

Course Syllabus (O'Kelly, ENG 399, Summer 2018)



COURSE OVERVIEW

This class will focus on a genre of American fiction and comic somewhat loosely defined as crime noir. Distinct from detective fiction, hardboiled crime noir centers on criminal protagonists, often of the “career” variety. Tracing the trajectory of such a genre from its inception in 1920s hardboiled crime fiction through the 20th century and into the present reveals the philosophical stances, the cultural and social prejudices, and the economic and historic contexts from which the texts emerge. We will explore the formal and structural range of this genre through a range of novels and graphic texts: foundational hardboiled novels by Dashiell Hammett and Paul Cain, and midcentury noirs from Dorothy B. Hughes and Horace McCoy; graphic texts ranging from Drake Waller’s 1950 “picture novel” *It Rhymes with Lust* to Frank Miller’s neo-noir *Sin City*, and the recent turn to crime noir conventions in Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillip’s *Criminal*. Due to the condensed summer session format, I've had to cut a range of crime noir films from the syllabus. We will still do some background reading on film noir and I'm happy to recommend supplemental films to anyone interested.

✓ Reading and Viewing

Complete all reading assignments in accordance with the class schedule and modules. I strongly encourage you to mark important passages and take notes in your book to prepare for discussions and writing assignments.



REQUIRED TEXTS

Title	ISBN/Availability
Ed Brubaker and Sean Philips, <i>Criminal Vol. 3: The Dead and the Dying</i> (2008)	978-1632152336
Paul Cain, <i>Fast One</i> (1932)	978-0982688786

Dashiell Hammett, <i>The Glass Key</i> (1931)	978-0679722625
Dorothy B. Hughes, <i>Ride the Pink Horse</i> (1946)	MysteriousPress.com/Open Road Ebook. Available through Amazon, Apple, Google, and Kobo. Some used paperbacks are also available online.
Horace McCoy, <i>Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye</i> (1948)	Midnight Classics/Open Road Ebook. Available through Amazon, Apple, Google, and Kobo. Some used paperbacks are also available online.
Frank Miller, <i>Sin City Vol. 1: The Hard Goodbye</i> (1992)	978-1593072933
Drake Waller, <i>It Rhymes with Lust</i> (1950)	978-0692709528

Additional readings will be available as PDFs on Canvas under the relevant module.

☑ Content Warning

Readings and viewings may contain explicit depictions of sex, violence, adult themes, coarse language, and material that some might find offensive. If you think that this might be a problem for you, please contact me about to discuss whether we can find a solution, or if this is the best class for you.



COURSEWORK AND GRADING

Your grade in this class will be based on your performance on the following tasks:

Discussion Forums (8 total, 25%)

For each assigned text, you will engage in online discussion with your peers: posing questions, analyzing sections of the text, and responding to peer questions and analysis. Links to Discussion Forums are posted under the respective [module](#) (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/modules>). Detailed instructions for how to post to discussion forums, how posts will be evaluated, are listed on the discussion forum.

Weekly Quizzes (4 total, 10% of overall grade)

There will be four short quizzes to test reading comprehension. Links to quizzes will be available in modules.

Short Critical Analysis Essays (3 total, 30% of overall grade)

You will write three short analysis essays of approximately two to three pages, two on novels and one on a graphic text. Prompts for each type of essay and rubrics for evaluation will be available on Canvas.

Final Essay (35% of overall grade)

You will write a 5-7 page final essay that will be due on Canvas on Friday, 7/20. Prompts will be available on Canvas by the end of Week 2.

There is no final exam in this course.

Writing Guidelines: Papers must be double spaced and in 12 point standard font with one inch margins and minimal, single spaced headers (i.e. name, date, course title or number). As the English department's learning objectives state, essays must be focused and in clear, grammatically correct prose. Proofread your essays several times before submission. Citations should follow MLA format. Submit all writing assignments to Canvas in either DOC or DOCX format. Canvas does not process Pages or ODT files. It is your responsibility to ensure that your essay has been uploaded correctly before the deadline. If you submit an essay in an incorrect format, you will not receive comments on it. *Due to the time constraints of the condensed summer session, late papers will be marked down a letter grade per day, including weekends (E.g., from A to B, etc.)* and will not receive comments. **I will not accept late final papers.**



LEARNING OUTCOMES

The English Department's assessment procedure is built around the following six desired learning outcomes. By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. Draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
3. Perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts;
4. Write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
5. Employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;
6. Employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay's thesis.



