**First Year Seminar: The Art of the Detective in Fiction and Film**

Dickinson College, Fall 2013

MWF 12:30-1:20, East College 300

Class Blog: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/fysdetective/>



Professor Sarah E. Kersh

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<http://sarahkersh.wordpress.com>

Office: East College 308

Office Hours: Monday & Friday 10-11; Tuesday 10:30-11:30;

and by appointment

**Course Description and Objectives**

“...when you have eliminated all which is impossible, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.” ~Sherlock Holmes

This class will examine the appeal of the mystery and suspense genre.  We’ll work to develop an understanding of the literary devices used to foster audiences’ experience of mystery and suspense, including point of view, characterization, plot, and setting.  In mysteries, characters and plots are driven by issues of power, crime, and law, but also gender, desire, politics, class, race, individuality, and society—just to name a few!  This is a genre driven by questions: questions of identity (Who is it? Whodunnit?), questions of epistemology (How do we know? What do we know?), and questions of hermeneutics (How should we interpret and understand?). Over the course of the semester we will examine 19th -, 20th - and 21st century short stories, novels, and films as well as a range of secondary readings that will provide theoretical frameworks through which you will become the investigators of literary and cultural contexts.

Our FYS introduces you to Dickinson as a “community of inquiry” by developing habits of mind essential to liberal learning. Through the study the art of detective fiction and film, we will:

* Critically analyze information and ideas
* Examine issues from multiple perspectives
* Discuss, debate and defend ideas, including one’s

 own views, with clarity and reason

* Develop discernment, facility, and ethical

 responsibility in using information

* Create clear academic writing
* Utilize the small group seminar format to interact

 and engage in discussion with your peers as well

 as with me, your professor

**Course Materials**

The following texts are required for the course and are available at the college bookstore:

1. *Writing Analytically*, 6th Edition, by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen (Cengage Learning, 2011) ISBN#: 978-0495910084
2. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes,* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Dover Thrift Editions, 2009) ISBN #: 978-0486474915
3. *The Maltese Falcon,* by Dashiell Hammett (Vintage Crime/Black Lizard, 1989) ISBN#978-0679722649

# *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,* by Stieg Larsson (Vintage Crime/Black Lizard; Mass Market Paperback edition, 2011) ISBN#: 978-0307949486

# Additional readings are available on Moodle or our class website unless otherwise specified in the syllabus.

\*\*Note: We will also be screening a number of films and/ or episodes of television. You will need to either attend screenings, view the required texts on your own or in the library where they are on reserve. Films/episodes to be screened are:

* *Rear Window,*  dir. Alfred Hitchcok (1954)
* *Sherlock,* “A Scandal in Belgravia”, created by  Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss (season 2, episode 1; 2012)
* an episode from the *Veronica Mars* series*,* created by Rob Thomas (2004-2007)

**Class Participation and Grading Overview**

The success of this course depends upon your regular contributions to class discussion. Course attendance is not optional. That said, I recognize things sometimes come up, and as such, I give you **three** absences throughout the course of the semester without penalty. Missing classes beyond that will result in a reduction of your participation grade. Just showing up for class, however, is not enough to guarantee a high participation grade. I also expect you to read the assigned material and be prepared to ask questions and offer opinions about it during class. Attendance alone with little or no contribution will only earn you approximately a C in participation.

I recognize that some students are hesitant to speak in front of class. If this is the case, please come talk with me during office hours early in the semester. Also, please reference your Oral Communication/ Participation Evaluation Rubric to be handed out in class and available on our class website.

Beyond participation, your grade will be based on weekly response paper and three more formal papers. The relative weight of each component is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Attendance and Participation | 10% |
| Paper #1 | 15%  |
| Paper #2 | 20% |
| Paper #3 | 25%  |
| Weekly Writing/Blog & Final Portfolio | 30%  |

Paper topics will be handed out in class at least a week before the first draft is due and we will engage in a peer-review process during class. You will have a week after peer review to revise your paper before handing it into me.

**Grade Calculations:**

I use an excel worksheet to calculate my grades. If you would like to discuss graded work, please take at least two days to review my comments, along with the grading criteria for the assignment. While I don't negotiate grades, I am happy to discuss strategies for improving your writing.

