ENGLISH 208K
Detective Fiction

Prof. K. McArthur
Office: HH 262 888-4567 X3398
Office Hours: Wed. 12:30 - 2:30 pm.
Email: kmcarthu@watarts.uwaterloo.ca

Texts:

Agatha Christie, The Murder of Roger Ackroyd.
Amanda Cross, The James Joyce Murder
Dashiel Hammett, The Maltese Falcon
P. D. James, Unnatural Causes
Sara Paretsky, Tunnel Vision
Ellis Peters, Monk’s Hood
Edgar Allen Poe, Selected Tales.

Schedule:

May
2 . Introduction
4 -11 Poe and the origins of Detective Fiction
16 - 18 Sherlock Holmes- A. Conan-Doyle and The Hound of the Baskervilles
30 - June 1 The British country-house mystery, and the early growth of the detective
figure - amateurs and ‘professionals’ - Christie, Sayers, Marsh, Allingham

June
6 - 13 P.D. James, Adam Dalgliesh and Unnatural Causes. The modern British
detective novel - Rendell, George, Dexter, Burley, Graham
15 - 22 Dashiell Hammett, Sam Spade and The Maltese Falcon. The American
‘private eye’, and the beginning of the American tradition.
22 Sara Paretsky, V.I. Warshawski and the female ‘hard-boiled private eye’.
27 - 29 Amanda Cross. The James Joyce Murders and the growth of the American
tradition of the detective novel - amateurs and ‘professionals’- Grafton,
Cornwell, Muller, Pickard, MacDonald

July
4 - 11 Ellis Peters, Brother Cadfael, Monk’s Hood, and ‘Specialty’ detective
fiction- Perry, Sedley, Tremayne, Tourney
13-25 Eric Wright, Charlie Salter and The Night the Gods Smiled, Gail Bowen,
Deadly Appearances. Canadian Detective Fiction, amateurs and
‘professionals’ - Gordon, L. R. Wright, Porter.

Requirements:
In-class seminar/presentation, Outline and Annotated Bibliography, worth 30%.
Essay, approximately 1500 words due July 13, 2000, worth 30 %.
Final examination, three hours, worth 40%.
Course Description:
Detective Fiction looks at the beginnings, growth and significance of the genre and, through a chronological/generic survey, explores the various authors, the various detective figures and the larger issues of the fiction. We will also be looking at dramatic adaptations of some of the works studied.

Assignment Descriptions:
Seminar:
Students will be required to give a 15 minute seminar presentation, with a partner, on an author and detective figure not assigned as required reading. Dates for the presentations will be assigned in the second week of classes and students will be required to hand in, on the presentation day, an annotated bibliography containing at least 4 secondary sources and an outline of the presentation. A fuller description of the seminar requirements will be circulated with the schedule. Worth 30% of the final grade.

Essay:
Students will be required to hand in a 1500 word (approx. 5-7 typed, double-spaced pages) essay on a topic either arising from the seminar presentation work, but individually prepared, or a topic of choice with permission of the instructor. As this course is offered through the English Department, the essay will be marked for the quality of the writing and for the quality of the literary analysis. Worth 30% of the final grade.

Examination:
A three-hour final examination will be written in the official examination period and will cover the required readings.