

San José State University
Department of English & Comparative Literature ENGL 21: Mystery and Detective Fiction, Section 01, Spring 2019

Course and Contact Information

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| Instructor: | Dr. Colton Saylor |
| Office Location: | FOB 112 |
| Telephone: | 408-924-4479 |
| Email: | colton.saylor@sjsu.edu |
| Office Hours: | Tues and Thurs, 3:00PM-4:00PM (or by appointment if necessary) |
| Class Days/Time: | Mon and Wed, 9:00AM-10:15AM |
| Classroom: | BBC 130 |
| Prerequisites: | It is recommended that students complete A2 (such as English 1A) before taking this course. |
| GE/SJSU Studies Category: | C2 (Letters) |

Course Learning Management and one.SJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through one.SJSU to learn of any updates.

ENGL 21 Course Description

This course will investigate the unique place that detective fiction and the crime novel holds in American culture. This course's main interest is in how detective fiction creates a critical space in which society can work through issues of justice and violence. In tracking the evolution of the detective genre from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, we will discuss how the attraction of detection in fiction has led us to seek out these same narratives in the crimes that take place in reality. At the same time, we will observe how other ethnic canons have managed to expand the possibilities of the detective novel by rejecting a Western notion of knowledge in favor of their respective intellectual and cultural traditions.

ENGL 21 Learning Outcomes

For The Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches.

3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, context, and nature of the subject.
4. Articulate relations among culture, history, and texts.

For General Education Area C2 (Letters), Students shall be able to:

1. Recognize how significant works illuminate enduring human concerns.
2. Respond to such works by writing both research-based critical analyses and personal responses.
3. Write clearly and effectively.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO): Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Examine significant works of the human intellect and imagination
2. Understand the historical and cultural contexts in which such texts were created
3. Recognize the accomplishments and issues related to women and diverse cultures reflected in such texts

ENGL 21 Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, you are expected to spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

Essay Breakdown:

All assignments due to Canvas unless otherwise instructed.

Assignment Word Count and Assignment GELO

| Assignment | Word Count | Learning Goals |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Essay # 1 (Close Reading) | 750-1000 | GE 1, 2, 3; E 1, 2, 3 |
| Essay # 2 (Final Paper) | 1,500-1,750 | GE 1, 2, 3; E 1, 2, 3, 4 |
| <i>Serial</i> Reading Responses (3) | 250-500 | GE 1, 2, 3; E 1, 2, 3, 4 |

***Serial* (<https://serialpodcast.org/season-one>)**

Throughout the course, we will—as a class—listen to the first season of the *Serial* podcast. Each week, you will be required to download the assigned episode (these are free to download from any online source for podcasts). Additionally, you will be required to write a 250-500 word response to three episodes throughout the quarter.

You will post these responses to Canvas under the Reading Response portal (under the Assignments tab); responses to a particular week must be up by the following Monday at 5:00PM. These responses can include the following:

- A description of your reactions to the week’s evidence and theories
- An analysis of the show’s host, Sarah Koenig, and her detecting style
- An explanation of how the stylization of the show affected your response to the reporting

Required Texts

Available for Purchase through Canvas page

A Rage in Harlem, Chester Himes, **ISBN-10:** 9780679720409; **ISBN-13:** 978-0679720409

In Cold Blood, Truman Capote, **ISBN-10:** 9780679745587; **ISBN-13:** 978-0679745587

Bone Game, Louis Owens, **ISBN-10:** 0806128410; **ISBN-13:** 978-0806128412

Blanche on the Lam, Barbara Neely, **ISBN-10:** 0140174397; **ISBN-13:** 978-0140174397

Other required readings can be found either linked in the syllabus or as PDFs in Canvas.

Grading Policy

Essay # 1 20%; Essay # 2 25 %; Reading Responses 15%; Final Exam 35 %;
Participation 5%

Participation includes the completion of all in-class work, such as group presentations, in-class writing responses, peer editing workshops, and your contributions to class discussion. You should be prepared to talk. That means having readings completed and available in class (either hardcopy or on computer/tablet). If you do not attend class, you will not be participating, which will reflect on your final grade.

Late papers (including drafts) will be docked up to one full letter grade each day they are late. Students must receive a C- or higher to pass the course

About Grades Requirements for particular assignments will vary, but in all cases essay grades will reflect the paper's effectiveness, which is broken down into three major areas: content (this includes maturity and sophistication of thought), organization, and expression.