Final letter grades will be assigned in the following way:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A = 93-100 | B- = 80-82 | D = 60-69 |
| A- = 90-92 | C+ = 77-79 | F = 0-59 |
| B+ = 87-89 | C = 73-76 |  |
| B = 83-86 | C- = 70-72 |  |

**Lateness, Cell Phones, and Other Disruptions:**

You are expected to be on time. Class begins promptly and if you are more than ten minutes late, I will record you as absent. Please remember to turn OFF all cell phones unless otherwise directed. If you are a student athlete or member of a student group which requires you to miss class for a university-sanctioned event, please let me know as soon as possible.

**Electronics**:

Since thoughtful listening and responding will be instrumental to the success of our course, I prefer students not rely on electronic instruments in class. **In other words, I do not like for students to use laptops for general note taking in class.** If we do in-class writing assignments you may use a laptop. (For these assignments, I will give advance notice.) If this presents a problem, please see me.

**Deadlines:**

Deadlines are firm. Unless you have asked for and received prior permission to extend the deadline or have extenuating circumstances about which I have been made aware, late assignments will lose one grade increment per day late. I cannot accept assignments more than one week late.

**Extra Credit:**

If you attend any Dickinson College screening, workshop, or lecture and write a 1-2 page reflection stating how the event related to this class and what was interesting about it for you, I will award 1 point extra credit. You may complete up to 5 extra credit reflections. These points will be added to your lowest paper grade at the end of the semester. I will reject any reflection I feel is insufficient or unsuitable.

**“How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” – E.M. Forster**

**Writing is a process and not an end product**. At the end of the semester, you will hand in a written reflection about your writing throughout the course of the semester, so make sure to **keep all** returned in-class writings and short assignments as well as formal papers.

**Peer Review and Conferences:**

Students will meet with me at least twice during the semester to discuss writing. Failure to meet with me **counts as one absence.** Students will also participate in Peer Review in class. **You must have peer reviews to receive full credit for your final paper.** Further details TBA.

**The Writing Center**

Writing is an integral part of this seminar and you will be required to visit the Writing Center *at least once* over the course of the term.

Writers of all levels and abilities need feedback in order to develop their ideas and grow as writers. Dickinson’s trained writing tutors can help you generate ideas, begin drafting, revise a rough draft, figure out your professor’s preferred documentation style, understand and respond to professor feedback, edit your writing – among other things. You can walk in or call and make an appointment at (717) 245-1620 (or 245-1767 for foreign language writing). For more information about hours and procedures, visit the web: <http://www.dickinson.edu/academics/resources/writing-program/content/Writing-Center/>

**Academic Integrity**

With respect to all assignments in this course, I expect you to do your own work. You are certainly encouraged to discuss course content and readings with your fellow classmates, but your work in papers must be your own. Regarding outside sources, you will need to cite all of your sources. We will discuss ways of doing this before your first paper is due. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please feel free to ask.

From Dickinson College's Community Standards:

 "Respect for ideas — our own and others’ — is a hallmark of academic integrity. We show respect by acknowledging when we have used another’s words or ideas in our work. We expect others to acknowledge when they use our ideas or words in their work. Students are expected to do their own work on quizzes, papers, examinations, class assignments, etc. Normally, a paper may be submitted in fulfillment of an assignment in only one course. Exceptions require permission from the instructors. Collaboration must be noted in writing and requires the consent of all instructors."

(<http://www.dickinson.edu/uploadedFiles/student_life/resources/dean_of_students/content/2012-2013%20Community%20Standards.pdf> )

**Accommodations**

I am committed to including all students in this course and am happy to discuss accommodations with students, provided that this conversation happens **early** in the semester and definitely before any papers/projects are due. From Dickinson College’s Disability Services:

“Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. I am available to discuss the implementation of those accommodations. Students requesting accommodations must first register with Disability Services to verify their eligibility. After documentation review, Marni Jones, Director of Learning Skills and Disability Services, will provide eligible students with accommodation letters for their professors. Students must obtain a new letter every semester and meet with each relevant professor prior to any accommodations being implemented. These meetings should occur during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances), and at least one week before any testing accommodations. Disability Services is located in Biddle House. Address inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at 717-245-1734 or email [disabilityservices@dickinson.edu](https://exmail.dickinson.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=fKQrC3azrU-NWvvfc7vmjGokFU6fVtAIVtaNsZ6ERxfdxiMbj55s6T2GrRkIdhXjHbjHzNI-cxg.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.dickinson.edu%2fstudent-life%2fresources%2fdisability-services%2fcontent%2fFaculty-Resources%2fdisabilityservices%40dickinson.edu). For more information, see the Disability Services website: [www.dickinson.edu/disabilityservices](https://exmail.dickinson.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=fKQrC3azrU-NWvvfc7vmjGokFU6fVtAIVtaNsZ6ERxfdxiMbj55s6T2GrRkIdhXjHbjHzNI-cxg.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.dickinson.edu%2fWorkArea%2flinkit.aspx%3fLinkIdentifier%3did%26ItemID%3d10737420869).”

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**Other Needs:**

If you have a concern or issue regarding this class, your ability to participate in it, or the material we are covering, please stop by my office hours or email me to set up an appointment. The sooner we can talk about your concerns, the better I will be able to help you negotiate a solution. I am committed to providing equal educational opportunity to all students.

**Class Contacts:**

If you miss class for ANY reason it is YOUR responsibility to contact another member of the class to see what you may have missed. Please make sure you have at least three contacts:

1. name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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— This schedule is subject to change —

