

**Department of English  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

**Crime Fiction**

Professor: Prof. Eli Park Sorensen  
Office Location: Fung King Hey 315  
Phone: 3943 8550  
Email: [eliparks@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:eliparks@cuhk.edu.hk)  
Office Hours: After class or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course takes a closer look at the genre of crime fiction. The course outlines a broad perspective of the genre of crime fiction from its earliest incarnations to modern-day TV drama. We will explore a variety of different forms of crime fiction, and how the genre more generally reflects cultural, historical and social issues. The study material for this course will consist of literary texts, TV series, and films drawn from the popular cultural canon. Topics we will discuss include conspiracy, serial crime, trauma, the epistemology of clues, history and crime, and the criminal mind. The course begins with a historical overview of detective fiction and concludes with a creative workshop on how to write a detective story. Students with a taste for murder, crime, and suspense — and above all the desire to solve enigmas and mysteries — are welcome to attend this course.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- understand the historical developments of crime fiction
- understand how to approach and read crime fiction
- appreciate the importance, relevance and value of crime fiction as cultural documents
- produce a well-reasoned essay

TEXTS

- Poe, Edgar Allan. ‘The Purloined Letter’ (1844)
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. ‘The Musgrave Ritual’ (1893)
- Sayers, Dorothy. ‘The Unsolved Puzzle of the Man with no Face’ (1926)

FILM & TV SERIES

- *Vertigo* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1958)

- *Memories of Murder* (dir. Bong Joon-ho, 2004)
- *The Silence of the Lambs* (dir. Jonathan Demme, 1991)
- *The Da Vinci Code* (dir. Ron Howard, 2006)

#### RECOMMENDED READING

- Horsley, Lee. *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Priestman, Martin (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Priestman, Martin. *Crime Fiction from Poe to the Present*. Northcote House, 1998.
- Rzepka, Charles. *Detective Fiction*. Polity, 2005.

#### ASSESSMENT

- A) Class preparation, participation and presentation: 30%
- B) Exam: 20%
- C) Essay: 50%