

EN3E7-30 Crime Fiction, Nation and Empire: Britain 1850 - 1947

20/21

Department

English and Comparative Literary Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Upamanyu Mukherjee

Credit value

30

Module duration

20 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module will help the students understand the central importance of the practices and narratives of crime, law, order and policing to the formation of British national and imperial power and identities from 1850-1947.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

By focusing on popular narratives of crime, the module will reflect on their situation within and relationship with British nationalism and imperialism. In so doing, it will resonate with issues of nationalism, imperialism and the cultural/material politics of popular narrative fiction that are also raised in other degree-level modules such as the European Novel, New Literatures in English and The Global Novel. Students will be introduced to a wide range of primary, critical and historical/archival materials. They will have to analyze and assess theories and narratives of nation, empire, class, ethnicity to trace the traffic between literature, law and social power at specific historical moments in British and world history. Additionally, they will develop skills required to assess the lines of continuity that link imperial Britain, to the contemporary neo- or late-

imperial global dispensation.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Term 1

Wk.1. Introduction: Approaches to British crime, fiction, nationalism and empire 1850-1914

Wk.2. Charles Dickens, Bleak House I

Wk.3. Charles Dickens, Bleak House II

Wk.4. Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White

Wk.5. Wilkie Collins, The Moonstone

Wk.6. Reading Week

Wk.7. Mary Braddon, Lady Audley's Secret

Wk.8. Arthur Conan Doyle, The Sign of Four

Wk.9. Arthur Conan Doyle, Selected Short Stories from, The Penguin Complete Sherlock Holmes:

- 'A Scandal in Bohemia'
- 'The Blanched Soldier'
- 'The Creeping Man'

Wk.10 R. Austin Freeman, "The Mystery of 31 New Inn"; L.T. Meade and Clifford Halifax, "The Adventures of a Man of Science: The Sleeping Sickness" (Adventures of a Man of Science); (The Mystery of 31 New Inn available here:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12187/12187-h/12187-h.htm>)

Term 2:

Wk.1. Introduction: Reading crime during imperial twilight, Britain 1910-1947

Wk.2. G.K. Chesterton, The Innocence of Father Brown stories in The Penguin Complete Father Brown

Wk.3. Agatha Christie, The Murder at the Vicarage (Harper Collins, 2016)

Wk.4. Agatha Christie, Death on the Nile (Harper Collins, 2014)

Wk.5. Dorothy Sayers, Strong Poison (Hodder Paperbacks, 1968)

Wk.6. Reading Week

Wk.7. Dorothy Sayers, Gaudy Night (Hodder Paperbacks, 2016)

Wk.8. Ngaio Marsh, Surfeit of Lampreys

Wk.9. Ngaio Marsh, Death and the Dancing Footman (The two Marsh novels are collected by Harper Collins, 2009)

Wk.10 Conclusion: Crime Fiction, Power and Resistance.

Learning outcomes

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

- Demonstrate coherent and detailed knowledge of selected texts and concepts relating to contemporary literary and cultural production;
- Deploy advanced analytical and critical skills through close reading/viewing of the set texts;
- Demonstrate a conceptual understanding that enables the development and sustaining of a critical argument;

- Describe and critically evaluate recent research and/or scholarship in subject;

Indicative reading list

Primary Texts: Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*; Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*; Mary Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*; Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Penguin Complete Sherlock Holmes*; ; R.Austin Freeman, "The Mystery of 31 New Inn"; L.T.Meade and Clifford Halifax, "The Adventures of a Man of Science: The Sleeping Sickness"; G.K.Chesterton, *The Penguin Complete Father Brown*; Agatha Christie, *The Murder at the Vicarage* and *The Mysterious affair at Styles*; *Murder in Mesopotamia* and *Death on the Nile*; Dorothy Sayers, *Gaudy Night*; Ngaio Marsh, *A Surfeit of Lampreys* and *Death and the Dancing Footman*.

