

ENGL 27G: DETECTIVE & MYSTERY FICTION

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 3: Arts & Humanities
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Compare/contrast similar tropes, forms, or themes across cultures/history
- Apply basic literary terminologies, theories, categories, motifs, and genres appropriate to an introductory college-level discussion of literature and art.

Description

A study of mystery, detective, and crime fiction from the 19th to 21st centuries, paying attention to the evolution of various sub-genres, such as Golden Age mysteries, hard-boiled detective novels, the police procedural, courtroom drama, etc. Reading and analysis of multicultural and/or transnational texts contextualized historically and interculturally, tracing the correlations between detective and mystery fiction and other literary genres.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Identify significant literary, social, cultural, political, and corporeal issues in transnational and/or multicultural detective and mystery literature from the nineteenth century to the present.
2. Apply a variety of critical and theoretical criteria to evaluation of detective and mystery literature.
3. Analyze detective and mystery literature through interpretations and arguments in written and oral forms.

Course Content

1. Identification of issues specific to detective and mystery literature
 - a. Literary issues, such as detective and mystery literature's place within multicultural and/or transnational literature canons, origins in gothic and enlightenment literatures
 - i. Evolution of sub-genres, such as whodunit, golden age mysteries, noir and hard-boiled detective novels, the police

procedural, crime fiction, courtroom drama, true crime, etc., noting textual and non-textual genre developments through conventions of literature, plays and theater, film and scripts, television and teleplay

- b. Social issues, such as interpersonal dynamics and power relationships, law and justice, gender and sexuality, social class, media representation
 - c. Cultural issues, such as relationships of citizens and governments, humans and the environment, multicultural identities, popular culture expressions and diverse authors, such as LatinX, Asian-American, African American, Native American, etc.
 - d. Socio-political criticisms, such as criminal justice reforms, oppression and manipulation of the "other," the use of force, restoration of and subversion of social order
 - e. Objective truth and post-truth narratives, logic and "ratiocination," traditional plot patterns of crime, detection, to resolution versus unresolved, open-ended, anti-detective narratives
2. Apply a variety of critical and theoretical criteria to evaluation of detective and mystery literature
 - a. Symbolic language (e.g., metaphor, synecdoche)
 - b. Narrative devices (e.g., unreliable narrator)
 - c. Structural devices (e.g., epigraphs, paragraphing)
 - d. Historical contexts
 - e. Gender studies
 - f. Queer theories
 - g. Psychological theories (Freudian, Jungian)
 - h. Marxian theories
 - i. Ethnic and racial theories
 - j. Theories of embodiment and abjection
 - k. Postcolonial studies
 3. Analyze detective and mystery literature through interpretations and arguments in written and oral forms
 - a. Active, critical participation in class discussion
 - b. Literary analysis/critical thinking demonstrated in formal essays
 - c. Literary analysis/critical thinking demonstrated through short writing projects
 - d. Understanding of literature demonstrated through class presentations

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. When taught on campus, no special facility or equipment needed.
2. When taught via Foothill Global Access, ongoing access to computer with email software and capabilities and current internet browser, email address.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Formal essays
 Informal writing projects, such as journal entries, reader responses
 In-class examinations

Class participation, student presentations

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Reading literary texts
Lectures on the texts and their historical and social contexts
Class discussion
Small group projects and presentations
Analytical writing projects

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Poe, Edgar Allan. The Murders in the Rue Morgue. 1841.

Braddon, Mary Elizabeth. Henry Dunbar. 1864.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. A Study in Scarlet. 1887.

Akutagawa Ryuunosuke. Rashomon. 1915.

Akutagawa Ryuunosuke. In a Grove. 1922.

Christie, Agatha. Murder on the Orient Express. 1934.

Chandler, Raymond. The Big Sleep. 1939.

Kim, Suki. The Interpreter. 2004.

Larsson, Stieg. The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo. 2008.

Wa Ngugi, Mukoma. Nairobi Heat. 2011.

Adams, Douglas. Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency. 2014.

Locke, Attica. Bluebird, Bluebird: a Novel. 2018.

Hammett, Dashiell. The Maltese Falcon. 1930.

Mosely, Walter. Devil in a Blue Dress. 1990.

Corpi, Lucha. Eulogy for a Brown Angel. 2002.

Double Indemnity. Directed by Billy Wilder. Film. 1944.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Reading and analyzing literary texts
2. Formal essays
3. Informal writing projects, such as journal entries, reader responses
4. In-class examinations
5. Class participation, student presentations

Discipline(s)

English