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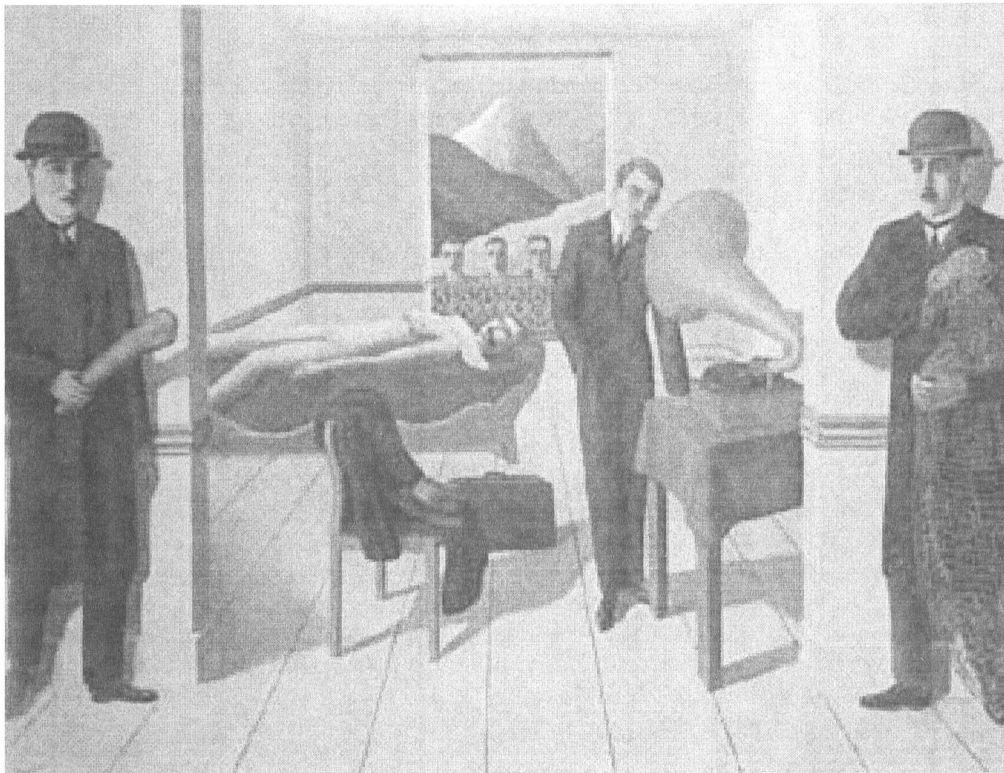
ENGL 190-01, Criminal Fictions, Fall 2009

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Class: MWF 10 -10.50am / Buckman 105
Office Hours: 11am-1pm Monday/Thurs 1.30-2.30pm

ENGL 190:01: Criminal Fictions
Literature and Transgression (1824-2000)



Course Description

This course considers literature's fascination with criminality and forms of transgression over the last 200 years. It offers students the chance to develop a historical understanding of the formal and thematic movements in literary fiction, while at the same time noting how literature uses crime to interrogate its own 'legitimate' identities.

Our program will move from the early nineteenth century, where criminals become the heroes of popular romance, into the complexities of late nineteenth-century crime: artistic genius as criminal mastermind, the emergence of aesthetic 'disinterestedness' and the twin developments of law and literature (resulting in a formalized 'detective fiction'). Finally, we will also look at modern crime fiction, with its generic formulas and diversifications.

The primary goals of this course are as follows:

- **To develop students' sense of historical, formal and thematic movements in literature over the last 200 years.** You should see the texts set before you both as an opportunity to explore your own interest in crime fiction, and the historical moments

specific to each of these texts. Understanding their presentation of certain thematic interests therefore also allows us to understand some of the wider cultural pressures on the production of literature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

- **To develop skills in the critical analysis of literature.** Class periods will be devoted to detailed discussion of the literary works assigned for the day. Often I may ask you to prepare discussion questions or brief presentations to facilitate discussion. The goal is for you to practice "close reading", and for you to be able to apply those techniques to the literature we *haven't* explicitly discussed. A good reader is a reader sensitive to the nuances of written communication, and its relationship to literary and historical context. As such, you should be able to understand formal aspects of literary fiction as well as the particular contextual meanings of writings.
- **Develop skills in writing.** This course is writing intensive and it includes a number of assignments to develop your critical thinking and essay-writing skills. You will be writing two shorter essays on literary texts, and one extended essay where you bring in some outside sources to create an argument. As part of that extended essay, you will submit a plan and an annotated bibliography earlier in the semester. The class will also include some workshop sessions on writing, individual student conferences on progress in writing, and instruction on the use and documentation of outside sources.

