

ANG 6605 Problems in Narrative Fiction: Detective Fiction

Professor Lianne Moyes

lianne.moyes@umontreal.ca

Winter 2021, Monday 9:30am-12:30pm

Description

This seminar traces shifts in the genre of detective fiction from its roots in the nineteenth-century to its myriad contemporary forms. Although the focus is English-language texts, the corpus includes writers such as Simenon, Eco, Camilleri and Mankell in translation. Given the number of writers and theorists who have written about detective fiction, there is a rich body of conceptual readings to draw upon. In the fields of narratology and semiotics, for example, detective fiction has been used as a testing ground for theorizing narrative phenomena such as closure, consequence, causality, desire, seriality and suspense. Among the topics we will discuss are links between reading and detection, questions of social justice, the codes of ‘Golden-Age’ and ‘Hard-boiled,’ decolonial and transnational appropriations, and sub-genres such as urban noir, police procedural, country-house drama, and forensic thriller. Students are encouraged in their final papers to address questions related to their own interests in this field.

Required texts (the following texts are available in the bookstore Pav. Jean-Brillant; all other primary texts (Poe, Doyle, Himes, Simenon, Rendell, Mankell, Atwood, Danticat) are available on Studium; please have texts to hand each week)

Agatha Christie, *Murder at the Vicarage* (1930)
Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (1980; trans. 1983)
Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (1930)
Thomas King, *The Red Power Murders* (2006)
Kathy Reichs, *Déjà Dead* (1997)

Requirements

Participation in seminar discussion (includes responses to presentations / reports)	20%
Reading report (3-4 pages) on a critical essay (marked with*)	15%
Seminar presentation (5-6 pages) on a literary text	15%
First essay (7 pages; this is a revised version of the seminar presentation)	15%
Second essay (12 pages)	35%

Schedule

January

- 11 Class cancelled
- 18 Edgar Allen Poe, “Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841)
- 25 Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia” (1891)

February

- 1 Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (1980; trans. 1983)

- 8 Agatha Christie, *Murder at the Vicarage* (1930)
- 15 Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (1930)
- 22 Chester Himes, “He Knew” (1933); Georges Simenon, “Storm in the Channel” (1938)

March

- 1 Reading Week (no class)
- 8 Thomas King, *The Red Power Murders* (2006)
- 15 Ruth Rendell, “Blood Lines” (1995); Henning Mankell, “The Man with the Mask” (1999; trans. 2008)
- 22 Kathy Reichs, *Déjà Dead* (1997)
- 29 Margaret Atwood, from “Murder in the Dark” (1983); Edwidge Danticat, “Claire of the Sea Light” (2011)

April

- 12 *Sherlock : A Scandal in Belgravia* (2006, dir. Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat)