

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
2227G: Crime Writing
Winter 2018

Section: # 001
Time/Room: Wednesdays 6:30pm-9:30pm in
Sommerville House 3305
Instructor: Dr. Michael Arntfield
www.michaelarntfield.com

Email: marntfie@uwo.ca
Office: Lawson Hall 3270

Office hours: Wednesdays 1:30pm-2:20pm &
5:30pm-6:20pm

Course Objectives

This course introduces students to the conventions of crime fiction through the interdisciplinary lens of both literary studies and criminology. Students will in turn become acquainted with the process of writing substantive and procedurally-accurate crime stories for a variety of media, including print, television, podcast, stage, and film. Drawing on classic and canonical works, as well as iconic crimes and trials, students will have an opportunity to author manuscripts reflecting the four major subgenres: the amateur detective, the cozy whodunit, the hardboiled thriller, and the police procedural. Students will also be introduced to the theory and practice of criminal evidence and procedure, as well as the study of the criminal mind as they create original texts encompassing the genre's archetypal crimes, including but not necessarily limited to murder, ransom kidnapping, and the theft of art and antiquities.

Required Texts

- ☞ Arntfield, M. (2017) *Mad City*. New York, NY: Little A Books
- ☞ Messent, R. (2012) *The Crime Fiction Handbook*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell

Recommended Texts

⌘ See titles as listed in the course schedule by section. Many are available online for free through the Gutenberg Project, and all are available at the D.B. Weldon Library.

Course Assignments

1. Amateur detective short story (15%) – Due Jan. 31
2. Cozy whodunit short story (20%) – Due Feb. 28
3. Hardboiled thriller teleplay/pilot outline (25%) – Due March 21
4. Police procedural prospectus & sample chapter (30%) - Due April 11
5. Attendance, peer reviewing/editing, & in class work (10%)

Tentative Course Schedule

Part I: The Literary Origins & Fundamentals of Crime Writing

Recommended readings for this section:

- 📖 Arntfield, M. A. (2016) *Gothic Forensics*. Palgrave-Macmillan
- 📖 Crow, C.L. (1999) *American Gothic: An Anthology: 1787-1916*. Wiley-Blackwell
- 📖 Poe, E. A. (2009) *Edgar Allan Poe: Complete Tales & Poems*. Castle Books

🔪 Week 1 (Jan. 10): The Gothic Tradition & Crime Fiction

Required readings: Arntfield, Messent: pp. 1-8, 109-115

Part II: The Amateur Detective

Recommended readings for this section:

- 📖 Chesterton, G.K. (1910) *The Blue Cross*. Chesterton & Brown
- 📖 Christie, A. (1930) *Murder at the Vicarage*. Harper-Collins
- 📖 Doyle, A.C. (1902) *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Oxford
- 📖 Gardner, E.S. (1961) *The Case of the Postponed Murder*. Pocket Books
- 📖 Minichino, C. (1998) *The Helium Murder*. Avalon

🔪 Week 2 (Jan. 17): Conventions, Style, & Narrative Staples

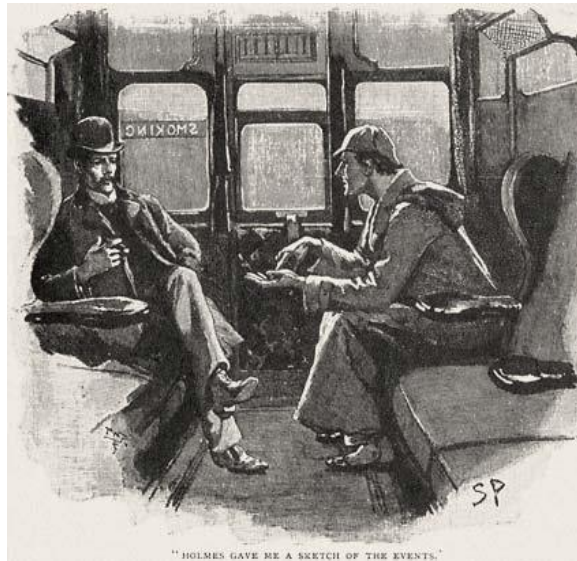
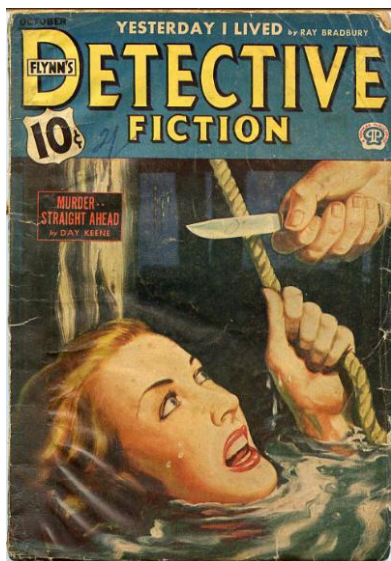
Required readings: Arntfield, Messent: pp. 27-33, 116-126

