ENG 4300-4390-003-097: Senior Seminar: "Getting a Clue: Investigating the Literary Detective"

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Course Description: In this course we will examine detectives—amateur and professional, well known and obscure—in a variety of genres: fiction, drama, reportage and film. Although representations of detectives vary from the acute to the bumbling, from rational to intuitive and range across different classes, races and sexes, we will notice that the literary detective serves as a barometer for the larger social and political concerns of his or her day. Furthermore, we will find the detective serving as a model for the processes of interpretation and exposition that we ourselves use when we read and write about literature.

This seminar will be discussion-driven. Assignments will include student presentations on literary texts and historical developments, a short essay, a 10-12 page research paper as well as midterm and final examinations.

Texts available through Textbook Rental Services
The Moonstone by Wilkie Collins
The Sign of Four by Arthur Conan Doyle
A is for Alibi by Sue Grafton
Devil in a Blue Dress by Walter Mosely
Blanche on the Lam by Barbara Neely
Course packet available in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Union Building, 2nd Floor (date for pickup to be announced)

Guidelines for Requirements and Grading: *(Dr. Bredesen will be available to answer questions regarding these requirements on Monday, August 27th.)*

20% For overall in-class work, including:
   1 Historical Brief at 15 minutes with 1 page handout.
   1 Discussion leading of a primary text.
   Thoughtful engagement with the materials read evidenced in relevant questions and comments that respond to classmates as well as texts.

20% A one-page, single-spaced no margin essay (11-12 point font).

15% Midterm Examination.

30% A research-informed (10-12 page, double-spaced) literary critical analysis of any text by authors we have covered in this class. This paper can, if you wish, deal with the same primary text that you presented on, but it need not do so. You will turn in with it an annotated bibliography of at least 8-10 secondary sources in which you demonstrate your critical engagement with their argument(s).

15% Final Examination

Course Schedule:
Please note this schedule, which extends to Midterm, is provisional and subject to change.
Students should read assigned text(s) prior to the class in which they will be discussed. I strongly encourage keeping in advance of the reading schedule.

Week One:
M 8/21  *Dr. Bredesen is teaching in Cape Town, South Africa this week and will be returning to the United States at the end of the week. The syllabus and reading materials will be distributed by Ms. Lisa Chamberlin, who will also take attendance. Dr. Angela Vietto will oversee Wednesday’s class. Attendance is mandatory.*
HMWK: Read Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Purloined Letter” and “Murder in the Rue Morgue” for Wednesday’s class.

W 8/23 Guest Lecturer: Dr. Angela Vietto
HMWK: Read Poe’s “The Mystery of Marie Roget”.

Week Two:
M 8/28 Continue discussion of Poe’s Chevalier Dupin
Introduction to Dickens’ writings on Detectives
Read Dickens on Detectives (Course packet)
And prologue to *The Moonstone*
**HB: Brief Biography of Eugene Vidocq, first professional detective.***
W 8/30 Discuss Assigned Readings
Week Three:
9/4 LABOR DAY / NO CLASS
9/6 Discuss Betteredge’s narrative
   HB: 1829 Police Act and Professionalization of the police in Great Britain
   HB: 1842 Professionalization of the first Detective Police Force in Great Britain
   HMWK: Finish First Period and read First Narrative of Second Period (Miss Clack’s narrative) Broadview edition to page 330

Week Four:
9/11 Discuss assigned readings
   HB: “Sensation Novels”
   HMWK: Read Second Narrative (Matthew Bruff) and Chapters I, II & III of Third Narrative (Franklin Blake) Broadview edition to page 377.
9/13 Discuss reading
   HMWK: Finish the Third and read the Fourth Narrative (Ezra Jennings) to p 502

Week Five:
9/18 Discuss assigned reading
   HMWK: Finish Reading The Moonstone (Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth Narratives and the Epilogue to 542) and skim the dramatic version of The Moonstone pp625-702.
9/20 Discuss The Moonstone’s conclusion.
   Introduction to First Literary female detectives and “yellowbacks”
   HMWK: Pick up course packet at Copy X in the MLK, jr. Student Union Building, 2nd Floor. Read: stories from The Female Detective and Revelations of a Lady Detective (packet)

Week Six:
9/25 Discuss assigned readings
   HB: Prostitution Laws
   HMWK: Finish reading stories
   Read “A Scandal in Bohemia” course packet
9/27 Intro to Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes
   HB: 1873 creation of Intelligence Department
   Paper Topics distributed: First Paper due Monday, October 9th
   HMWK: Read The Sign of Four
Week Seven:
10/02    Discuss *Sign of Four*
**HB: Cesaere Lombroso and criminal anthropology**
HMWK: Read Second “Wave” Female Detective stories (packet) and Auden essay “Murder in the Vicarage” (packet)

10/04    Discuss assigned readings
**HB: Women in the Metropolitan Police Force**
HMWK: Work on Paper, study for the exam.

Week Eight:
10/09    First Paper Due

10/11    Midterm Exam
Second Half of English 4300

Week Nine  “The Hard-boiled Detective”  HMWK: Read Devil with a Blue Dress
-W/ Oct 16— Watch The Maltese Falcon
W/Oct 18— Finish watching Maltese Falcon  Dr. Robin Murray guest speaker on Film Noir
Conferences with Instructor: Thanksgiving Reading Book List distributed.  Sign up for book.

Week Ten
-M/ Oct 23— Devil with a Blue Dress  
W/ Oct 25— Devil with a Blue Dress  Dr. Chris Wixon guest speaker

HMWK: Read A is for Alibi

Week Eleven
M/Oct 30— Finish Discussion of Devil with a Blue Dress
Start discussion of A is for Alibi
W/Nov 1— A is for Alibi
HMWK: Read Blanche on the Lam

Week Twelve
M/Nov 6— A is for Alibi
W/Nov 8— Finish Discussion of A is for Alibi
Begin Discussion of Blanche on the Lam

Week Thirteen
M/Nov 13— Finish Discussion of Blanche on the Lam
W/Nov 15— HMWK: Choose a book off of list and read over Thanksgiving Break: be prepared to discuss.

Week Fourteen
M/Nov 27— Five minute Detective Fiction Reports
W/Nov 29— Research Presentations (5)

Week Fifteen
M/Dec 4— Research Presentations (5)
W/Dec 6— Research Presentations (4) and Course Evaluations