Course Format

The class meets twice a week in a seminar and discussion format. You will be expected to complete all readings assigned for the class and prepare for class discussions upon them. Sometimes I will supply you with particular questions of tasks to guide you in your preparation. This will mean preparing the answers in advance to particular questions so you are able to talk about them when called upon. There will also be a substantial number of student presentations and discussion tasks that will involve oral work. Participation in discussion is a vital part of this course and your overall semester grade will reflect that. With each reading you should expect to comment or pose questions about it, as well as challenge or test the ideas within it. By participating in class discussion, your analytic skills and interpretative strategies will be strengthened and your experience of a particular text will be enriched. This may seem like a daunting task, but if you are nervous about speaking up in class, look on this as a personal challenge. I would like everyone to set themselves the task of saying something in each class.

Course Requirements

Formal Essays

You will complete three essays this semester. Two will be of 3-5 pages (1000 words). These need not involve use of outside critical sources, though you may use them if you prefer. The third will be 7-8 pages long and will constitute an 'extended essay' (2200 words). The extended essay explicitly requires the use of some secondary critical sources or historical context, thereby improving and testing your skill as a researcher. For all the essays, I encourage students to choose some aspect of the course texts which interests them, and upon which they have not already submitted work. In preparation for the longer paper, this will be a collaborative project for which you will submit a proposal, outlining your thesis, and an annotated bibliography with at least four secondary sources you have consulted.

All assignments must be typed in 12pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced with margins of one inch. Full format details can be found in the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (sixth or seventh edition) in the library or by emailing me. Although I assume this will mean there are approximately 300 words on each page, every paper must include **a word count, your name, my name and a title (to be decided upon by you)**. Every paper must be proofread for grammatical and spelling errors. Your grade will reflect the appropriate penalties if errors are not corrected. I allow 10% leniency in the word count. So if the paper should be 1000 words long, I will not penalize if it is between 900 and 1100. For papers under 90% of the word count, I will deduct at least 0.3 of a grade point. Submissions at less than 60% of the word count will automatically receive a fail, regardless of their other merits.

Final exam/Class Presentation

At the end of the course there will be an in-class assignment that will ask you to present your understanding of the course concepts and show factual knowledge of the texts we have considered. We will discuss this further in the course of the semester.

Participation and Discussion

Your participation is crucial to this course and it involves not only attendance, but reading and preparation before class, and contribution during. I will expect each person I call on during class time to be prepared and willing to speak. If at any point a student is not able to participate in an adequate manner or is unprepared for the class, they will be counted as absent for that session.

• Essay 1	1000 words	20%
• Essay 2	1000 words	20 %
• Proposal & Short Bibliography	2 pages	10%
• Extended Essay	2200 words	25%
• Final Exam		10%
• Participation		15%

PLEASE NOTE: You will not receive a passing grade unless you submit all written assignments.

A word to the wise: there is a substantial amount of reading for this class – important, worthwhile, and, of course, required. You need plan for it and make sure you have completed the pages listed on the schedule. I expect everyone to reach the points in the novel that I specify in advance of the class. If you think you might have trouble meeting this requirement, you should think carefully about the course now. I may also have a series of brief factual reading quizzes, which will count towards participation. These will be impromptu, but should be easy to complete if you are reading attentively.

Attendance Policy:

You are expected to be in class everyday. This means that you will be present, fully awake, prepared and ready to contribute to class activities. Failure to meet the terms of that definition may result in a student being marked absent. You may miss three classes in the term without penalty (for illness, sickness, religious holidays or other absences). Further absences will result in

your final grade for the entire course being lowered a third of a point (i.e. From B+ to B, from B- to C+). More than six absences will result in failure of the course.

Honor Code:

Please make sure you are absolutely clear about the terms of the honor code. All written work must be your own. Under no circumstances will any form of intellectual dishonesty be tolerated. You should be aware that the consequences are severe. If you are ever unsure whether you might be violating the code, please contact me or another professor to find out. Work that has been written or presented in other classes will constitute an infringement of the honor code if submitted here.

Disabilities

If you have a disability, please contact me in advance of the class to discuss any additional requirements you may have, such as large print handouts or extra time in assessments.