🔪 Week 3 (Jan. 24): Overview of Key Works & Peer Review Workshop

Required readings: Arntfield, Messent: pp. 127-135

🔪 Week 4 (Jan. 31): Section Summary

No readings. **Assignment #1 due electronically by January 31**



Part III: The Cozy Whodunit

Recommended readings for this section:

- 📖 Allingham, A. (1929) *The Crime at Black Dudley*. Jarrolds Publishing
- 📖 Christie, A. (1934) *Murder on the Orient Express*. Harper-Collins
- 📖 Collins, W. (1868) *The Moonstone*. Wadsworth Classics
- 📖 Crispin, E. (1946) *The Moving Toyshop*. Vintage
- 📖 Winters, B. (2012) *The Last Policeman*. Quirk Books

🔪 Week 5 (Feb. 7): Conventions, Style, & Narrative Staples

Required readings: Arntfield, Messent: 127-135

🔪 Week 6 (Feb. 14): Overview of Key Works & Peer Review Workshop

Required readings: Arntfield, Messent: pp. 11-26 & 127-135

🔪 Week 7 (Feb. 21): READING WEEK – NO CLASS

Review readings as required.

🔪 Week 8 (Feb. 28): Section Summary

No readings. **Assignment #2 due electronically by Feb. 28**

Part IV: The Hardboiled Thriller

Recommended readings for this section:

- 📖 Cain, J.M. (1944) *Double Indemnity*. Vintage
- 📖 Chandler, R. (1939) *The Big Sleep*. Vintage
- 📖 Hammett, D. (1941) *The Maltese Falcon*. Vintage
- 📖 Hammett, D. (1934) *The Thin Man*. Vintage
- 📖 Moore, A. & Campbell, E. (1999) *From Hell: Collected Edition*. Top Shelf

🔪 Week 9 (March 7): Conventions, Style, & Narrative Staples

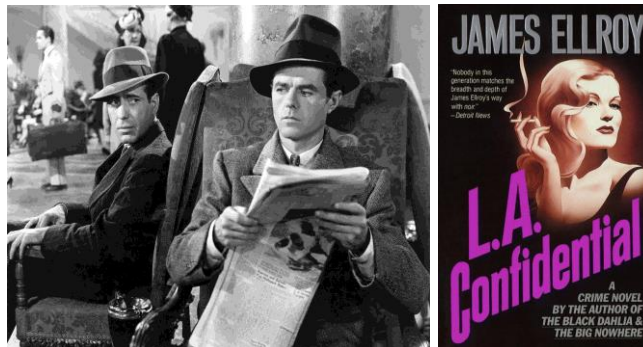
Required readings: Arntfield, Messent: pp. 34-40, 50-84

🔪 Week 10 (March 14): Overview of Key Works & Peer Review Workshop

Required readings: Arntfield, Messent: pp. 136-158 & 227-239

🔪 Week 11 (March 21): Section Summary

No readings. **Assignment #3 due electronically by March 21**



Part V: The Police Procedural

Recommended readings for this section:

- 📖 Connelly, M. (1994) *The Concrete Blonde*. Grand Central Publishing
- 📖 Ellroy, J. (1990) *LA Confidential*. Grand Central Publishing
- 📖 Ellroy, J. (1987) *The Black Dahlia*. Grand Central Publishing
- 📖 Harris, T. (1981) *Red Dragon*. G.P. Putnam
- 📖 McBain, E. (1956) *Cop Hater*. Pocket Books

📌 **Week 12 (March 28): Conventions, Style, & Narrative Staples**

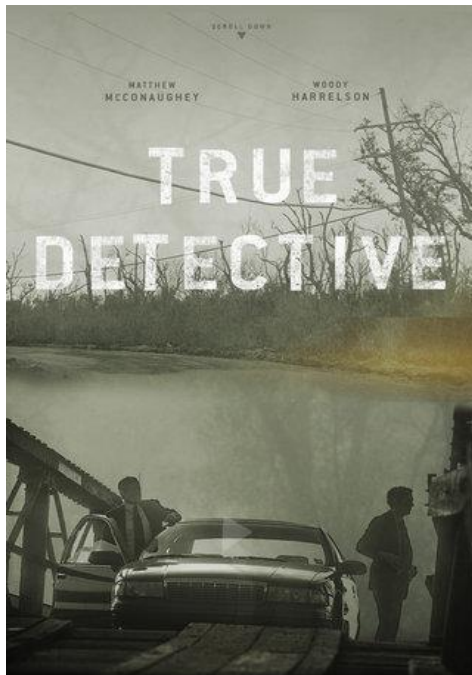
Required Readings: Arntfield, Messent: pp. 41-49, 85-106

📌 **Week 13 (April 4): Peer Review Workshop & Course Wrap-up**

Required readings: Arntfield, Messent: pp. 187-207

📌 **Week 14 (April 11): END OF TERM – NO CLASS**

Assignment #4 due electronically by April 11 at 4:30pm



📌 **Assignment Format**

All assignments are to be typed, using 12 point font unless otherwise specified, and submitted electronically via OWL Sakai as .pdf files. All assignments must have your name, course name, section number, and the professor's name on the first page.

