19th Century Mystery Writing

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Monmouth College, Fall 2018

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Mellinger Learning Center Room 207

Office hours: MWF 10-11, 3-4, Th 12-2, or by appointment

This course charts the changing nature of mystery fiction from the Enlightenment through the Victorian period, beginning with the Gothic literature of the late 18th century and culminating in the detective stories of the late 19th century. Examining how early Gothic novels tested and developed techniques that later became prominent in mystery novels, we will consider the nature of the detective and the kinds of puzzles he (or she!) solves, the construction of the clue, and the production of suspense. We will study the social implications of these works and the crimes they describe, and examine when and how (or if!) the mystery novel came to shed its supernatural underpinnings.

Required Texts

*Castle of Otranto*, Horace Walpole

*The Romance of the Forest,* Ann Radcliffe

*Caleb Williams*, William Godwin

*The Vampyre*, John Polidori

*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Charles Dickens

 “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” “The Mystery of Marie Roget,” “The Purloined Letter,” Edgar Allen Poe

*Lady Audley’s Secret: A Drama in Two Acts*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, George Roberts

*The Law and the Lady*, Wilkie Collins

*Dracula*, Bram Stoker

*The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Grading

Weekly written responses (1-2 pages) 20%

Presentation 15%

Presentation Paper (2-3 pages) 15%

Final Paper Proposal + Rough Draft 10%

Final Paper (5-7 pages) 20%

Class participation 20%

Course Engagement:

You should expect to spend an average of 14 hours per week on this class; 3 hours of scheduled class time, and 11 hours per week of reading, writing, and reflecting on the material.

Presentation and Presentation Paper

 Each student will sign up to present on one piece of secondary criticism (which can be a journal article or a book chapter). Attached is a bibliography with some suggested sources, but you are encouraged to find others! In your presentation, you will (briefly) take us through the author’s argument, giving us a sense of the critical conversation and the author’s particular intervention into it. The real focus of your presentation, however, will be to connect this critical argument to the text we are discussing in class that day and provide us with some ideas or questions to discuss. Note that the critical piece you discuss does not have to be about the text we are discussing that day! Also, please avoid spoilers (for this reason, you may specifically wish to pick criticism on a different text!).

 Your presentation paper (due one week after your presentation) will begin with an account of the critical argument you presented, but it too, will primarily be focused on developing the ideas discussed in relation to our reading. Where your presentation raised questions, your paper can begin – thanks to the excellent class discussion that will no doubt have ensued – to posit some answers. Which is to say that your presentation paper will really be developing a reading of the text we discussed in class, using the secondary source you discussed as a jumping off point.

 Note: I encourage you to come discuss the secondary source with me as you are working on your presentation. Works of literary scholarship vary widely in their accessibility and their sense of audience, and I am more than happy to help you work through tougher arguments. Also, if you are presenting on a book chapter, you will probably find it helpful to read the Introduction (or Conclusion) of the book, to get a sense of the overall argument.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is an amazing, totally free resource and you should take advantage of it. They offer unlimited, peer tutoring at any stage of the writing process. It is located on the 3rd floor of Mellinger, and is open Monday-Thursday, 3-5pm, and Sunday-Thursday, 7-10pm. They are there to help!

Course Content Note

Some of the material that we will be discussing in this class may be upsetting or disturbing to you. The texts will include representations of sexual assault, racism, and trauma, and we will discuss political questions that may include sensitive topics. You may find some of the content challenging, and it may trigger you. I have chosen the material on the syllabus with great care, and I believe that it has educational value, and that it is important for us to discuss it together in class. However, if you find that the material is threatening your emotional well-being, please come see me and we will make arrangements.

 Please be aware that I am a mandated reporter – this means that I am required to report any case of sexual assault to authorities. For this reason, you may not want to disclose such information to me. If you would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can call Victim Services at 309-837-5555 (local but not campus-affiliated). You can also contact the Counseling Center at 309-457-2114.

Notice of Accommodation and Disability Support Services

Monmouth College is committed to equal education access, and I am happy to work with your individual accommodation needs. For official accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), your first step is to talk to Kam Williams, Director of Academic Support Services. She can be found in the Teaching and Learning Center, located on the 2nd floor of Poling Hall, 309-457-2257, or via email at tlc@monmouthcollege.edu. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

(Tentative) Schedule

Wed Aug 22Introductions, Day 1

Fri Aug 24 Castle of Otranto, Preface to the First Edition, 15-55

Mon Aug 27Castle of Otranto, Preface to the Second Edition, 56-end

Wed Aug 29 Romance of the Forest, 1-59

Fri Aug 31 Romance of the Forest, 59-127

Mon Sept 3Romance of the Forest, 127-199

Wed Sept 5Romance of the Forest, 199-258

Fri Sept 7Romance of the Forest, 258-306

Mon Sept 10 Romance of the Forest, 306-end; Stephanie Insley Hershinow, Born Yesterday, Ch 3

Wed Sept 12Caleb Williams, 1-48

Fri Sept 14Caleb Williams, 48-102

Mon Sept 17 Caleb Williams, 103-151

Wed Sept 19 Caleb Williams, 151-199

Fri Sept 21 Caleb Williams, 200-250

Mon Sept 24 Caleb Williams, 250-end

Wed Sept 26 The Vampyre; Franco Moretti, “The Slaughterhouse of Literature”

Fri Sept 28 Edwin Drood 1-54

Mon Oct 1 Edwin Drood, 54-110

Wed Oct 3 Edwin Drood, 110-160

Fri Oct 5 Edwin Drood, 160-end

Mon Oct 8 Poe, “Murders in the Rue Morgue”; “The Mystery of Marie Roget”

