

Option name: Sherlock in the Strand: Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in serial form.

Option Short Name: Sherlock in the Strand

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ECTS Weighting: 5

Term Taught: HT

Year: JS

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the primary set text
- Develop skills in reading and analysing the content of Victorian periodicals
- Develop an understanding of how Victorian readers consumed short stories in instalments and the effects of reading in serial form
- identify and examine key themes and features of Victorian detective fiction
- Discuss the themes and concerns of the set text in relation to its social, historical, and literary contexts
- Close read the text, paying attention to issues of form, structure, genre, plot, and language
- Develop an awareness of contemporary and historical critical debates about Victorian detective fiction
- Develop skills in research, oral and written communication, and teamwork

Module Description and Learning Aims

This module introduces students to *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle, one of the most influential collections of Victorian detective fiction. Holmes first appeared in two novels, *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four* (1891), but it was not until he featured in a series of short stories in the *Strand Magazine* from 1891 that his popularity and fame grew. The twelve stories that form the volume edition (published in 1892) appeared in monthly instalments in *The Strand Magazine* between July 1891 and June 1892. *The Strand*, a popular illustrated monthly founded by Victorian publishing magnate George Newnes, played a crucial role in shaping the mass-market appeal of detective fiction and in establishing Sherlock Holmes as a cultural icon. The classic image of Holmes in an Inverness cape and a deerstalker cap, created by the *Strand* illustrator, Sidney Paget, became instantly recognisable.

Over this module we will read one story each week alongside relevant excerpts from the *Strand* and/or secondary articles which will help us to understand the genre of detective fiction. Detective fiction in this period typically revolves around mysteries, property crimes, and acts of deception—such as theft, blackmail, fraud, and occasionally murder—embedded within respectable middle- and upper-class British society. Through the figure of Sherlock Holmes, Doyle popularised the methods of rational deduction, forensic observation, and scientific reasoning, positioning the detective as a modern professional whose analytical skills restore order to a rapidly changing urban world.

As a class, week- by- week, and guided by the themes of the stories we read on that particular week, we will examine issues such as women's property and inheritance rights, attitudes towards race and empire, and themes of madness, addiction, criminality, class, and national identity. This deliberately slow and attentive mode of reading enables a sustained exploration of the stories' themes, recurring motifs, and generic influences, while also inviting students to encounter the pleasures of deferred revelation characteristic of serial publication—mirroring, in part, the experience of Victorian readers who first encountered the narratives in serial form.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Demonstrate deep and detailed knowledge of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*
- Identify and discuss the key features of the detective genre
- Understand and discuss the social, historical, and cultural contexts for Victorian detective fiction
- Understand and discuss the significance and effects of serialisation on Victorian short stories
- Understand, discuss, and analyse Victorian periodical culture, especially *The Strand Magazine*
- Discuss, debate, and formulate questions on these stories, this genre, and Victorian serial publication

Content/Schedule:

Week 1: introductory lecture, with course outline and instructions for reading by instalments. The following classes will all be tutorial/seminar style.

Week 2: A Scandal in Bohemia

Week 3: The Red-Headed League

Week 4: A Case of Identity

Week 5: The Boscombe Valley Mystery

Week 6: The Man with the Twisted Lip

Week 7: study week/no class

Week 8: The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

Week 9: The Adventure of the Speckled Band

Week 10: The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb

Week 11: The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor

Week 12: The Adventure of the Copper Beeches

N.B. PDFs will be provided for all readings. Readings of the Holmes stories may also be completed using an online text of the stories, a published edition of the stories or an audiobook)

Assessment Details (Including component percentage(s):

- TBD