

EN 334: Crime Fiction, Nation and Empire Assessed Essay 1, 2017-18

Please consult the Department website for guidance on essay submission, citations, and plagiarism: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduate/essay/>

You should refer to and compare, unless otherwise stated, **two texts** (you may use a few more if short stories) you have studied in your essays.

- Write an essay of **5,000 words** on one of the following topics.
- One electronic copy should be submitted on TABULA by 12 noon on the day of the deadline.
- If you are unsure of what a good essay at this level looks like, you may consult the EN245 (English C19th novel) website, where some examples of essays that received a first in the past couple of years have, with their authors' permission, been uploaded. Also, please make reference to the e-lecture concerning writing papers.

NB: The nineteenth-century seems to be the century most vulnerable to unfounded over-generalizations and misrepresentations. Be on your guard here. You might want to avoid phrases like 'In the Victorian era...', 'The Victorian age was an age of...' [e.g. prudery], and so forth, as does the fin de siècle and the Edwardian era. Points of historical contextualization, when specific, evidenced and well-earned, are rewarded; simplifications and distortions are best avoided.

Also note, points made by anyone in a seminar are not "quotable". Lectures are.

Questions:

1. Comment on the relationship between documents, narration and detection in the crime fiction that you have read this term.
2. "Take my advice, and let the Diamond be! That cursed Indian jewel has misguided everybody who has come near it" (*The Moonstone*).
How are wealth and inheritance represented in 19th-century crime fiction?
3. "And the law of England has so particular and tender a regard to the immunity of a man's house, that it stiles it his castle, and will never suffer it to be violated with impunity." (William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*)
Comment on the imposed divisions and violations of public/private, domestic/empire in texts you have read.
4. "Mrs. Bucket—a lady of a natural detective genius, which if it had been improved by professional exercise, might have done great things, but which has paused at the level of a clever amateur"
Write an essay on 'detective fever' and discuss its effects on those who suffer from it. You might also consider the gendered representations of detective work.
5. "Time and place cannot bind Mr Bucket" (*Bleak House*). Consider the development of the figure of the omnipresent detective in 19th-century fiction.
6. "Sherlock Holmes took his bottle...the only one in the world" (*The Sign of Four*). What is the relationship between addiction and detection?
7. "The age of superstition is quite over ... You ought not to think of such medieval follies" (*The Adventures of a Man of Science*). Write on how science and reason are represented in Victorian crime fiction.

8. "Mind, they say, rules the world" (*Woman in White*). Consider the criminal as an intellectual figure in the nineteenth-century crime novel.
9. "You would wish to prove that this lady is mad, and therefore irresponsible for her actions?" (*Lady Audley's Secret*). Write about the relationship between doctors, medicine, and crime in the novels you have read on this course.
10. "I did, sir, and at the sight of me he looked as I have never seen a man look before, and over he went with his head on the fender. But he was dead before he fell....The bare sight of me was like a bullet through his guilty heart" (*The Crooked Man*). Analyse the importance of vision in crime fiction.
11. "The tears – miserable, weak, women's tears of vexation" (*Woman in White*). How is the 'woman question' posed in the stories about crime?