

Twentieth-Century Genre The Case of the Detective

<http://andrewgoldstone.com/genre24>

Mondays, 10:20 a.m.

Professor Andrew Goldstone (andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)

Office hours: Wednesdays, 1:00–2:00 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Detective fiction, probably the single most-read and best-selling category of fiction across the whole of the last century, nonetheless occupies a marginal place in standard literary-historical accounts. What does fiction since 1900 look like from the perspective of this commercial genre? What does *genre*—usually considered from the heights of “the lyric” and “the novel”—look like from the perspective of this genre? This course proposes a literary history of the Anglo-American detective story, with a special emphasis on the evolving institutions of genre fiction and the changing forms of cultural capital. At the same time we will reconsider the theory of genre, focusing on the challenge to classic accounts from the sociology of culture. The goal is less to unlock the mysteries of mystery than to explore the methodological demands of a mass-cultural literary phenomenon: not only its texts but its readers, writers, and publishers.

LEARNING GOALS

Students in this course will:

1. gain a broad understanding of the history of detective fiction, including developments in theme, form, and modes of publication;
2. engage critically with multiple theoretical approaches to literary genre, using detective fiction as a case study;
3. reflect systematically on the methodologies needed to study popular and “high” literary texts together; and
4. carry out substantial independent research on detective fiction in primary and secondary sources and prepare an article-length argumentative essay on the subject.

SCHEDULE

MONDAY, JANUARY 22.

In class: Conan Doyle, "A Case of Identity" (also in Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes: Selected Stories*).

In class: Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1447a–b29 (§1).

MONDAY, JANUARY 29. PRECURSORS/CATEGORY ERRORS.

Selections from Poe, *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*:

"Murders in the Rue Morgue," www.eapoe.org/works/mabbott/tom2to43.htm.

Consider the earliest periodical context in *Graham's* (April 1841):

search.proquest.com/americanperiodicals/docview/135598147.

"The Purloined Letter," www.eapoe.org/works/mabbott/tom3to11.htm.

Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1447a–1452b13 (§1–11).

Frow, *Genre*, chap. 1 (and optionally chap. 3).

Genette, *The Architext*, 1–49.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5. RIVALS.

Selections from Conan Doyle, *Sherlock Holmes: Selected Stories*:

The Sign of the Four.

"A Scandal in Bohemia."

"The Six Napoleons."

Pirkis, "The Redhill Sisterhood."

Moretti, "The Slaughterhouse of Literature."

In class: anti-DH.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12. GOLDEN.

Christie, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*.

Haycraft, "The Detection Club Oath."

Dine, "Twenty Rules for Detective Stories."

Knox, introduction to *The Best English Detective Stories of 1928*, 12–16.

Todorov, "The Typology of Detective Fiction."

In class: database expedition no. 1.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19. PULPS.

"Sergeant Ryan," "The Mysterious Highwayman."

Chapin, "Through the Dragon's Valley."

Daly, "Knights of the Open Palm."

Hammett, "Crooked Souls."

McCann, *Gumshoe America*, chap. 1.

Rieder, *Science Fiction*, chap. 2.

In class: physical objects.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26. FORMULA.

Keene, *The Secret of the Old Clock*.

Benson, "The Ghost of Ladora."

Johnson, "From Paragraphs to Pages."

Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, chap. 1.

Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, chaps. 1–11 (to get ahead).

MONDAY, MARCH 4. STYLE.

Chandler, *The Big Sleep*.

Jameson, *Raymond Chandler*, chap. 2.

Smith, *Hard-Boiled*, chap. 3.

Norman, "The Big Empty."

MONDAY, MARCH 18. EXCESS.

Himes, *Cotton Comes to Harlem*.

Denning, "Topographies of Violence."

In class: database expedition no. 2.

(FRIDAY, MARCH 22.)

Narrative bibliography due.

MONDAY, MARCH 25. GENRE FEMINISM?

James, *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*.

Horsley, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, 242–62.

Griswold, "A Methodological Framework for the Sociology of Culture."

DiMaggio, "Classification in Art."

MONDAY, APRIL 1. THEORY IN FOCUS.

Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 114–25, 214–56.

Frow, *Genre*, chaps. 4, 6.

Altman, *Film/Genre*, chaps. 3–5, 7.

Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, chaps. 1–10 (to get ahead).

MONDAY, APRIL 8. NORTH.

Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Sure, it's a lot.

Berglund, "Genres at Work."

(WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, AT 12 P.M.)

Kalle Berglund (Uppsala) and Justin Tackett (Warwick) on the history and future of audiobooks, Murray 302.

MONDAY, APRIL 15. CONTEMPORARY PUBLISHING.

Wilkins, Driscoll, and Fletcher, *Genre Worlds*, chap. 1.
Thompson, *Merchants of Culture*, introduction, chaps. 4–5.
Thompson, *Book Wars*, chaps. 1, 6.

(THURSDAY, APRIL 18, AT 4 P.M.)

