

Humanities Seminars Program

Elementary My Dear....The Modern International Detective Tale

Dr. Malcolm Compitello
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Mondays 9:00 a.m. – noon
June 2 – June 30, 2014

This class will examine several of the most important examples of how the detective tale, born of the work of Edgar Allan Poe, perfected by Arthur Conan Doyle and substantially altered by Dashiell Hammett, evolves over time in the hands of international masters of the tale such as Jorge Luis Borges, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Andrea Camilleri and Donna Leon. Our examination helps identify the qualities that provide this genre with its enduring allure and explores how modern practitioners play with the form and adapt it to the writer's needs in ways that continue to fuel reader interest. Through the reading of the required primary text and important recommended secondary texts and through the seminar's "investigation" of the genre we will come to a new appreciation of how the most representative of formulaic fiction broke out of its mold and garnered wide critical appreciation and the loyalty of millions of readers worldwide.

Required Texts:

- 1) Vazquez Montalban, Manuel. *Southern Seas*. Trans. Patrick Camiller. Melville International Crime, 2012. ISBN: 1612191177.
- 2) Camilleri, Andrea. *The Terra-Cotta Dog*. Trans. Stephen Sartarelli. Penguin Books, 2005. ISBN: 0142004723.
- 3) Leon, Donna. *Death at La Fenice*. Harper Perennial, 2004. ISBN: 006074068X.

The works for the first two weeks will be available as PDFs on the password protected link "course materials" on the Humanities Seminars website. If you have not yet created an account, you need to do so. Please go to <http://course.hsp.arizona.edu> and follow the instructions for creating an account.

The books for the last three weeks are on order with the UA Bookstore, but should also be available in most public libraries or on Amazon.com or other booksellers. There may be some secondary source materials.

Class Schedule:

- June 2:** Origins, the classic detective tale
Edgar Allan Poe: "The Purloined Letter" and "Murders in the Rue Morgue"
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: "A Scandal in Bohemia" and "Silver Blaze"
- June 9:** From the "Whodunnit" to the "Who donut"
Jorge Luis Borges: "Death and the Compass" and
"The Garden of the Forking Paths"
Dashiell Hammett: "The Tenth Claw" and "The Girl with the Silver Eyes"
- June 16:** "The Social Who donut"
Manuel Vázquez Montalbán: *Southern Seas*
- June 23:** Life and Death Italian Style
Andrea Camilleri: *The Terra Cotta Dog*
- June 30:** Death in Venice . . . Again
Donna Leon: *Death at La Fenice*