

Fall 2015

## **ENGL 2090**

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## ENGL 2090-476: Mystery and Detective Fiction

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### Texts and Materials

The following novels are required. They will be in the bookstore, but you may buy them online as well. You may choose to purchase a different edition, but be aware that you will have a difficult time keeping up with classroom discussion and taking notes because the pagination will be off. *Note: these are listed alphabetically by author, not in the order in which they will be read. See the Syllabus at the end of this document for a reading and discussion schedule.*

1. Cain, *Double Indemnity*, Vintage, 0679723226
2. Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, Vintage, 978-0394758282
3. Christie, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, Random House, 978-0-8129-7720-2
4. Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, Random House, 978-0-8129-6854-5
5. Hammett, *The Dain Curse*, Random House, 978-0-679-72260-1
6. Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs*, St. Martin's Griffin, 0312195265
7. Highsmith, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, W. W. Norton, 0393332144
8. Short stories – will be provided in PDF form in the Moodle course site

### Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to

1. introduce students to the literary analysis of fictional works;
2. enable students to distinguish among the various forms that murder fiction takes;
3. introduce students to critical viewpoints of fictional works and enable them to develop their own critical analyses in a variety of contexts;
4. guide students in critiquing and improving their own writing.

### Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to

1. effectively analyze the elements of mystery, detective and crime fiction writing;
2. demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of mystery, detective and crime writing and how these related genres have changed over time;
3. articulate their own theory of mystery, detective and crime fiction writing and demonstrate its application in an analysis of literary texts;
4. analyze their own strengths and weaknesses as thinkers/writers and set goals for their writing.

## **Course Description**

This is a course in the study of narrative genre, designed to define two relatively distinct narrative forms, mystery and detective fiction, and to distinguish between them in terms of their fictional worlds, their treatment of plot resolution and closure, their character types, and their dominant ideology. In the latter part of the term we will look at an adjacent narrative form, the crime novel.

The course combines reading and multi-media content with participation and applied learning. You will read stories and novels, and review weekly lessons in the form of lecture notes, media samples, linked resources, and brief audio files and/or videos. These will be posted in the weekly folders you'll find in Moodle. You will complete short assignments including objective quizzes, quick response writing, and an ongoing collaborative glossary or wiki project. Attendance and participation will be documented through students making at least one weekly discussion forum post in response to prompts that will be provided in the forums.

## **Course Requirements**

The effort required in an online class is no different than that for a conventional classroom course. Plan to spend between six and nine hours each week reading, discussing, writing and studying.

Use the Syllabus to plan and read ahead to be ready to discuss a novel by the beginning of the week for which it is assigned. If a novel is assigned over more than a week's time, read at least half before the assigned dates. Students are not expected to understand each work in detail, recite from it at will, or answer direct questions about it on command after an initial reading. Our lessons and discussions will deepen their knowledge and interaction with the text after that first, perhaps rushed and cursory, reading.

In addition to the readings on the syllabus, I will post a few short stories and critical essays over the semester. Students should keep up with the Announcements section in our course and check their UNO email weekly.

Notice that attendance and participation account for ten percent of the overall grade; this is an interactive course, and its success depends on students' input and ideas. It also means students can lose a whole letter grade simply by failing to post in the weekly discussion forums. Each class member's comments and questions are valuable, so everyone should make every effort to post a couple of times a week.

If you are experiencing trouble with keeping up or with understanding the course, contact me. If a crisis happens and you must miss some course time, let me know. Assignments are due on their stated due dates but allow one late submission of the major assignments, meaning one exam or one paper, but you must contact me and arrange for this ahead of time. I will deduct ½ letter grade for every day a paper is late.

There is no makeup for weekly discussions, quizzes and short assignments; once the week is over, you will not be given credit for any work left undone. If you fall behind on these types of assignments, come see me so I can help get you back on track.

## **Grade Structure**

Grades will be based on participation, short assignments, two exams, and two papers.

10% Discussion Participation

10% Short assignments (quizzes, short responses, glossary and/or wiki)

20% Paper 1

20% Paper 2

20% Midterm Exam

20% Final Exam

I will provide instructions in the course regarding expectations and requirements for each assignment. The one-hour (60 minute) midterm exam will be proctored and students will have the choice of coming to campus to take the exam or taking it online through a proctoring service for a fee, which is explained below. Whether on campus or online, students will verify their identities by providing photo ID before taking the exam.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.

### **Accommodations**

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

### **Verification for Online Students**

To ensure academic integrity, all students enrolled in distance learning courses at the University of New Orleans may be required to verify their identity when completing exams or other high-stakes assignments. At the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course, verification may include on-campus proctored examinations, off-site or online proctored examinations, or other reasonable measures to ensure student identity. If students cannot attend an on-campus proctored exam, UNO partners with ProctorU, a live, online proctoring service that allows students to complete exams from any location using a computer, webcam, and reliable internet connection. Verification measures for this course are identified below and any fees associated are the responsibility of the student.

### **Pricing for ProctorU**

- \$8.75 for exams up to 30 minutes
- **\$17.50 for exams from 31 up to 60 minutes \***
- \$25.00 for exams from 61 up to 120 minutes
- \$33.75 for exams from 121 up to 180 minutes
- \$42.50 for exams beyond 180 minutes

\*The cost to take our midterm

Students are encouraged to schedule their appointment at least 72 hours in advance to avoid additional costs. For convenience, students have the option to choose either the Take it Soon or Take it Now options

with the additional charges (+\$5.00 or +\$8.75 respectively) to be paid at their own expense. Take it Soon allows a test to be scheduled within 72 hours of the chosen start time; Take it Now allows a test to be taken on-demand with no appointment needed.

You will find more detail and a link to the ProctorU portal here: <http://www.uno.edu/distance-education/online-testing.aspx>.

## Schedule of Readings (Syllabus)

This syllabus indicates the dates we will address the following novels and stories. You are responsible for keeping up with any changes to this syllabus. I will post any such changes in Moodle.

Week 1: Introduction to the course  
Aug 19 Review requirements and conduct introductions in forum

Week 2: Introduction to Mystery Fiction  
Aug 24 Short stories – see Moodle ; Glossary Project begins

Week 3: Short stories – see Moodle  
Aug 31

Week 4: Labor Day Holiday Sept. 7  
Sept. 8 Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*

Week 5: Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*  
Sept 14

Week 6: Christie, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*  
Sept 21

Week 7: Christie, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*  
Sept 28 Introduction to Detective Fiction  
Hammett, *The Dain Curse*

Week 8: Hammett, *The Dain Curse*  
Oct 5 Mid-semester exam Oct. 5-9

Week 9: Chandler, *The Big Sleep*  
Oct 12 Mid-semester break Oct. 15-16

Week 10: Chandler, *The Big Sleep*  
Oct 19 Cain, *Double Indemnity*

Week 11: Cain, *Double Indemnity*  
Oct 26

Week 12: Introduction to the Crime Novel  
Nov 2 Highsmith, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*

Week 13: Highsmith, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*  
Nov 9

Week 14: Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs*  
Nov 16

Week 15: Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs*  
Nov 23 Thanksgiving Holiday Nov. 26-27

Week 16: Harris, *Silence of the Lambs*  
Nov 30 exam reviews

Final Exams week: Dec. 7-11