

**Sophister Module Description Template 2021-22**

**Full Name:** THE ART OF MURDER: 19<sup>TH</sup> TO 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CRIME WRITING

**Short Name:** THE ART OF MURDER

**Lecturer Name and Email Address:** Dr Clare Clarke <clare.clarke@tcd.ie>

**ECTS Weighting:** 10

**Semester Taught:** MT

**Year:** SS

**Module Content:**

**Learning Aims:**

This module investigates the development of crime fiction as a genre, from its beginnings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with super-detective Sherlock Holmes, right up to the present day. The module explores the development of various crime sub-genres, including the classic detective short story, the clue puzzle form, developed by Agatha Christie, the American hard-boiled school, characterized by the work of Dashiell Hammett, and mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century noir fiction, which explored the dark recesses of the criminal psyche. The module also looks at texts by black and feminist writers, exploring the intersections between crime fiction, race, and gender. Lastly, we look at some of the most popular recent crime sub-genres including Nordic noir, domestic noir, and the true crime podcast narrative form. This module will appeal to students with an interest in contemporary fiction and crime fiction, as it examines how the crime genre forces us to think about the differences between the law, justice, and morality, as well as exploring the intersections between issues of class, race, and gender with ideas about criminality and detecting.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this module students will be able to:

- Trace the emergence and development of the crime genre through the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries

- Identify and examine key themes in 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century crime and detective fiction
- Discuss the themes and concerns of the set texts in relation to their social, historical, and political contexts
- Close read and analyse the primary texts paying attention to form, structure, language
- think critically about the ways in which the detective genre depicts criminality and heroism in terms of class, gender and race
- trace and interrogate developments in the history of crime fiction criticism, examining in detail a number of key approaches– Formalist, Foucauldian, Historicist, feminist
- Demonstrate skills in research, oral and written communication, and teamwork

### **Assessment Details:**

- Number of Components: 2
- Name/Type of Component(s) annotated bibliography/essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 1000/4000
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 20%/80%

### **Preliminary Reading List:**

WEEK 1: Introduction: texts and theories. Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia” (1891) and Edgar Allan Poe, “Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841)

WEEK 2: Clue-Puzzle: Agatha Christie, *The Murder on the Orient Express* (1930)

WEEK 3: Hardboiled: Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (1930)

WEEK 4: Noir: Patricia Highsmith, *The Talented Mr Ripley* (1955)

WEEK 5: Black detective fiction: Chester Himes, *A Rage in Harlem* (1957)

WEEK 6: True crime podcasts: Sarah Koenig and Julie Snyder, *Serial* (2014)

WEEK 7: READING WEEK

WEEK 8: Feminist detective fiction: Gender: Sara Paretsky, *Bitter Medicine* (1987)

WEEK 9: Nordic noir: Stieg Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2008)

WEEK 10: Domestic Noir: Paula Hawkins, *The Girl on the Train* (2015)

WEEK 11: Victim-focused narratives: *Forgotten: Women of Juárez* (2020)

[podcast] <https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1119-forgotten-the-women-of-ju-63028149/>

OR Selected essays from Rachel Monroe, *Savage Appetites: Four True Stories of Women, Crime, and Obsession* (2019)

WEEK 12: Recap and revision/essay consultations

Please note:

- Curricular information is subject to change.
- Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.