Wed Oct 10 Poe, “The Purloined Letter”; Irwin, The Mystery to a Solution, Ch 1

Fri Oct 12 FALL BREAK, NO CLASS

Mon Oct 15 FALL BREAK, NO CLASS

Wed Oct 17 Lady Audley’s Secret

Fri Oct 19The Law and the Lady, 7-57

Mon Oct 22 The Law and the Lady, 57-124

Wed Oct 24 The Law and the Lady, 124-182

Fri Oct 26The Law and the Lady, 182-226

Mon Oct 29 The Law and the Lady, 226-300

Wed Oct 31The Law and the Lady, 300-358

Fri Nov 2 The Law and the Lady, 358-end

Mon Nov 5 Dracula, 1-53

Wed Nov 7 Dracula, 53-98

Fri Nov 9Dracula, 98-160

**Final Paper proposal due**

Mon Nov 12 Dracula, 160-209

Wed Nov 14 Dracula, 209-268

Fri Nov 16 Dracula, 268-309

Mon Nov 19 Dracula, 309-end

Wed Nov 21 (NO CLASS)

Mon Nov 26 Hound of the Baskervilles, Ch 1-4

**Final Paper Rough Draft Due**

Wed Nov 28 Hound of the Baskervilles, Ch 5-8

Fri Nov 30 Hound of the Baskervilles, Ch 9-11

Mon Dec 3Hound of the Baskervilles, Ch 12-end

Wed Dec 5 Conclusions

**Final Paper due 5pm Tuesday, Dec 11**

**(Working) Bibliography**

*Signs Taken for Wonders*, by Franco Moretti.

--Ch 5, Clues, is on Sherlock Holmes mysteries, Ch 3. The Dialectic of Fear discusses Dracula.

*The Novel and the Police*, by D.A. Miller, University of California Press

--Intro is useful way of thinking about the novel as a genre and police, also has chapters on Dickens and Wilkie Collins (esp about gender in Collins)

*Detection and its Designs: Narrative and Power in 19th Century Detective Fiction*, by Peter Thomas, Ohio University Press

--chapters on Caleb Williams, Hound of Baskervilles, Dupin stories, Dickens, Collins

*The Purloined Poe*, Edited by John Muller and William Richardson, Johns Hopkins University Press

--on Dupin stories, includes the and Lacan and Derrida pieces and discussions of them

*The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800*, by EJ Clery, Cambridge University Press

--overview of Gothic, includes discussions of Walpole and Radcliffe

*Gothic Reflections*, by Peter Garrett, Cornell University Press

--theory of how the Gothic works (with shift into Victorian times), includes discussions of Walpole, Radcliffe, Poe, Stoker, Dickens,

“Searching After the Splendid Nothing: Gothc Epistemology and the Rise of Fictionality”, Katherine Ding, *ELH* 80:2 (Summer 2013), 543-573

--on the idea that the Gothic contributes to the rise of the novel by teaching readers to believe what isn’t real

“Godwin’s Handshake,” by Andrew Franta. *PMLA* vol 122, no 3 (2007), 696-710

--uses a reading of handshakes in *Caleb Williams* to examine what the novel says about politics and society

“Fugitive Pieces: Language, Embodiment, and the Case of *Caleb Williams*” by Daniel DeWispelaare, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction,* vol 28, no 2 (Winter 2015), 345-373

--examines fugitive advertising (wanted ads for criminals or runaway slaves) and what they show us about the idea of character

***“***Godwin from "Metaphysician" to Novelist: "Political Justice", "Caleb Williams", and the Tension between Philosophical Argument and Narrative” by Evan Radcliffe, *Modern Philology*, vol 97, no 4 (May 2000), 528-553

--examines the difference between *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams* as a formal difference between philosophical argument and fiction

"So Variable and Inconstant a System": Rereading the Anarchism of William Godwin's "Political Justice", by Jared McGeough, *Studies in Romanticism* vol 52, no 2 (Summer 2013), 275-309

--uses *Caleb Williams* to reconsider the arguments in *Political Justice*

 “It’s Only Love: The Politics of Passion in Godwin’s *Caleb Williams*.” By Alex Gold Jr. *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 19 (1977): 135-60.

--on homo-erotic desire in *Caleb Williams*

*The Maniac in the Cellar*, by Winifred Hughes, Princeton University Press

--explanation of sensation fiction, includes Collins, Braddon

”Railway Novels: Sensation Fiction and the Modernization of the Senses”, Nicholas Daly, *ELH* vol 66, no 2 (1999)

--on sensation fiction, anxiety, and technology. Discusses Collins and Braddon.

“Robert Audley’s Secret: Male Homosocial Desire in *Lady Audley’s Secret*”, Richard Nemesvari. *Studies in the Novel* 27:4 (1995), 515-528.

--on repressed homosexual desire in Braddon

“A Painfully “Nice Family”: Reconstructing Interdependence in Wilkie Collins’s *The Law and the Lady*”, by Rachel Herzl-Betz, *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* vol 9:1, 2015, 35-51.

--on disability and non-normative relationships, looking at Dexter & Ariel and BDSM

“Cosmetic Tragedies: Failed Masquerade in Wilkie Collins’ *The Law and the Lady*”, Aviva Briefel. *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 37:2 (2009), 463-481

--on the idea of the feminine, and make-up, in Collins

“No Clocks in his Castle: The Threat of the Duree in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*”, Alana Fletcher, *Victorian Review* 39:1 (2013), 55-69

--on time, civilization and Otherness in *Dracula*

 “Vampiric Typewriting: Dracula and its Media”, Jennifer Wicke, *ELH* vol 59, no 2 (1992)

--technology, writing, and detective work in *Dracula*

”Sherlock Holmes and the Ritual of Reason”, James Kissane and John Kissane, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, vol 16, no 4 (1963)

--*Hound of Baskervilles* as quintessential detective novel