Unsolved Mysteries: Reimagining the Detective Novel (FRSEM-UA ###)

“The detective… has a range of awareness that startles you, but it belongs to him by right, because it belongs to the world he lives in.”

--Raymond Chandler, “The Simple Art of Murder”

“The truth never shines forth, as the saying goes, because the only truth is that which is known to no one and which remains untransmitted, that which is not translated into words or images, that which remains concealed and unverified, which is perhaps why we do recount so much or even everything, to make sure that nothing has ever really happened, not once it's been told…”

--Javier Marias, A Heart So White

Description
In this class, we will study literary novels that borrow from the Mystery genre to pose larger questions about human existence. We’ll consider political questions about race, class, gender, and power as well as metaphysical questions about human desire, moral courage, and our place in the universe. After reading a genre classic by Raymond Chandler, we will study diverse literary works that may not fit neatly into the crime genre but that play with the desire to uncover truth. Students will be required to read and analyze the texts in a series of response papers and longer essays, and will embark on a creative “detective” project involving multiple modes of research.

Required Texts:

- Raymond Chandler, The Lady in the Lake
- Haruki Murakami, A Wild Sheep’s Chase
- Javier Marias, Tomorrow in the Battle Think on Me
- Rivka Galchen, Atmospheric Disturbances
- Katie Kitamura, A Separation
- Additional short stories/articles that I will ask you to download and print

Requirements

Class Preparedness and Participation: In a seminar we learn collaboratively so we will all depend on you to arrive on time with assignments done, ready to listen, think, speak, write, learn. If you need to miss class for a legitimate reason, email me to let me know when I can expect your homework, and contact your classmates to discuss what you missed.

Reading: This course is reading intensive. You can expect reading assignments to average 100 to 150 pages per week. Most of it is fiction, but we will also read some short critical works.

Writing: Most weeks you will write short response papers. These are ungraded but required. Failure to turn them in or to give them adequate thought will lower your grade. You will also write two longer essays (4-5 pages) and one longer research paper (7-9 pgs). Finally you will do an oral presentation on mystery of your choosing.
**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short response papers/web posts</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short essays (4 pgs)</td>
<td>40% (20% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final essay (8 pgs)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Integrity:** Please carefully review the College’s policies on academic integrity. The University makes no distinction between intentional and unintentional plagiarism. This means that when writing, always take care to distinguish between your own words and the words of other writers and your classmates. Ideas are valuable commodities—we’ll discuss this quite a bit over the course of the semester.

**Support:** The Writing Center is an excellent resource, staffed by Expository Writing Program faculty who meet with students to help them with their writing. They don’t do the work for you—they don’t edit or proofread your work or give you ideas—but they can help you figure out what you need to do in order to improve your writing. To register as a client and to schedule an appointment, go to nyu.mywconline.com. It’s wise to schedule appointments well in advance of anticipated need, as appointment slots fill up quickly around essay deadlines.

**Schedule**

**Week 1:**
Class Sherlock Holmes and Truth

**Week 2:**
Read: *The Lady in the Lake*, (first half, 115 pages)
Due: Response paper (1-2 pgs.)

**Week 3:**
Read: *The Lady in the Lake* (2nd half, 115 pages)

**Week 4:**
Reading from Edward P. Jones (handout)
Due: First short essay (5 pgs)

**Week 5:**
Read: *A Wild Sheep’s Chase*, first 150 pgs. (approx.)
Due: Response paper (1-2 pgs.)

**Week 6:**
Read: *A Wild Sheep’s Chase* (second half)
Due: Response Paper

**Week 7:**
Read: *Tomorrow in the Battle Think on Me*, (first 120 pgs)
Due: Response Paper

**Week 8:**
SPRING BREAK
Week 9:
*Tomorrow in the Battle Think on Me*, (next 120 pgs)
Due: Second essay (5 pgs)

Week 10:
*Tomorrow in the Battle Think on Me*, (last 120 pgs)
Due: Response paper (1-2 pgs.)

Week 11:
Read: *Atmospheric Disturbances,* (first half)
Due: Response paper (1-2 pgs.)

Week 12:
Read: *Atmospheric Disturbances* (second half)
Due: Response paper (1-2 pgs.)

Week 13:
Read: *A Separation*, first half
In-class Presentations

Week 14:
Read: *A Separation*, second half
In-class Presentations

Week 15:
**Final papers due.** Discussion, question-answering session, and celebration of the work we did in the previous weeks of the semester.