

EN2E7-30 Crime Fiction, Nation and Empire: Britain 1850 - 1947

23/24

Department

English and Comparative Literary Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Jen Baker

Credit value

30

Module duration

18 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module will introduce students to the emerging genre of crime and detective fiction in Britain as a way to 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

This module will introduce students to the emerging genre of British crime and detective fiction, its heroes and villains, its settings, its narrative quirks, its publication contexts, and more, as a way to 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. 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, gender, and ethnicity to trace the traffic between literature, law and social power at specific historical moments in British and world history.

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. Mary Braddon, Lady Audley's Secret I

Wk.5. Mary Braddon, Lady Audley's Secret II

Wk.6. Reading Week

Wk.7. Lady Detectives

Wk.8. Wilkie Collins, The Moonstone I

Wk.9. Wilkie Collins, The Moonstone II

Wk.10. Arthur Conan Doyle, The Sign of Four

Term 2:

Wk.1. Men of Detection: Sherlock short stories and other short detective fiction of period.

Wk.2. G.K. Chesterton, selections from The Innocence of Father Brown stories

Wk.3. The Interwar Years - Critical Movements

Wk.4. Agatha Christie, The Murder at the Vicarage

Wk.5. Dorothy Sayers, Strong Poison

Wk.6. Reading Week

Wk.7. Margery Allingham, Flowers for the Judge

Wk.8. Agatha Christie, Death on the Nile

Wk.9. Ngaio Marsh, Death and the Dancing Footman

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;
- Demonstrate a critical consideration of the development of a genre in light of national and Imperialist narratives of crime.

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 Pen-

guin Complete Father Brown; Agatha Christie, The Murder at the Vicarage and The Mysterious affair at Styles; Murder in Mesopotemia 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).

Research element

independent assessment

Interdisciplinary

Strong historical analysis required

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 and their contexts, the module will reflect on their situation within and relationship with British nationalism and imperialism. 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.

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.

Other activity description

Workshop on finding and using primary sources

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 A3

	Weighting	Study time
Glossary of Terms	10%	
Critical definitions of given terms based on discussions and reading from Term 1. 1000 words in total		
Assessed Essay	40%	
Essay which puts one primary text from the first Unit of the course in dialogue with independently researched primary sources and uses critical backing where required.		
Essay Plan	10%	
(800 words in total) that contains two versions of the thesis statement, argument, and structure outline for the second essay (including details of text choice) before consultation with tutor and a revised version after a document office hour/email consultation with the tutor. To be submitted on tabula. (10%)		
Assessed Essay	40%	
Essay which responds critically to pre-formed questions using a few texts from the course and a range of critical sources.		

Feedback on assessment

Written comments; opportunity for further oral feedback in office hours

Availability

Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 2 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 2 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 2 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature
- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ52 Undergraduate Philosophy, Literature and Classics

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UCXA-QQ37 Undergraduate Classics and English

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature