



SYLLABUS

Law & Order UK: Gender, Race, and Class in British Mystery Novels and TV Crime Dramas

Dr. Susan M. Shaw
Oregon State University

Fall 2020

Contact Hours: 60
(4 semester/6 quarter credits)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores a wide variety of British murder mystery novels and TV crime dramas from feminist and critical race perspectives. The selected novels and TV shows are set across an array of historical times and places in England, further affording us opportunity to explore British history and culture, the changing roles of gender, race, and class in the UK throughout the years, and British social institutions and issues such as the legal and penal system, violence, gender and racial equality, employment, and education.

During the first class session of each week we will discuss the mystery novel for the week, with particular emphasis on issues of difference and social inequality within the British context. We will pay special attention to the ways authors use, develop, and/or adapt the crime fiction genre and employ narrative devices such as character, atmosphere, and setting to explore social issues. We will also watch episodes of British TV crime dramas and analyze them as visual texts along the same lines as our novels. You will also be asked to watch some shows during out-of-class time. During the second class session of each week, we'll visit a site in London related to the week's reading or viewing. We will also take occasional excursions beyond London to relevant sites.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of having taken this course, students should be able to:

- Articulate feminist and critical race readings of British mystery novels and TV crime dramas
- Explain the role and development of the woman sleuth/detective in novels and crime dramas
- Explain the changing status of gender, race, and class differences across a number of time periods in British history
- Analyze key themes and narrative devices in novels and TV crime dramas
- Develop critical reading and viewing skills out of close analysis of novels and TV shows

In addition, students will meet learning outcomes in two of OSU's baccalaureate core categories:

Literature and the Arts

- Recognize literary and artistic forms/styles, techniques, and the cultural/historical contexts in which they evolve.
- Analyze how literature/the arts reflect, shape, and influence culture.
- Reflect critically on the characteristics and effects of literary and artistic works.

Western Culture

- Identify significant events, developments, and/or ideas in the Western cultural experience and context.
- Interpret the influence of philosophical, historical, and/or artistic phenomena in relation to contemporary Western culture.
- Analyze aspects of Western culture in relation to broader cultural, scientific, or social processes.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. “Scene of the Crime” Social Media 60 points

Each student will develop a “scene of the crime” web page, blog, or Facebook page to document our mysteries, crime dramas, and excursions. Each week, students should post text and photos to offer commentary and analysis about the books we read, the shows we watch, and the places we visit. These accounts should offer feminist and critical race perspectives about the narratives and the locations. Posts should also attend to issues of place, history, culture, genre, character, narrative devices, and visual techniques.

2. Critical Analysis Paper 40 points

Each student will write a 6-8 page paper offering a critical race feminist analysis of some facet of one of our books or TV shows or a theme that crosses our reading/viewing. Specifically, papers should address the larger cultural context of the issue and the place of the work in British history and culture. Papers should begin with a thesis that is supported with arguments and evidence from scholarly sources (minimum 5). Papers should follow MLA style guidelines and are due Week 14.

GRADING SCALE

95-100	A	87-89	B+	80-83	B-	74-76	C	67-69	D+	60-63	D-
90-94	A-	84-86	B	77-70	C+	70-73	C-	64-66	D	below 60	F

REQUIRED READINGS

Beaton, M. C. *Agatha Raisin and the Quiche of Death*. 1992.

Bauer, Belinda. *Rubbernecker*. 2014.

Christie, Agatha. *At Bertram’s Hotel*. 1965.

Dhand, A. A. *One Way Out*. 2019.

French, Nicci. *The Red Room*. 2002

James, P.D. *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*. 1977.

McDermid, Val. *Skeleton Road*. 2014.

Mitchell, Dreda Say. *Vendetta*. 2015

Rubenholt, Hallie. *The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper*. 2019.

Sayers, Dorothy. *Gaudy Night*. 1935.

Nicola Upson. *London Rain*, 2016

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One: Orientation

Week Two: Introduction to Gender, Race, and Class in British Crime Fiction and TV Crime Drama
The Fall

Week Three: A History of British Murder: *The Five Ripper Street*

Week Four: Detective Fiction & TV Crime Drama: *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*
The Bletchley Circle

Week Five: Social Class in London: *At Bertram's Hotel*
Poirot

Week Six: LGBTQ in Detective Fiction: *London Rain*
Killing Eve

Week Seven: Time off for travel

Week Eight: Complicated Women: *Gaudy Night*
Vera

Week Nine: Sexual Violence: *The Red Room*
Silent Witness

Week Ten: Racism and Xenophobia: *One Way Out*
The Bodyguard

Week Eleven: Disability in Crime Fiction: *Rubbernecker*
The Tunnel

Week Twelve: Gender and Race in the City: *Vendetta*
Law & Order UK

Week Thirteen: Gender and Race in the Countryside: *Agatha Raisin and the Quiche of Death*

Hinterland

Week Fourteen: Gender, Ethnicity, and War: *Skeleton Road*
Informer