in the term syllabus.

Engagement (20%): Students are expected to be engaged in class, to have read the [CEA CAPA Engagement Policy](#), and to understand the [Class Engagement Rubric](#) that outlines how engagement is graded. Student engagement should demonstrate thorough knowledge of the text being studied each week, a copy of which must be brought to class.

Essay (1750 words, 20%): In response to questions released ahead of the due date in week 6. Papers should be carefully planned, economically written, analytical and proofread.

Psycho-geographical Urban Exploration written assignment (750 words, 20%): A creative, reflective written exercise due week 8 that responds to the history and topography of London.

Presentation (20%): This will be given either individually or in groups in weeks 12 and 13 on a topic given by the instructor and will be used as a springboard for wider class discussion.

Final Exam (20%): This will last two hours, and students will be asked to answer questions discussing texts you have not already examined in the essay. It will require a knowledge of several texts on the course, together with a working concept of the essential characteristics of detective fiction. No books or notes may be used.

Active Learning

Experiential learning is an essential component of education abroad, and participation in field studies is a required part of coursework. In this course, students explore the city in which they are studying using a variety of methods. This provides the opportunity to gain nuance and perspective on the host context and course content, as well as to collect information and resources for assigned papers, projects, and presentations.

The assigned field components (subject to change) are:

- **One theatre performance.**
- **One student-led investigative / reflective urban assignment.**

Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in co-curricular program activities.

Readings and Resources

The below readings and resources are representative of what will be assigned as required in this course but may vary slightly in the term syllabus.

All students are given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH), accessible [here](#), and are expected to comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.

Wherever possible, required readings are made accessible through the online library or Canvas. Students are responsible for obtaining all required readings.

Each course utilizes Canvas as its LMS. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly for updates and deadlines. Canvas is also the primary platform for contacting your instructor in case of questions or concerns about the course.

Required Readings

Arthur Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891) / "The Blue Carbuncle" (1891) / "The Bruce Partington Plans" (1908)

Agatha Christie, *The ABC Murders* (1936)

Claudia Piñeiro, *Elena Knows* (2007)

Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (1930)

Patrick Modiano, *Dora Bruder* [The Search Warrant] (1997)

Percival Everett, *The Trees* (2021)

Recommended Secondary Reading(s)

Bertens, Hans and Theo D'haen. *Contemporary American Crime Fiction* (Palgrave, 2001).

Cawelti, John G. *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* (Chicago UP, 1976).

Fischer-Hornung and Monika Mueller (eds.). *Sleuthing Ethnicity: The Detective in Multiethnic Crime Fiction* (Associated UP, 2003).

Gosselin, Adrienne Johnson (ed.). *Multicultural Detective Fiction: Murder from the "Other" Side* (Garland, 1999).

Horsley, Lee. *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction* (OUP, 2005).

Klein, Kathleen Gregory. *Diversity and Detective Fiction* (Bowling State UP, 1999).

Knight, Stephen. *Crime Fiction, 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

- Kungl, Carla T. *Creating the Fictional Female Detective: The Sleuth Heroines of British Women Writers, 1890-1940* (McFarland, 2006).
- Matzke, Christine and Susanne Muhleisen (eds.). *Postcolonial Postmortems: Crime Fiction from a Transcultural Perspective* (Rodopi, 2006).
- Moore, Lewis D. *Cracking the Hard-Boiled Detective: A Critical History from the 1920s to the Present* (McFarland, 2006).
- Reddy, Maureen T. *Traces, Codes, and Clues: Reading Race in Crime Fiction* (Rutgers UP, 2003).
- Roth, Laurence. *Inspecting Jews: American Jewish Detective Stories* (Rutgers UP, 2004).
- Rubenholt, Hallie. *The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper* (Black Swan, 2020).
- Scaggs, John. *Crime Fiction* (Routledge, 2005).
- Moretti, Franco. *Signs Taken for Wonders* (Verso, 1997) Willett, Ralph. *Hard Boiled Detective Fiction* (BAAS, 1992).
- Thomas, Ronald R. *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science* (CUP, 1999).