John Thompson (Cambridge), Ana Cecilia Calle (Universidad Javeriana, Colombia), and Gustavo Guerrero (CY Cergy Paris) on independent publishing, Murray 302.

(FRIDAY, APRIL 19, AT 12 P.M.)

Discussion of *Book Wars* with Thompson and AG.

MONDAY, APRIL 22. LITERARY.

Everett, *Assumption*. Don't stop short of the spectacular ending.
Rosen, "Literary Fiction and the Genres of Genre Fiction."
Lizardo and Skiles, "Reconceptualizing and Theorizing 'Omnivorousness.'"
Bonus quantitative application: Lizardo, "From Macrogenres to Microgenres via Relationality."

MONDAY, APRIL 29. PARTING SHOTS.

Students' informal remarks on work in progress.
McGurl, *Everything and Less*, introduction and chap. 1.
Underwood, *Distant Horizons*, chap. 2.
Childress et al., "Genres, Objects, and the Contemporary Expression of Higher-Status Tastes."

(MONDAY, MAY 20.)

Paper due to the graduate office.

REQUIREMENTS

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

$$\text{grade} = 0.1(\text{participation}) + 0.1(\text{write-ups}) + 0.8(\text{paper})$$

PARTICIPATION

There are many ways to participate actively and effectively in a seminar discussion. It is important for everyone (including the instructor) to reflect on what they are doing as a discussion participant and how they can best contribute to the development of the collective inquiry. I am always happy to meet one-on-one to talk over ideas or concerns about the seminar.

SEMINAR-LEADING AND WRITE-UP

In each seminar session, one student will have a special responsibility for one of the theoretical or scholarly readings: that student will begin discussion of that reading with some observations and questions. A short (2 pp.) write-up, including a reflection on a fictional text as well the theoretical/scholarly text, is due the subsequent week.

NARRATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

In preparation for the final paper, a short narrative about potential primary and secondary sources is due at the end of March. This bibliography will not be separately graded.

PAPER

The major assignment is a research paper of 20–25 pp. (8000–12000 words) making an argument building on the themes and materials of the course. Papers must address the material circumstances of generic production and circulation.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All reasonable accommodation will be given to students with disabilities. Students who may require accommodation should speak with me at the start of the semester. You may also contact the Office of Disability Services (ods.rutgers.edu; 848-445-6800).

BOOKS TO BUY

The course texts are available at Barnes & Noble, or order elsewhere (search using the ISBNs below).

Chandler, Raymond. *The Big Sleep*. New York: Vintage, 1992. ISBN: 9780394758282.

Christie, Agatha. *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*. New York: Signet, 2023. ISBN: 9780593639580.

Conan Doyle, Arthur. *Sherlock Holmes: Selected Stories*. Edited by Barry McCrea. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN: 9780199672066.

Everett, Percival. *Assumption: A Novel*. Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2011. ISBN: 9781555975982.

Himes, Chester B. *Cotton Comes to Harlem*. New York: Vintage, 1988. ISBN: 9780394759999.

James, P.D. *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*. New York: Scribner, 2001. ISBN: 9780743219556.

Larsson, Stieg. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. Translated by Reg Keeland. New York: Vintage, 2009. ISBN: 9780307454546.

READINGS AVAILABLE VIA CANVAS

- Altman, Rick. *Film/Genre*. London: British Film Institute, 1999.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*. In *Aristotle, Poetics; Longinus, On the Sublime; Demetrius, On Style*, edited and translated by Stephen Halliwell. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995. https://www-loebclassics-com.proxy-libraries.rutgers.edu/view/aristotle-poetics/1995/pb_LCL199.29.xml.
- Benson, Mildred Wirt. "The Ghost of Ladora." *Books at Iowa* 19 (November 1973): 24–29. <https://doi.org/10.17077/0006-7474.1061>.
- Berglund, Karl. "Genres at Work: A Holistic Approach to Genres in Book Publishing." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24, no. 3 (2021): 757–776. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494211006097>.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Translated by Susan Emanuel. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Cawelti, John G. *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
- Chandler, Raymond. "The Simple Art of Murder." *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1944.
- Chapin, Anna Alice. "Through the Dragon's Valley." *Detective Story* 19, no. 5 (December 10, 1918). <https://archive.org/details/DetectiveStoryV019N0519181210/page/n79/mode/2up>.
- Childress, Clayton, Shyon Baumann, Craig Rawlings, and Jean-François Nault. "Genres, Objects, and the Contemporary Expression of Higher-Status Tastes." *Sociological Science* 8 (2021): 230–64. <https://doi.org/10.15195/v8.a12>.
- Daly, Carroll John. "Knights of the Open Palm." In *The Black Lizard Big Book of Black Mask Stories*, edited by Otto Penzler. June 1923. New York: Vintage, 2010.
- Denning, Michael. "Topographies of Violence: Chester Himes' Harlem Domestic Novels." *Critical Texts* 5, no. 1 (1988): 10–18.
- DiMaggio, Paul. "Classification in Art." *American Sociological Review* 52, no. 4 (1987): 440–55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2095290>.
- Dine, S.S. Van. "S.S. Van Dine Sets Down Twenty Rules for Detective Stories." *American Magazine* 106 (3 1928): 129–31. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015056074373?urlappend=%3Bseq=405%3Bownerid=13510798900542158-419>.
- Eburne, Jonathan P. "The Transatlantic Mysteries of Paris: Chester Himes, Surrealism, and the Série Noire." *PMLA* 120, no. 3 (May 2005): 806–21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486215>.
- Frow, John. *Genre*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2015. <https://doi-org.proxy-libraries.rutgers.edu/10.4324/9781315777351>.
- Genette, Gérard. *The Architext: An Introduction*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Griswold, Wendy. "A Methodological Framework for the Sociology of Culture." *Sociological Methodology* 17 (1987): 1–35. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/271027>.
- Hammett, Dashiell. "Crooked Souls." In *Crime Stories & Other Writings*, 35–51. New York: Library of America, 2001. http://www.loa.org/images/pdf/Hammett_Crooked_Souls.pdf.

