Evidence: a whorl fingerprint visible in a dust of carbon powder, mud caked into a shoe’s tread, a newly painted wall—smudged. From Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes to the crack team of CBS’ television hit *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, the detectives of popular representation gather and, ultimately, explain evidence—expert powers of observation allow them to glean the solution to which all “clues” have lead.

This course introduces key aspects of literary fiction, including narration and perspective, character development, plot, literary form, theme and closure. We will look at several detective stories, turning first to texts that authorize its reading by characters who are “professionals.” Then, as we become sharper critical readers, we will take the detective’s place, considering texts that make radical demands on readers to interpret evidence for ourselves, pushing us to seek solutions to crimes when none are forthcoming within the text. We will ask: who may interpret evidence, and do those interpretations reinforce or challenge the social contexts from which they emerge?

As the course progresses, we will write essays and engage in class discussions that require sophisticated arguments built on our own careful use of evidence drawn from analysis of primary course texts and, occasionally, works of literary theory and critical scholarship. Ultimately, you should be developing skills of analysis and argument—and imagination—that will serve you well in all University of Oregon courses and beyond.

**Some of Our Goals:**
- Master basic literary terms, identify characteristics of detective fiction, and take the challenge to become “detecting” readers.
- As critical readers, identify and evaluate implicit arguments in our course texts; as persuasive writers and discussion participants, construct and organize effective arguments ourselves.
- Through each of our preparedness, participation, and good humor, build an engaging, supportive class.

**Required Texts Available at the Duck Store:**
- Chandler, Raymond: *The Big Sleep*
- Doyle, Arthur Conan: *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Novels and Stories*
- O’Brien, Tim: *In the Lake of the Woods*
- Stein, Gertrude: *Blood on the Dining-Room Floor: A Murder Mystery*

**Other course materials, including the latest version of this syllabus and all assignments, will be posted to Blackboard (Bb).**

**Coursework:**
- Participation (10 percent of your final grade)
- Reading quizzes (10 percent; I will drop your lowest quiz grade—quizzes cannot be made up.)
- Several short writing assignments (1-2 pages) and in-class activities (35 percent)
- Final paper (4-5 pages, 30 percent)
- Final portfolio, neatly arranged in a folder, that includes the final paper, rough drafts of the final paper, graded copies of all assignments, and an opening commentary (15 percent)
Grades and Attendance Policies:
Your overall grade in the course will reflect participation and attendance. You are permitted three unexcused absences; every subsequent absence lowers your final grade one notch (A to A-, B+ to B, etc.). Arriving late three times will count as an absence. Excused absences are only granted for serious, unavoidable events: for example, acute illness, a religious holiday, or a family emergency.

Hard copies of assignments are due at the beginning of the class periods of their due dates. Late papers lose one notch per day (A to A­, B+ to B, etc.), including weekends/holidays. After a week, late papers earn an F. Exceptions to these policies are rare and must be arranged between us early: email me as soon as you can if anything may prevent you from handing in your work as scheduled.

Academic Honesty:
All work submitted in Introduction to Fiction must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources—ideas, quotations, paraphrases—must be properly documented. Please consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl> for a definition of plagiarism and information on documentation, and refer to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards Web site for UO’s policies and adjudication procedures: <http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx>.

If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating, you will fail the assignment, and I will send a report to Student Conduct. Please feel welcome to ask many any questions you have about what constitutes plagiarism and how to work with sources—I’m very happy to help you with this!

Classroom Courtesy:
Please turn off or silence cell phones when you enter the classroom. You’re welcome to take notes on your laptop provided it doesn’t become a barrier to your active listening and participation in discussion.

Disability Accommodations:
The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu.

Note: We will tailor this schedule of readings to meet our needs as the semester progresses—be alert to changes.

Week One
T Sept. 27th
Welcome! Introduction to our course: look together at Corinne Mae Botz’s photos of the “Nutshell Studies” and CSI NY opening credits
For next time: Read Study in Scarlet (Doyle 3-54)

TH Sept. 29th
Discuss historical context of Holmes stories and characteristics of detective stories
For next time: Finish Study in Scarlet (Doyle 55-120)

Week Two
T Oct. 4th
Discuss the structure of Study in Scarlet
For next time: Read “A Scandal in Bohemia” (Doyle 239-269)

TH Oct. 6th
Discuss “Scandal” and gender, clips from Guy Ritchie’s Sherlock Holmes (2009)
Assign Point/Counterpoint Debate (mini paper #1)
For next time: Prepare for murder mystery game; read Franco Moretti’s “Clues” (Bb)

Week Three
T Oct. 11th
Play murder mystery game
For next time: Complete mini paper #1

TH Oct. 13th
Hand in mini paper #1
Point/Counterpoint Debate—let’s begin on time!
For next time: Read The Big Sleep (Chandler 3-62)

Week Four
T Oct. 18th
Characteristics of “hard-boiled” fiction and Marlowe as a narrator
For next time: Continue The Big Sleep (Chandler 63-104)

TH Oct. 20th
Close reading exercise
For next time: Continue The Big Sleep (Chandler 105-169)

Week Five
T Oct. 25th
Continue The Big Sleep discussion: Marlow’s women—and men; assign “Right, Wrong, or Split the Difference” mini paper (#2)
For next time: Finish The Big Sleep (169-231)

TH Oct. 27th
Discuss the novel’s conclusion: a happy ending? Clips from Howard Hawks’ film (1946)
For next time: Complete “Right, Wrong, or Split the Difference” mini paper; attend Memento screening

Week Six
T Nov. 1st
Mini paper #2 due
Discuss Memento’s form; what does Lenny’s limited perception suggest about him as a detective?
What does this film “do” to us as viewers?
For next time: Read Jorge Luis Borges’ “Death and the Compass” (Bb)

TH Nov. 3rd
Discuss “Compass” and Memento: is too much curiosity a dangerous thing in these texts?
For next time: Read Blood on the Dining-Room Floor (good luck—don’t give up!)
**Week Seven**
T Nov. 8\textsuperscript{th}
In-class free write; making sense of Stein
For next time: “Turning Emotional Responses into Critical Ones” mini paper (#3)

TH Nov. 10\textsuperscript{th}
Mini paper #2 due
Continue Stein discussion: a detective story without limits?
For next time: Begin *In the Lake of the Woods* (O’Brien 1-58)

**Week Eight**
T Nov. 15\textsuperscript{th}
Discuss Tim O’Brien, fact vs. fiction, and the representation of war
For next time: Continue *In the Lake of the Woods* (O’Brien 59-110)

TH Nov. 17\textsuperscript{th}
Continue O’Brien discussion
For next time: Continue *In the Lake of the Woods* (O’Brien 111-174)
Look at final paper topics (Bb)

**Week Nine**
T Nov. 22\textsuperscript{nd}
Brainstorming workshop for final papers, discussion of portfolio requirements
For next time: Finish *In the Lake of the Woods* (175-303)

TH Nov. 24\textsuperscript{th}
Thanksgiving Holiday—Yay!

**Week 10**
T Nov. 29\textsuperscript{th}
Continue O’Brien discussion (no reading quiz today, in case you didn’t finish over the holiday)

TH Dec. 1\textsuperscript{st}
Class wrap-up—congratulations!

**Week 11**
Optional final materials consultations with Lee
Portfolios due to my office by NOON, THURSDAY DECEMBER 8

*Please contact me early in winter term for the safe return of your portfolios. Also early winter term, I’ll run an optional discussion meeting in case anyone read Paul Auster’s City of Glass over the break and wants to talk about it!*