

TUTORIAL: DETECTIVES AND THEIR FICTIONS

Fall 2002

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Office Hours: MW 14:30-16:00; TTH 10:00-10:50, and by appointment

Course Description

Detectives and Their Fictions

This tutorial focuses on the literary and film representations of detectives and the generic conventions within which those characters operate. First, we will examine the conventions of detective fiction established by E.A. Poe and refined by the English tradition. Then we will examine the American “hard-boiled” conventions in literature and film. Finally, we will concentrate on works that challenge, reshape, or parody such conventions.

Required Texts

- Burns, Rex and Mary Rose Sullivan (eds). *Crime Classics. The Mystery Story from Poe to the Present*. (Penguin). Material available as class handouts and on the Burling Library Reserve.
- Fulwiler, Toby and Alan R. Hayakawa. *The College Writer's Reference*. Third edition. (Prentice Hall).
- Nabokov, Vladimir. *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* (Vintage)

Methodology:

• Reading

It is expected that you will prepare your assignments carefully, which translates into annotation and close attention to both form and content of each work. Figure on a minimum of two and a half hours for preparation. More time will be needed when preparing for presentations.

• Writing

There will be five papers of varied lengths and a reading journal. Please refer to the class schedule for due dates. The first three papers will be short (1-3 pages) analyses in which you engage a specific issue raised in the assigned texts or films. The fourth paper will be a focused bibliography on your research topic on Nabokov's novel. The fifth and last paper will be a comprehensive paper (7-10 pages) on some aspect of *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* as it relates to the topic of detection and will include discussion on one of the sources cited in your bibliography.

Barring *force majeure* causes, all papers are due in class and are not accepted if late.

• Oral Presentations / Class discussions

There will be several informal presentations and two formal ones. The first will be a short (5-7 min.) presentation on a secondary source (article). The second presentation will be longer (15 min.) and will be on your research project (after consultation with the instructor).

During the course of the semester you or your group will be asked to lead our class discussion on one of the assigned readings or films.

- Primary sources for the second Oral Presentation

Crime Classics (Burling Library Reserve)

Chesterton, G. K. "The Invisible Man" (CC 139-154)
Christie, Agatha. "The Blue Geranium" (CC 231)
Futrelle, Jacques "The Problem of Cell 13" (CC 103-136)
O'Connor, Flannery. "The Comforts of Home" (CC 317-336)
Queen, Ellery. "The Adventure of Abraham Lincoln's Clue" (CC 299-314)
Sayers, Dorothy, "The Adventurous Exploit of the Cave of Ali Baba" (CC 201-228)
Woolrich, Cornell: "Murder at the Automat" (CC: 247-265)

Listening Room (Burling Library)

Blue Velvet (Lynch, 1986)
Crossfire (Dmytryk, 1947)
D.O.A. (Mate, 1949)
Farewell, My Lovely (Richards, 1975)
Laura (Preminger, 1944)
Midnight Show (Randal, 1939)
Shock Corridor (Fuller, 1963)

- **Grading**

Your course grade will be based on your overall performance in the areas of preparation, attendance, participation, and the quality of your written and oral work. Absences will affect your grade.

Class work (quality of preparation, participation, etc)	40%
Formal Presentations	20%
Written work	40%

READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

08/29 *Crime Classics* (CC), Introduction (ix-xxiv); Barnet, "How to Write About Fiction"
Informal presentation: My favorite detective/style/case.

09/03 Poe: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"

09/05 Exercise on citation and paraphrasing (handout)

09/10 Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia" (CC 55-76); "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (CC 77-99)

09/12 Poe: "The Purloined Letter" (CC 35-51); Workshop: Paper #1

09/17 **Paper #1 Due (Commentary)**—Todorov, "The Typology of Detective Fiction"

09/19 Hammet, "The House on Turk Street" (CC 181-198); Mac Donald, "The Sleeping Dog" (CC 340-353)

09/23 Screening: *The Maltese Falcon* (7-9 pm, ARH 224)

09/24 *The Maltese Falcon* (Houston, 1941)

09/26 Mc Bain, "Sadie, When She Died" (CC 357-388); Workshop: Paper #2

09/30 Screening: *High and Low* (7-9 pm, ARH 224)

10/01 **Paper #2 Due (Comparison & Contrast)** – *High and Low* (Kurosawa, 1963)

10/03 Glaspell, "A Jury of Her Peers" (CC 157-177); Faulkner, "Hand upon the Waters" (CC 269-282)

10/07 Screening: *Chinatown* (7-9 pm, ARH 224)

10/08 *Chinatown* (Polanski, 1974)

10/10 Borges: "Death and the Compass"

10/15 **Oral Presentation** (Todorov's article and any story or film discussed in class, except Poe's)

10/17 **Paper #3 (Opinion)—No class. Arrange appointment with Librarian for Paper #4**

10/22 Fall Break

10/24 Fall Break

10/29 Nabokov: *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* - **Reading Journal Due**

10/31 Nabokov: *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*

11/05 Nabokov: *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*

11/07 Nabokov: *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* —**Paper #4 (Bibliography/Library Research)**

11/12 Nabokov: *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*

11/14 Nabokov: *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*

11/18 Screening: *Citizen Kane* (7-9 pm, ARH 224)

11/19 *Citizen Kane* (Wells, 1942); —**Select primary source for the second Oral Presentation**

11/21 **Paper # 5 due** - No Class (work on outline for the Oral Presentation)

11/26 **Outlines for Oral Presentation due in class (Stories or films not discussed in class)**

11/28 Thanksgiving

12/03 Oral Presentations

12/05 Oral Presentations

12/06 Oral Presentations

12/08 Evaluations and Wrap-Up