Email and Online Readings

Please check your email **each day** for notices about the course. This is the easiest way for us to communicate. On several occasions over the course, I might pose a question on email to the whole group, which may ask for electronic responses from you. In all email communications, please remember appropriate formal protocols for addressing a faculty member and your colleagues in the class. Occasionally I will also include online readings for the course, which should be printed out and brought to class. This will often be from books which are out-of-print or from texts where we are only using a small section. These can be found in my public folder on the academic fileserver:

\\Fileserv1\acad_dept_pgm\English\Newman_Rebecca\Public\Criminal Fictions

Grading Scale

Essays and the final grade are calculated on scale from A-F, including pluses and minuses in between. You will have an opportunity to ask questions about criteria in detail before each assignment. A grade of 'A' indicates excellent and outstanding work; 'B' is a good grade and, in the case of B+, a very good grade; 'C' is a passing grade and indicates **satisfactory** work; 'D' indicates poor or shoddy work; 'F' is a failing grade.

Criminal Fictions

Date	Text/Topic - Reading Due	Writing
August 26 M	Schedule - Course Introductions	
Aug 28 F	"The Macbeth Murder Mystery"/ James Hogg	
Aug 31 M	<u>Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner</u> 5-55	
Sept 2 W	<u>Justified Sinner</u> 55-89	
Sept 5 F	<u>Justified Sinner</u> 93-142	
Sept 7 M		
Sept 9 W	<u>Justified Sinner</u> 142 -237	
Sept 11 F	<u>Justified Sinner</u> - Class Presentations	
Sept 14 M	Victorian Detective Fiction The Murdered Cousin - Sheridan LeFanu	
Sept 16 W	"Hunted Down" - Charles Dickens	
Sept 18 F	"The Purloined Letter" - Edgar Allan Poe	
Sept 21 M	"Who Killed Zebedee?" - Wilkie Collins	
Sept 22 T	Film Screening - <u>Law and Order</u>	IN BARRET 34 7.30pm
Sept 23 W	<u>Law and Order</u> - close reading	
Sept 25 F	Preparing to Write - Essay Questions	
Sept 28 M	<u>The Moonstone</u> - Wilkie Collins 1-41	Paper 1 due in class
Sept 30 W	<u>The Moonstone</u> 41-111	
October 2 F	<u>The Moonstone</u> 111-190	
Oct 5 M	<u>The Moonstone</u> 191-263	
Oct 7 W	<u>The Moonstone</u> 263-288	
Oct 9 F	<u>The Moonstone</u> 288-338	
Oct 12 M	<u>The Moonstone</u> 338-428	
Oct 14 W	<u>The Moonstone</u> 428-466	
Oct 16 F	Writing Review	
Oct 19 M		
Oct 21 W	<u>The Picture of Dorian Gray</u> - Oscar Wilde	
Oct 23 F	<u>The Picture of Dorian Gray</u>	
Oct 26 M	<u>The Picture of Dorian Gray</u>	Paper 2 due in class
Oct 28 W	<u>The Maltese Falcon</u> - Dashiell Hammett 1-60	
Oct 30 F	<u>The Maltese Falcon</u> 60-111	
Novem 2 M	<u>The Maltese Falcon</u> 112-150	
Nov 3 T	Film Screening - <u>The Maltese Falcon</u>	IN BARRET 34 7.30pm
Nov 4 W	<u>The Maltese Falcon</u> 150-217	
Nov 6 F	Writing Review	
Nov 9 M	<u>An Unsuitable Job for a Woman</u> - P.D.James 1-89	
Nov 11 W	<u>An Unsuitable Job for a Woman</u> - 89-174	
Nov 13 F	<u>An Unsuitable Job for a Woman</u> - 174-250	
Nov 16 M	<u>The New York Trilogy</u> - Paul Auster 1-71	
Nov 18 W	<u>The New York Trilogy</u> 71-130	
Nov 20 F	<u>The New York Trilogy</u> 133-192	
Nov 23 M	<u>The New York Trilogy</u> 192-308	Proposal & Bib due
Nov 25 W		
Nov 27 F		
Nov 30 M	student meetings	
December 2 W	student meetings	
Dec 4 F	student meetings	
Dec 7 M	<u>The New York Trilogy</u> - Round-up discussions	
Dec 9 W	Final Class	
Dec 11 F		Extended Essay due