

English 3212 – Crime Fiction & Film Noir

Overall English Department Mission Statement

The English Department at Dixie State College strives to instill in students an appreciation for the centrality of language and literature in human culture, particularly their function in social, historical, and political contexts. Students who major in English master skills in analyzing and evaluating texts and other media, as well as learning how to produce focused critical essays.

Emphasis Mission Statement (Literature)

Our literature courses seek to broaden and deepen students' understanding of the unique value of literary expression as an aesthetic form that challenges the senses, the intellect, and the imagination. Students also learn to appreciate the complex relationship between the aesthetic and intellectual aspects of literature and the culture and time in which it was produced.

Course Description

Fulfills a Period / Topic Studies requirement for English majors pursuing an emphasis in Literary Studies or English Education, and open to other students who wish to learn about the "hard boiled" school of detective fiction and the influence it has had upon American cinema. Introduces themes, motifs and other narrative elements that distinguish the novels of Depression-era crime writers like Dashiell Hammett, James M. Cain, and Raymond Chandler. Students will analyze cinematic adaptations of these authors' works, especially those which have been cited by critics as examples of film noir. Prerequisite: ENGL 2010 (Grade C or higher).

Course Goals:

Goals to be reached in this course:

- Increased understanding of the differences between popular and literary fiction.
- Production of critical analyses of fictional works, academic essays, and feature films.
- Gain experience using research resources available through Dixie State College's library.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will have improved their ability to:

- Use the techniques of literary analysis to "unpack" several works of popular fiction produced in the last century.
- Examine the manner in which cinematic adaptations resemble and depart from their literary sources.
- Effectively share their findings about the works they encounter with peers in classroom discussions.

Methods of Assessment:

Formative Assessment Methods

Quizzes: Students respond to questions that assess their understanding of assigned readings

Mid-term Exam: Students answer questions that evaluate their understanding of technical terms and concepts discussed in class readings and lectures.

Essay: Students produce weekly journal responses that address assigned readings and screenings

Summative Assessment Methods

Final Exam: Students answer questions that evaluate their understanding of technical terms and concepts discussed in class readings and lectures.

Essay: Students produce a research-driven examination of a feature film, drawing upon ideas explored in class lectures and readings.

Value-Added Assessment Method

Pre/Post Test: Students will take a course-specific pre- and post-test, to assess the ways in which their learning has increased during the semester. This will be a multiple-choice (scantron) test.