ENGLISH 208K: DETECTIVE FICTION

Spring Term, May – July, 2004
T/R 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., HH 150

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Office Hours: Wed. 12:00pm-1:00pm
Thurs., 11:30 a.m–1:00 p.m.

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Tues., 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Murder and mayhem with an international flair! This course will look beyond the “formula” as we study detective fiction from around the world and examine certain critical approaches to the forms of the genre. We will be reading works from both classic and contemporary authors and, in particular, will examine the ways in which national cultures, social conventions and worldviews influence individual authors and inform the fiction they produce. Included in the course will be selections from Sweden, New Zealand, Great Britain, Europe and North America.

TEXTS:

Required reading:

John Brady
Michael Dibdin
Tony Hillerman
P. D. James
Sebastien Japrisot
Henning Mankell
Ngaio Marsh
Ian Rankin
Janwillem van de Wetering
L. R. Wright

A Stone of the Heart
Blood Rain
A Thief of Time
Death of an Expert Witness
The Sleeping Car Murders
Firewall
Died in the Wool
Hide and Seek
Outsider in Amsterdam
Strangers Among Us

Recommended:

(Royalties from the purchase of this book go to an English Department Scholarship Fund)
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Mid-Term Examination:

Students will be required to write an in-class, mid-term exam on Tuesday, June 15, 2004, covering course material from Poe through Marsh. Worth 20% of the final grade.

Essay:

Students will be required to hand in a 1250 – 1750 word essay (approx. 5 – 7 typed, double-spaced pages), on a topic arising from a list of suggestions or a creative project with permission from the instructors. 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. The essay (or project) is due in class on Thursday, July 8, 2004. Worth 40% of the final grade.

Final Examination:

A three-hour final examination will be written in the official examination period and will cover the required readings and lecture material from the entire course. Worth 40% of the final grade.

The Dean of Arts Office requires the inclusion of the following statement on all undergraduate course outlines:

“Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:II). If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.”

Note: Undergraduate Calendar, p. 1:II is also available at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/info/cal/UW/policy_71.html

Further to the above, we expect that you will observe all the conventions of reasonable and professional behaviour (ie turning off all cell phones, not creating a disturbance in class, distracting your fellow students with talk or other matters).
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SCHEDULE

May 4 – 6:
Introduction and critical approaches to the genre
The “Formula” defined
Poe and Dupin (CourseWare)
Doyle and Holmes (CourseWare)

May 11 & 13 – Canada:
Strangers Among Us (L. R. Wright)

May 18 & 20 – England:
Death of an Expert Witness (P. D. James)

May 25, 27, & June 1 – Scotland:
Hide and Seek (Ian Rankin)

June 1, 3 & 8 – Sweden:
Firewall (Henning Mankell)

June 8 & 10 – New Zealand:
Died in the Wool (Ngaio Marsh)

June 15: Mid-term Examination

June 17 & 22 – France:
The Sleeping Car Murders (Sebastien Japrisot)
Review of MLA Guidelines

June 24 & 29 – Italy:
Blood Rain (Michael Dibdin)
Essay Writing Tips

July 1 – Canada Day (no class)

July 6 & 8 – Ireland:
A Stone of the Heart (John Brady)
Essay Due in class July 8

July 13 & 15 – United States:
A Thief of Time (Tony Hillerman)

July 20 & 22 – The Netherlands:
Outsider in Amsterdam (Janwillem van de Wetering)

July 27 – Course Review