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| ***Date*** | ***In-class Topic***  | ***Reading and Writing Due IN CLASS***  |
| ***Thurs 8/22******9:00-10:15*** | course introduction and overview |  |
| ***Sat 8/24 1:00-2:15*** | Why write? | + **Writer’s Questionnaire Due****+** Read Chapter 1 in *Writing Analytically.* Come prepared to share 3 facts/tips you find illuminating and any questions |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 8/26*** | ***Section I***Detective Work: An Introduction to Close Reading  | *+* read Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s “A Scandal in Bohemia” |
| ***W 8/28*** |  | + Read *Writing Analytically* pp 23-32, 86-90 |
| ***F 8/30***  | \*In Class Writing\* | + Read *The Maltese Falcon* pp 3-23 (chapters 1-2)[20pp]+ identify a passage you find particularly interesting and come prepared to write for 20 minutes about that passage (see *WA* p86-90) |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 9/2*** |  | + Read *The Maltese Falcon* pp 24-72 (chapters 3-7) [48pp]+ “Film Noir” from Susan Hayward’s *Cinema Studies* (PDF) |
| ***W 9/4*** |  | **+** Read *WA* 106-109(From “How to Read” to “ Pointing”)**+ one page reflection due** (prompt handed out in class) |
| ***F 9/6*** | **Meet in Libraray** | Library Day—guest speaker- Kayla Birt + instructions to be given in class |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 9/9*** |  | + **post to class blog (see handout)**+ Read *The Maltese Falcon* pp 73-130 (chapters 8-12) [57pp]+ Bring *WA* (we will be looking at pp 53-71) |
| ***W 9/11***  |  | **+ one page reflection due** (prompt handed out in class)**+** Bring *WA* (we will continue to look at pp 53-71) |
| ***F 9/13***  |  | **+** Read *The Maltese Falcon* pp **131-171** [40pp]+ short selection from Ernst Kaemmel, “Literature under the Table: The Detective Novel and its Social Mission” |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 9/16***  |  | + Finish *The Maltese Falcon* pp 172-216 (Chapters 18-20) [44pp] |
| ***W 9/18***  | Peer Review | **+ Draft of Paper #1 Due (in-class peer review)** |
| ***F 9/20*** |  | + No class: Individual Writing Conferences scheduled  |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 9/23***  | ***Section II***Gender, the Gaze, and the Art of Analysis | + View Alfred Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* (1954) **(Film Screening*:* 3:00-5:00pm, Sunday 9/22; Library ICC)** |
| ***W 9/25***  |  | **Paper #1 Due—** please submit your draft, peer review, final draft and writer’s memo |
| ***F 9/27***  |  | + Come prepared with a particular moment in *Rear Window* you would like to discuss. + Read: [“ ‘It’s Just a Movie’: A Teaching Essay for Introductory Media Classes”](http://www2.gsu.edu/~jougms/Justamovie.htm) by Greg Smith (online article)+ read together in class: “[What’s Wrong with Hitchcock’s Women](http://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/oct/21/alfred-hitchcock-women-psycho-the-birds-bidisha)” by Bidisha (online review) |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 9/30***  |  | + View the BBC’s *Sherlock: A Scandal in Belgravia* (2012)**(Film Screening*:* 3:00-5:00pm, Sunday 9/29; Library ICC** |
| ***W 10/2*** | \*In Class Writing\* | **+ in class writing**  |
| ***F 10/4*** |  | + revise your in-class writing and post it to the blog. (see power point slide for how to make the post multimodal) |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 10/7***  |  | + View an episode 1 from Season 1 of Veronica Mars (2004)**(Film Screening: 3:00-5:00pm, Sunday 10/6; Library ICC)**+ Also: Comment on 2 peer blog posts. Do ONE of the following in each comment:--Draw a connection between Sherlock and Rear Window given what your peer has written--Make a connection between your post and what your peer has written--Suggest another moment within the film that supports or expands your peer’s reading |
| ***W 10/9***  |  | **+ revised claim exercise- posted to blog** |
| ***F 10/11***  |  | +“Rethinking ‘The Getting Even Part’: Feminist Anger and Vigilante Justice in a Post-9/11 America” by Tamy Burnett and Melissa Townsend (PDF)+ pp 360-363 and 372-373 in WA (“Good Ways to Begin” through “What Conclusions Do: the ‘So What?’” and “Guidelines for Writing Introductions and Conclusions”) |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 10/14***  |  | **+ short reaction paper posted to blog—**make a claim about one of the films and support it with evidence from the film. I encourage you to make your post multimodal in some way. |
| ***W10/16*** | ***Section III*** Greater than Fiction: Moving Beyond a Genre and Beyond this Class | **+ \*\*meet in library\*\*: guest speaker- Kayla Birt**+ *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo:* Chapters 1-2 (61pp)* While reading: keep track of characters; note 3 interesting or unusual moments and their page numbers; list the mysteries presented in the narrative
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| ***F 10/18***  | Conferences | + No class- conferences+ *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo:* Chapters 3-4 (38pp) |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 10/21*** | FALL BREAK  | NO CLASS |
| ***W10/23***  |  | + *TGWTDT:* Chapters 5-8 (67pp) |
| ***F 10/25***  | In-class Peer Review | **+ Paper #2 Draft Due** |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 10/28*** |  | + *TGWTDT:* Chapters 9-10 (52pp) |
| ***W 10/30*** |  | + *TGWTDT*: Chapter 11-12 (39pp) |
| ***F 11/1*** |  | **+ Paper #2 Due** |
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| ***M 11/4***  |  | + *TGWTDT:* Chapters 13-16 (78pp)*+* Also: Use “the method” to mark up the text from pages 246-247 (chart repetitions, clusters, oppositions and contrasts, and anomalies). Then, using the data you collected through the method, write a working thesis/claim. We will share these working claims/theses in class and then try to complicate them together. Please utilize the worksheets from class. (PDF of pages 246-247; PDF of worksheet on complicating evidence and evolving the thesis) |
| ***W 11/6***  |  | + **in-class writing**+ *TGWTDT* : Chapters 17-18 (37pp) |
| ***F 11/8*** |  | + *TGWTDT* : Chapters 19-20 (40pp) |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 11/11***  |  | + *TGWTDT* : Chapters 21-24 (102pp)  |
| ***W 11/13*** |  | **+ short reaction paper posted to blog:** use a lens to read TGWTDT and make a claim about the novel. Then introduce a complicating piece of evidence and begin to evolve your thesis. |
| ***F 11/15*** |  | + *TGWTDT* : Chapters 25-27 (64pp) |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 11/18*** |  | + *TGWTDT* : Chapters 28- epilogue (74pp) |
| ***W 11/20*** | Peer Review | **+ Paper #3 Draft Due** |
| ***F 11/22*** |  | + NYT article: “[The Neuroscience of Your Brain on Fiction”](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/opinion/sunday/the-neuroscience-of-your-brain-on-fiction.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0) by Annie Murphy Paul (online article)+ New York Review of Books: “[The Moralist](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/jun/09/moralist-stieg-larsson/)” by Tim Parks (online article) |
|  |  |  |
| ***M 11/25*** | Last Class wrap up | + **Final Paper Due** |
| ***W/F 11/27-29*** | THANKSGIVING BREAK |  |