

Fall/Winter 2019-2020

AP/EN 2178 3.0M (W)

The English Detective Novel

Course Director:

Ila Goody
Office: 312 Bethune College

Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Wednesdays 11:30am-2:30pm

Description:

This course explores the emergence and development of the English detective novel as expressed by British practitioners of the genre from Arthur Conan Doyle to P. D. James, examining its history, conventions, values, popularity, and possible limits. We will begin by examining and comparing the primary models and conventions of the genre, for example the role of the detective's helper/writer as the reader's double/surrogate (e.g. Watson to Sherlock Holmes). We will further examine classic novels of detection from the "golden age" of crime fiction by Agatha Christie, considering her transformative uses of gender/age characterizing the detective (Miss Marple, in print and in a film version). Among other topics we will examine are: the resolution of mysteries/puzzles through the use of the Enlightenment science of deduction and analytic reason (Sherlock Holmes), the "locked room" mystery ("The Adventure of the Speckled Band") and the limits of reason (Trent's Last Case). As well, we will examine the way in which contemporary fictions develop this popular genre through literary parody and pastiche: for example, Lyndsay Faye's account of the Ripper murders (as "written" by Dr. Watson), Laurie R. King's The Beekeeper's Apprentice, or On the Segregation of the Queen (a feminist revision of Sherlock Holmes) and P.D. James's Death Comes to Pemberley (a completion text to Pride and Prejudice). We will consider all these texts through a variety of critical approaches, such as Marxisms, gender/feminisms, reader-response theory, rhetoric, and close textual analysis.

Although our primary focus will be on the English detective novel, we will also situate and interrogate the origins and development of that fiction in the context of broader world narratives; for example, those of the French detectives C. Auguste Dupin (by the American, Edgar Allan Poe) and Inspecteur Lecoq, (by the French, Émile Gaboriau), as well as fiction by Edogawa Rampo, the Edgar Allan Poe of Japan. A further critique of the limits of the traditional detective narrative will be examined in the postmodern short novel City of Glass, by the American, Paul Auster.

The objectives of the course will be to enable students to engage with texts in the genre of the detective novel, and to acquire the skills to analyze, compare, and interpret those texts.

Category:

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Historical Requirement:

Period II (1700-1900) 3 credits

Requirements:

1 Bibliographic Assignment (750-1000 words)	20%
1 Major Essay (2000-2500 words)	30%
1 Test (in class)	20%
1 Seminar Presentation (1000 words)	20%
Class Participation	10%
Total:	100%

Reading List:Auster, Paul. City of GlassBentley, E. C.. Trent's Last CaseChristie, Agatha. A Murder is Announced; film version with Geraldine McEwanDoyle, Arthur Conan. A Study in ScarletDoyle, Arthur Conan. The Hound of the Baskervilles

Doyle, Arthur Conan. "The Adventure of the Speckled Band"

Faye, Lyndsay. Dust and Shadow: An Account of the Ripper Killings by Dr. John H. WatsonGaboriau, Émile. Selections from The Lerouge CaseJames, P.D.. Death Comes to PemberleyKing, Laurie R.. The Beekeeper's Apprentice, or On the Segregation of the Queen

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter"

Rampo, Edogawa. The Black Lizard and Beast in the Shadows

Any unabridged edition of these works in English is acceptable. Many texts, such as those by Doyle, Poe, Gaboriau, are available on-line through <http://www.gutenberg.org>

First three authors to be read: Poe, Doyle, Christie

Open To:

Yr 2, 3, 4