COURSE POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Please visit the following course pages to view information on [Technical Requirements \(https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/pages/course-technical-requirements\)](https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/pages/course-technical-requirements), [How to](#)

[obtain Technical Support, \(https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/pages/technical-support-information\)](https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/pages/technical-support-information) and [Additional Resources and Information \(https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/pages/additional-resources-and-information\)](https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/pages/additional-resources-and-information) to help you succeed in the class.

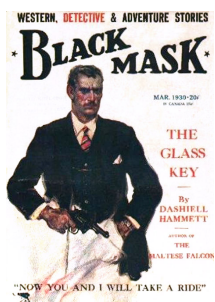


COURSE SCHEDULE

Due to the condensed time schedule, there are frequent due dates so you should regularly consult Canvas and carefully read the "Overview and Instructions" page for each module, which lists the due dates. The reading load is also much heavier during the first two weeks that focus on novels, so plan ahead. During the final two weeks on comics, the reading quantity will decrease to allow you to devote more of your effort to your final essay.

WEEK 1 (June 25 - July 1)

Module 1 | Objective Writing and the Serialized Novel



Due by Wednesday June 27 at 11:59 p.m



Read Chandler, "[The Simple Art of Murder](#)"

<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/files/5596203/download?wrap=1>

<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/files/5596203/download?wrap=1>



Read Hammett, *The Glass Key*



Contribute to [The Glass Key Discussion Forum](#)

https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/discussion_topics/444985



Due by Friday June 29 at 11:59 p.m.



Read Cain, *Fast One* including Lewis' introduction and Kohler's afterward.



Contribute to the [Fast One Discussion Forum](#)

https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/discussion_topics/444987



Complete [Quiz #1](#) (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/quizzes/115559>)

Due by Sunday July 1 at 11:59 p.m.



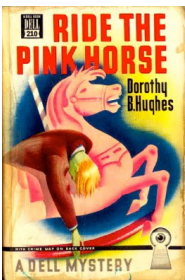
Write [Critical Analysis #1](#)

<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/assignments/617032>



WEEK 2 (July 2 - July 8)

Module 2 | Career Criminals



Due by Wednesday July 4 at 11:59 p.m



Read Hilfer, Introduction to "The Crime Novel: A Deviant Genre"



Read Hughes, *Ride the Pink Horse*



Contribute to [Ride the Pink Horse Discussion Forum](#)

<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/assignments/622836>



Due by Friday July 13 at 11:59 p.m.



Read Waller, *It Rhymes With Lust*



Read Schrader, "Notes on Film Noir"



Contribute to the [It Rhymes With Lust Discussion Forum](#)

https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/discussion_topics/445026



Complete [Quiz #3](#) (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/quizzes/117120>)

Due by Sunday July 15 at 11:59 p.m.



Write [Critical Analysis #3](#) (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/assignments/622843>)



WEEK 4 (July 14 - July 20)

Module 4 | Neo Noir



Due by **Tuesday** July 17 at 11:59 p.m (note different due dates)

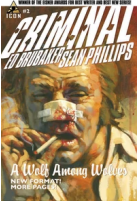


Read Miller, *Sin City Volume 1: The Hard Goodbye*



Contribute to [The Hard Goodbye Discussion Forum](#)

https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/discussion_topics/445027



Due by **Thursday July 19 at 11:59 p.m. (note different due date)**



Read Brubaker and Phillips, *Criminal Volume 1: Coward*



Contribute to the [Criminal Discussion Forum](https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/discussion_topics/445028)

(https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/discussion_topics/445028)



Complete [Quiz #4](https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/quizzes/117121) (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/quizzes/117121>)

Due by **Friday July 20 at 11:59 p.m. (note different due dates)**



Write [Final Essay](https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/assignments/622844) (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/113225/assignments/622844>)