

EN3590: CRIME FICTION

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Crime Fiction

Subject Code

EN - English

Course Number

3590

Academic Unit

English (EN)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

EN2820 Crime Fiction: Murder in the City

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

Until relatively recently, crime fiction was frequently seen, alongside other forms of popular fiction, as less worthy of serious critical attention than other forms of literature. Yet it is one of the longest-lived and most popular genres of fiction.

It also raises important theoretical questions concerning, for example, plot, character, discourse, and setting, while at the same time reflecting and illuminating transformations in social attitudes. This course will introduce students to both the historical development of crime fiction from its roots in the 19th century to the present, and explore the broad international scope of the genre. It will approach crime fictions both as texts rooted in and organised by specific generic traditions, and as social documents linked both to changing concepts of transgression, punishment, and justice, and a number of other important concepts including gender, race, and class. It will also adopt an intermedial approach to crime narratives by studying adaptations, and by examining screen crime dramas.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Trace the development of crime fiction from its historical roots through the present day, examining major trends and turning points in relation to literary and cultural history.		x	x	x
2	Distinguish the typical conventions and structures of crime fiction as a genre.		x	x	
3	Identify the genre's exploration of concepts of justice and order, especially the consequences of these values to individuals and society as a whole.		x	x	x
4	Critique a range of crime fiction texts in relation to theoretical and contextual perspectives.				x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Students will participate in interactive lectures regarding a range of set texts and theories pertinent to the analysis of crime narratives.	1, 2, 3	

2	Class /Group Discussions	Students will hold class and/or small group debates and discussions. This will allow students the chance to negotiate and reassess their personal views of selected crime texts.	1, 2, 3, 4	
3	In and out of class readings	Intensive and extensive reading will give students the chance to reflect on texts in a critical manner, applying the theories and concepts learnt in class.	1, 2, 3, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Assessed group discussions will evaluate students' abilities to reflect on and articulate views about the course' s set texts.	1, 2, 3	20	Students are encouraged to use GenAI to prepare for this assignment	Yes
2	A written assignment will allow students to apply the skills and knowledge acquired on the course by developing and supporting a claim about the course texts.	1, 2, 3	30	-	No
3	Class participation is crucial in this course. Both in-class and online activities may be considered. Students will be asked to complete a course participation document at the end of the course.	1, 2, 3	10	Students are encouraged to use GenAI to enrich class participation	Yes

4	Quiz or quizzes will allow students to demonstrate their mastery of fundamental facts and concepts related to crime narrative.	1, 2, 3, 4	40	-	No
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Participation

Criterion

Individual

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Always actively listens and responds to others as well as to the teacher.

Always actively participates in the group, helping to define goals, plans roles and timelines.

Always prepared for group tasks in class and makes excellent contributions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Frequently listens and responds to others as well as to the teacher.

Mostly participates in the group, frequently helping to define goals, plan roles and timelines

Mostly prepared for group tasks in class and contributes well.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Sometimes listens and responds to others as well as to the teacher.

Sometimes participates in the group and occasionally is observed to contribute to the team, but mostly takes a passive role.

Mostly lacks preparation for group tasks and relies on others.

Marginal (D)

Little evidence of listening and responding to others. Makes little or no contribution to the class.

Generally passive in the group and lets others do the work. Does minimum work in contributing to the team effort and

appears to rely heavily on others.

Failure (F)

No evidence of individual or team work due to non -attendance.

Assessment Task

Quiz/Quizzes

Criterion

Knowledge of texts, theories, and contexts from set readings and lectures

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstration of subject knowledge of in an exemplary way with evidence of in-depth reading and enquiry beyond the formal requirements of the course. Application of knowledge to task is excellent.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstration of good subject knowledge showing evidence of completing all readings as part of the formal requirements of the course. Application of knowledge to task is good.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstration of adequate subject knowledge but little beyond the minimum expectation of the subject. Application is adequate only and could benefit from more reading and in-depth enquiry.

Marginal (D)

Little evidence of subject knowledge and poorly applied to the task.

Failure (F)

No evidence of subject knowledge, or fails to submit task.

Assessment Task

Written Assignment

Criterion

Presentation, Accuracy and organization

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The written assignments are extremely well presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation. The written assignments are highly accurate in terms of lexis and grammar, are cohesive, and have a logical structure.