An "A" range essay is organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment, written in a unique and compelling voice. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively with a solid command of grammar, mechanics, and usage.

A "B" range essay demonstrates competence in the same categories as an "A" essay, but it may show slight weakness in one of these areas. It will respond to the topic suitably and may contain some grammatical, mechanical or usage errors.

A "C" range essay will complete the requirements of the assignment, but it will show weaknesses in fundamentals, such as development. It may show weakness in mastery of grammar, mechanics, usage, or voice.

A “D” range essay will neglect to meet all the requirements of the assignment or may be superficial in its treatment of the topic. It may lack development or fail to stay on topic. It may contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that interfere with reader comprehension.

An “F” essay does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (<60)

This course must be passed with a C- or better as a CSU graduation requirement.

Classroom Protocol

You need to participate, be on time, and be courteous to your peers and to your teacher. When we are discussing the readings, you should either have a physical copy or a copy pulled up on a laptop or tablet. Your cell phone should remain in your pocket or bag unless you offer me a convincing argument as to why you need to have it out.

University Policies

University Policies: the link below contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/index.html>.

Note on Course Readings and Projects:

Sometimes projects and class discussions include material with a sensitive nature. In this course, students encounter materials that differ from and perhaps challenge their understanding of reality. Students are encouraged to discuss issues that may arise from materials with their instructor.

ENGL 21, Section 01, Mystery and Detective Fiction, Spring 2019

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice: you are responsible for any changes made in class or through email.

| Week | Date | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines |
|-------------|-------------|---|
| 1 | 1/28 | Introduction |
| 1 | 1/30 | Class Online – Post: Detective Fiction Diagnostic |
| 2 | 2/4 | Read: Edgar Allan Poe, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” |
| 2 | 2/6 | Read: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Adventure of the Dancing Men” |
| 3 | 2/11 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 1 Watch In-Class: “The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual” |
| 3 | 2/13 | Read: Agatha Christie, “Witness for the Prosecution” |
| 4 | 2/18 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 2 |

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| | | Read: Raymond Chandler “Red Wind” , “The Simple Art of Murder” |
| 4 | 2/20 | Read: Chester Himes, <i>A Rage in Harlem</i> , pp. 1-50 |
| 5 | 2/25 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 3 Read: Chester Himes, <i>A Rage in Harlem</i> , pp. 51-100 |
| 5 | 2/27 | Read: Chester Himes, <i>A Rage in Harlem</i> , pp. 101-151 Close Reading Paper Due 3/1 |
| 6 | 3/4 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 4 Read: Joan Didion, “Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream” |
| 6 | 3/6 | Read: Truman Capote, <i>In Cold Blood</i> , pp. 1-85 |
| 7 | 3/11 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 5 Read: Truman Capote, <i>In Cold Blood</i> , pp. 86-171 |
| 7 | 3/13 | Read: Truman Capote, <i>In Cold Blood</i> , pp. 172-256 |
| 8 | 3/18 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 6 Read: Truman Capote, <i>In Cold Blood</i> , pp. 257-343 |
| 8 | 3/20 | Watch In-Class: <i>Law & Order</i> |
| 9 | 3/25 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 7 Midterm Review |
| 9 | 3/27 | Midterm |
| 10 | 4/1 | SPRING BREAK |
| 10 | 4/3 | SPRING BREAK |
| 11 | 4/8 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 8 Read: Louis Owens, <i>Bone Game</i> , pp.1-64 |
| 11 | 4/10 | Read: Louis Owens, <i>Bone Game</i> , pp. 65-129 |
| 12 | 4/15 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 9 Read: Louis Owens, <i>Bone Game</i> , pp. 130-194 |
| 12 | 4/17 | Read: Louis Owens, <i>Bone Game</i> , pp. 195-256 |
| 13 | 4/22 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 10 Watch In-Class: <i>Brick</i> |
| 13 | 4/24 | Watch In-Class: <i>Brick</i> |
| 14 | 4/29 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 11 Read: Eleanor Taylor Bland, <i>Dead Time</i> , pp. 1-67 |
| 14 | 5/1 | Read: Eleanor Taylor Bland, <i>Dead Time</i> , pp. 68-137 |
| 15 | 5/6 | Listen: <i>Serial</i> , Episode 12 Read: Eleanor Taylor Bland, <i>Dead Time</i> , pp. 138-211 |
| 15 | 5/8 | Peer Review Workshop |
| 16 | 5/13 | Final Review Final Paper Due TBD |
| Final Exam | 5/16 | Final |
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