Course Calendar

Session 1	
Topics	CRIME AND THE CITY: INTRODUCTION TO DETECTIVE FICTION
Activity	Lecture, textual analysis, discussion, video material
Readings and Assignments	Readings: CANVAS files on the history of Detective Fiction Assignments: Class participation

Session 2	
Topics	SHERLOCK HOLMES, LONDON, AND THE VICTORIAN DETECTIVE
Activity	Lecture, textual analysis, discussion, video material
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Arthur Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891) / "The Blue Carbuncle" (1891) / "The Bruce-Partington Plans" (1908) Assignments: Class participation

Session 3	
Topics	AGATHA CHRISTIE AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF DETECTION
Activity	Lecture, textual analysis, discussion, video material
Readings and Assignments	Readings: The ABC Murders / Secondary material posted on CANVAS. Assignments: Class participation

Session 4	
Topics	FIELD STUDY: THE MOUSETRAP AT ST. MARTIN'S THEATRE.
Activity	Performance of The Mousetrap
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Secondary readings on CANVAS Assignments: Class participation

Session 5	
Topics	HARDBOILED DETECTIVE FICTION: THE MALTESE FALCON
Activity	Lecture, textual analysis, discussion, video material
Readings and Assignments	Readings: The Maltese Falcon / Secondary Criticism on CANVAS Assignments: Class participation

Session 6	
Topics	FIELD STUDY: HERCULES POIROT AT THE HEN AND CHICKENS THEATRE
Activity	Film screening of Chinatown. Lecture, analysis, discussion
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Secondary readings on CANVAS. Assignments: Class participation. 1750-word assignment due this week.

Midterm Break

Session 7	
Topics	DETECTIVES, HISTORY AND URBAN GEOGRAPHY IN DORA BRUDER
Activity	Lecture, textual analysis, discussion, video material
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Dora Bruder/ secondary readings on CANVAS Assignments: Class participation.

Session 8	
Topics	PSYCHO-GEOGRAPHICAL EXPLORATION/WRITING EXERCISE
Activity	Urban exploration of historical crime scenes
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Class participation / written assignment Assignments: Independent research relating to case file presented by tutor. Various Points in London

Session 9	
Topics	DISABILITY AND THE BODY IN ARGENTINE CRIME WRITING
Activity	Lecture, textual analysis, discussion, video material
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Elena Knows/ Secondary readings on CANVAS Assignments: Class participation

Session 10	
Topics	MURDER, RACE AND HISTORY IN PERCIVAL EVERETT'S THE TREES
Activity	Lecture, textual analysis, discussion, video material
Readings and Assignments	Readings: The Trees/ Secondary readings on CANVAS Assignments: Class participation

Session 11	
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Topics	Guest Lecture - TBC
Activity	Lecture, textual analysis, discussion, video material
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Assignments: Class participation, Prepare questions for guest lecturer

Session 12	
Topics	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
Activity	Student presentations followed by Q+A
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Material relating to students' research. Assignments: Presentation / Class participation

Session 13	
Topics	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
Activity	Student presentations followed by Q+A
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Material relating to students' research. Assignments: Presentation / Class participation

Session 14	
Topics	STUDENT PRESENTATIONS and EXAM REVIEW
Activity	Student presentations followed by Q+A Review session for Final Exam
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Material relating to students' research. Assignments: Presentation / Class participation

Session 15	
Topics	FINAL EXAM
Activity	Final Exam
Readings and Assignments	Readings: Course revision material on CANVAS Assignments: Final Exam

Section III: Academic Policies and Standards

Academic Policies

Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including our [Academic Policies](#) and [Engagement Policy](#). CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. Additional requirements that may be associated with a specific course or program are addressed in the term syllabus.

Student Learning & Development Objectives

CEA CAPA has identified [Student Learning and Development Objectives \(SLDOs\)](#) for all programs in all locations: content in context, navigating differences, power and equity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, career and professional development, and sustainability and migration.

These are meta-level learning objectives that transcend coursework and are infused across all elements of program delivery, beyond specifics of course offerings, addressing student learning holistically and framing it a larger learning context.