This is a creative writing class and it is expected that you will not be citing any outside source material as you would when writing conventional academic monographs or research papers. In any exceptional cases when you might be inclined or required to cite outside sources (including any copyrighted images or multimedia content that accompanies your narratives) you will be expected to follow MLA, APA, or CMS standards for documentation.

↳ Assignment Submission

Assignments are due in-class on the date specified on the schedule. Late essays will be penalized at the rate of 5% per day, including weekends, unless I've granted an extension at least 72 hours in advance and in writing. You must apply for extensions ahead of the due date; they are not automatic. I don't like to penalize late assignments; however, you need to know that deadlines are not a matter of negotiation. For these reasons, all assignments will be due on the date specified barring some unforeseen changes in circumstances or catastrophic event. Following any other policy would be an injustice to you as an emerging author. **NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE TERM ENDS.**

In addition to all assignments being submitted electronically for grading purposes, note that in this course the final version of each of your essays will go through OWL Sakai to turnitin.com to verify originality. If hard copies are at some point deemed necessary, please submit essays to the Writing Department Drop Box outside Lawson Hall Room 3270, making sure you include your professor's name and your section number. However, do not:

- fax assignments
- e-mail assignments

Keep copies of all assignments submitted.

*N.B: In addition to submitting final drafts on/by the due date for each assignment, you are required to bring a rough draft of each assignment to class for each of the scheduled peer-review sessions. Failure to attend a scheduled peer-review session with a sufficiently completed rough copy to enable a meaningful review, or to otherwise participate in the peer-review session, **will** result in the earned mark for that assignment being reduced by 10%. In other words, an assignment that would have normally earned a 75, for example, will instead receive a recorded grade of 65. This penalty will be applied in addition to any other penalties incurred, e.g. for late submission.*

↳ Attendance policies

Attendance at class is required to improve as a writer. Here is the Writing Studies attendance policy in this class:

- You may miss up to three hours (the equivalent of one week of class) of class meetings during the term without explanation. That means that the first three class hours you miss will be recorded as absences but *excused provided you don't miss any more.*
- However, if you miss a total of four to nine class hours (the equivalent of up to three full weeks of class), your final grade will be reduced by 10% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).
- If you miss a total of more than nine hours of class meetings (the equivalent of more than three weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be reduced by 15% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 68).

This policy will be waived only for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting (e.g. if you've missed three hours, and need or want to miss another class meeting) discuss these reasons with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors. See also: '**Medical Accommodation Policy**' below.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of ‘make-up class’ in another course **will** count as non-attendance, and **will** attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at Western University **shall not require** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student’s other scheduled class times. If you are asked or ‘required’ to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean’s office. If you elect to miss a Writing class in order to write such a test in another class, that is **your** choice; your absence will not be excused.

Attendance also extends to tardiness. If you are more than 20 minutes late, you will be penalized an hour of attendance. Please make every effort to be on time as late entry can disrupt the flow of discussion in our class. Early departures from class, which have not been previously arranged with the instructor, will also be counted as an absence. If you leave during the break, you will be docked an hour of attendance.

↪ **Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism**

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholoff.pdf

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Note: In this course you will be required to submit an electronic copy of the final version of each of your essays to turnitin.com through your section’s OWL homepage.

↪ **Prerequisites**

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101, 2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 70 or more in Writing 1000F/G, or c) Special Permission of the Program.

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded and that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) that they have taken. If the student does not have the requisites for a course, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the course and to delete it from the student’s record. This decision may not be appealed. A student will receive no adjustment to his or her fees in the event that he or she is dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

↳ **Medical Accommodation Policy**

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or Writing Studies, and Writing Studies requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an 'Attendance' policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the "Information for All Students in a Writing Course" for more detailed information.

Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean's office of your home faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

‡ Dr. Mike's Policy on Social Media & Wireless Devices:

Note that while the responsible use of smartphones, notebook computers, tablets, and other devices as learning tools in this course is certainly encouraged, and while I understand that smartphones in particular are increasingly integral to students' social experience at Western, it is expected that these technologies will be used appropriately in the context of the classroom. Please respect your professor (me) and peers (your friends and classmates) by refraining from SMS texting, BBMing, iMessaging, or using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, et al. other than during the designated break times. Students who are found to be distracted by and/or routinely engaged in social media, or found using wireless devices for personal business during lectures, peer review sessions, or in-class assignments will be deemed to be *mentally absent* and will have their attendance and participation marks affected to the same degree as someone who has failed to attend entirely. Please don't make this an issue. Please use discretion and common sense.