- Haycraft, Howard, ed. "The Detection Club Oath." In *Art of the Mystery Story*, 197–99. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1946. <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.183184/page/n203/mode/2up>.
- Horsley, Lee. *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Jameson, Frederic. *Raymond Chandler: The Detectors of Totality*. New York: Verso, 2016.
- Johnson, Deirdre. "From Paragraphs to Pages: The Writing and Development of Stratemeyer Syndicate Series." In *Rediscovering Nancy Drew*, edited by Carolyn Stewart Dyer and Nancy Tillman Romalov, 29–40. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=836733>.
- Keene, Carolyn [Mildred Benson]. *The Secret of the Old Clock*. 1930. Bedford, MA: Applewood, 1991. <https://www.fadedpage.com/showbook.php?pid=20201147>.
- Knox, Ronald. Introduction to *The Best English Detective Stories of 1928*. Edited by Ronald Knox and H. Harrington. New York: Liveright, 1929. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uva.x000897051?urlappend=%3Bseq=17%3Bownerid=27021597768678650-21>.
- Leavis, Q. D. *Fiction and the Reading Public*. 1932. London: Chatto and Windus, 1965.
- Lizardo, Omar. "From Macrogenres to Microgenres via Relationality." *Poetics* 102 (February 2024). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2024.101868>.
- Lizardo, Omar, and Sara Skiles. "Reconceptualizing and Theorizing 'Omnivorousness': Genetic and Relational Mechanisms." *Sociological Theory* 30, no. 4 (December 2012): 263–82. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41818930>.
- McCann, Sean. *Gumshoe America: Hard-Boiled Crime Fiction and the Rise and Fall of New Deal Liberalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1167499>.
- McGurl, Mark. *Everything and Less: The Novel in the Age of Amazon*. London: Verso, 2021. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/lib/rutgers-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6735676>.
- Moretti, Franco. "The Slaughterhouse of Literature." *MLQ* 61, no. 1 (March 2000): 207–27. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/22852>.
- Norman, Will. "The Big Empty: Chandler's Transatlantic Modernism." *Modernism/Modernity* 20, no. 4 (November 2013): 747–70. <https://doi.org/10.1353/mod.2013.0114>.
- Pirkis, C.L. "The Redhill Sisterhood." *Ludgate Monthly* 4 (1893). <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/3713106?accountid=13626>.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*. Edited by Thomas Ollive Mabbott. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978. Baltimore: Poe Society, 2011–17. <https://www.eapoe.org/works/mabbott/tominfo.htm>.
- Rieder, John. *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017. <https://login.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e00oxna&AN=1402665&site=ehost-live>.
- Rosen, Jeremy. "Literary Fiction and the Genres of Genre Fiction." *Post45: Peer Reviewed*, August 7, 2018.
- "Sergeant Ryan" [George C. Jenks]. "The Mysterious Highwayman." *Detective Story* 6, no. 1 (January 5, 1917): 77–86. <https://archive.org/details/DetectiveStoryMagazine1917-01-05/>.
- Smith, Erin A. *Hard-Boiled: Working-Class Readers and Pulp Magazines*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000. <https://www-jstor-org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/stable/j.ctt14bs9kc>.
- Thompson, John B. *Book Wars: The Digital Revolution in Publishing*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021.

- Thompson, John B. *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*. 2nd ed. New York: Penguin, 2012.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. "The Typology of Detective Fiction." Chap. 3 in *Poetics of Prose*, translated by Richard Howard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- Underwood, Ted. *Distant Horizons: Digital Evidence and Literary Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.
- Wilkins, Kim, Beth Driscoll, and Lisa Fletcher. *Genre Worlds: Popular Fiction and Twenty-First-Century Book Culture*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2022. <https://login.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=3296421&site=ehost-live>.

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