Secondary Texts: Auden, W.H. *The Guilty Vicarage* (1963); Bell, Ian and Daldry, Graham (eds), *Watching the Detectives* (1990); Barnard, Robert., *A Talent to Deceive* (1980); Bird, Delys (ed.), *Killing Women* (1993); Botting, Fred, *Gothic* (2001); Browne, Ray and Kreiser, Lawrence *The Detective as Historian* (2000); Cawelti, John G., *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* (1976); Earwaker, Julian and Becker, Kathleen, *Scene of the Crime* (2002); Fiske, John, *Understanding Popular Culture* (1992); Foucault, Michele, *Discipline and Punish* (1991) and *Power/Knowledge* (1980); Priestman, Martin (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (2003), *Detective Fiction and Literature* (1990), *Crime Fiction* (1998); Klaus, Gustav and Knight, Stephen (eds), *The Art of Murder* (1998); Knight, Stephen, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (1988), *Crime Fiction 1800-2000* (2004); Light, Alison, *Forever England* (1991); Malmgren, Carl, *Anatomy of a Murder* (2001); Mandel, Ernst, *Delightful Murder* (1984); Most, Glenn and Stowe, William (eds), *The Poetics of Murder* (1983); Munt, Sally, *Murder by the Book*; Mukherjee, Pablo, *Crime and Empire* (2003); Orwell, George, *The Decline of English Murder and Other Essays* (1944); Plain, Gill, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction* (2001); Porter, Dennis, *The Pursuit of Crime* (1981); Reddy, Maureen, *Sisters in Crime* (1988); Roth, Marty, *Foul and Fair Play* (1995); Walker, Ronald and Frazer, June (eds), *The Cunning Craft* (1990), *Summerscale, Kate, The Suspicion of Mr Whicher* (2008); Caroline Reitz, *Detecting the Nation* (2004); Ronald Thomas, *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science* (2004).

Subject specific skills

This module will help the students understand the central importance of the practices and narratives of crime, law, order and policing to the formation of British national and imperial power and identities from 1850-1947. By focusing on popular narratives of crime, the module will reflect on their situation within and relationship with British nationalism and imperialism. In so doing, it will resonate with issues of nationalism, imperialism and the cultural/material politics of popular narrative fiction that are also raised in other degree-level modules such as the *European Novel*, *New Literatures in English* and *The Global Novel*. Students will be introduced to a wide range of primary, critical and historical/archival materials. They will have to analyze and assess theories and narratives of nation, empire, class, ethnicity to trace the traffic between literature, law and social power at specific historical moments in British and world history. Additionally, they will develop skills required to assess the lines of continuity that link imperial Britain, to the contemporary neo- or late-imperial global dispensation

Transferable skills

- Demonstrate coherent and detailed knowledge of selected texts and concepts relating to contemporary literary and cultural production;
 - Deploy advanced analytical and critical skills through close reading/viewing of the set texts
 - Demonstrate a conceptual understanding that enables the development and sustaining of a critical argument
 - Describe and critically evaluate recent research and/or scholarship in subject
 - Display an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity, and contradictions within contemporary cultural productions
 - Make appropriate use of scholarly reviews and primary sources
 - Exhibit an advanced command of written English together with a wide-ranging and accurate vocabulary
 - Apply confident textual analysis and fluent critical argument to initiate and carry out an extended essay
 - Conduct independent research through self-generated questions
 - Explore methodologies for reading British narratives of crime, law and order within the context of nationalism, imperialism
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	18 sessions of 1 hour 30 minutes (9%)
Private study	273 hours (91%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

Research & reading.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
Assessed Essay 2 x 4,000-word essays	80%	
Exercise 1 x Citation and Bibliography Exercise	20%	

Feedback on assessment

Written comments; opportunity for further oral feedback in office hours

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 3 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing
- Year 4 of UENA-QP37 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing with Intercalated Year
- Year 4 of UENA-Q301 Undergraduate English Literature with Intercalated Year
- Year 3 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 4 of UENA-QW35 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies with Intercalated Year
- Year 4 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature
- Year 4 of UFIA-QW26 Undergraduate Film and Literature (with Study Abroad)

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UCXA-QQ37 Undergraduate Classics and English
- Year 3 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 3 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature
- Year 4 of UPHA-VQ73 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature with Intercalated Year