

**Department of English
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Crime Fiction**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course takes a closer look at the genre of crime fiction. The course outlines a broad perspective of the genre of crime fiction from its earliest incarnations to modern-day TV drama. We will explore a variety of different forms of crime fiction, and how the genre more generally reflects cultural, historical and social issues. The study material for this course will consist of literary texts, TV series, and films drawn from the popular cultural canon. Topics we will discuss include conspiracy, serial crime, trauma, the epistemology of clues, history and crime, and the criminal mind. The course begins with a historical overview of detective fiction and concludes with a creative workshop on how to write a detective story. Students with a taste for murder, crime, and suspense — and above all the desire to solve enigmas and mysteries — are welcome to attend this course.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- understand the historical developments of crime fiction
- understand how to approach and read crime fiction
- appreciate the importance, relevance and value of crime fiction as cultural documents
- produce a well-reasoned essay

TEXTS

- Poe, Edgar Allan. ‘The Purloined Letter’ (1844)
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. ‘The Musgrave Ritual’ (1893)
- Sayers, Dorothy. ‘The Unsolved Puzzle of the Man with no Face’ (1926)

FILM

- *Vertigo* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1958)
- *Memories of Murder* (dir. Bong Joon-ho, 2004)

- *The Silence of the Lambs* (dir. Jonathan Demme, 1991)
- *The Da Vinci Code* (dir. Ron Howard, 2006)

RECOMMENDED READING

- Horsley, Lee. *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Priestman, Martin (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Priestman, Martin. *Crime Fiction from Poe to the Present*. Northcote House, 1998.
- Rzepka, Charles. *Detective Fiction*. Polity, 2005.

ASSESSMENT

- A) Class preparation, participation and presentation: 30%
- B) Exam: 20%
- C) Essay: 50%

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

Grade A / Excellent: Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The ‘A’ grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are expected to be achieved only by a small minority

Grade A- / Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on ALMOST ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Grade B+ / Good (Plus): HIGH performance on all learning outcomes, OR HIGH performance on some learning outcomes which compensates WELL for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply WELL the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level WELL.

Grade B / Good: SUBSTANTIAL performance on all learning outcomes, OR SUBSTANTIAL performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a MORE COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade B- / Good (Minus): GOOD performance on all learning outcomes, OR GOOD performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade C+ / Fair (Plus): VERY SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C / Fair: SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C- / Fair (Minus): SOMEWHAT SATISFACTORY performance on A NUMBER OF learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to SOMEWHAT apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the BARE basic requirement at this level.

Grade D+ / Pass (Plus): BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on A FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade D / Pass: ALMOST BARELY satisfactory performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in very few areas while responding very minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade F / Failure: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Fails to address the course and likely does not understand what the course requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.