Good (B+, B, B-)

he written assignments are well presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation. The written assignments are accurate in terms of lexis and grammar, are generally cohesive, and have a clear structure.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The written assignments are adequately presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation. The written assignments are fairly accurate in terms of lexis and grammar, are somewhat cohesive, and have some structure.

Marginal (D)

The written assignments are poorly presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation. The written assignments are inaccurate in terms of lexis and grammar, have problems in terms of cohesion, and have little structure.

Failure (F)

The written assignments are very poorly presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation. The written assignments are highly inaccurate in terms of lexis and grammar, are not cohesive, and have no clear structure.

Assessment Task

Written Assignments

Criterion

Critique and commentary

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The written assignments offer an extremely effective critique of and commentary on the relevant text

Good (B+, B, B-)

The written assignments offer an effective critique of and commentary on the relevant text

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The written assignments offer an adequate critique of and commentary on the relevant text

Marginal (D)

The written assignments offer an inadequate critique of and commentary on the relevant text

Failure (F)

The written assignments offer little or no critique of or commentary on the relevant text

Assessment Task

Written Assignments

Criterion

Evidence and argumentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The claims made about the text are excellently supported by evidence and argumentation

Good (B+, B, B-)

The claims made about the text are well supported by evidence and argumentation

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The claims made about the text are supported by some evidence and argumentation

Marginal (D)

The claims made about the text are poorly supported by limited evidence and weak argumentation

Failure (F)

The claims made about the text are unsupported by evidence or argumentation

Assessment Task

Discussion

Criterion

Knowledge of subject

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstration of subject knowledge in an exemplary way with evidence of in-depth reading/research and enquiry beyond the formal requirements of the course.

Application of knowledge to the spoken task is excellent.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstration of good subject knowledge showing evidence of completing all readings/research as part of the formal requirements of the course.

Application of knowledge to the spoken task is good.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstration of adequate subject knowledge but little reading/research evident beyond the minimum expectation of the Application is adequate only and could benefit from more reading/research.

Marginal (D)

Little evidence of subject knowledge and poorly applied to the spoken task.

Failure (F)

No evidence of subject knowledge, or fails to undertake the task.

Assessment Task

Discussion

Criterion

Critical thinking and analysis

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent critical analysis/interpretation/reflection/evaluation demonstrated for the required task.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good critical analysis/ interpretation/ reflection/ evaluation demonstrated for the required task.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate critical analysis/ interpretation/ reflection/ evaluation demonstrated for the required task.

Marginal (D)

Weak critical analysis /interpretation/ reflection/evaluation demonstrated for the required task.

Failure (F)

Fails to show any critical thinking/analysis in the completion of the task or fails to undertake the task.

Assessment Task

Discussion

Criterion

Task fulfilment

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Responds to the spoken task requirement in an exemplary way.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Responds to the spoken task requirements in a good way.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Responds to the spoken task requirements in an adequate way.

Marginal (D)

Only addresses the requirements of the spoken task in a superficial way.

Failure (F)

Fails to respond to the spoken task or does not complete the task.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Genre and genre conventions; crime literature; crime writing, crime fiction, detective fiction, Golden Age crime fiction, hard-boiled fiction, international crime fiction, crime, punishment, justice, gender, race, class, adaptation, literary theory, literary history

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Chandler, Raymond. <i>The Big Sleep</i> . Penguin, 2014. (9780241970775)
2	Christie, Agatha. <i>The Murder of Roger Ackroyd</i> . HarperCollins, 2016. (9780007527526)
3	Doyle, Arthur Conan. <i>The Sign of Four</i> . Penguin, 2014. (9780141395487)
4	Hammett, Dashiell. <i>The Maltese Falcon</i> . Orion, 2005. (9780752865331)
5	Sandberg, Eric. <i>Studying Crime in Fiction: An Introduction</i> . Routledge, 2024. (9780367742096)
6	Sayers, Dorothy L. <i>The Nine Tailors</i> . Hodder & Stoughton, 2016. (9781473621398)
7	Sjowall, Maj and Per Wahloo. <i>The Man on the Balcony</i> . HarperCollins, 2011 (9780007439133).

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Individual instructors will select the required readings to complete the course CILOs.