



Beijing Jiaotong University

2020 Summer Session

ENG 400 Pulp Fiction

Course Outline

Term: July 13-August 7, 2020

Class Hours: 14:00-15:50 (Monday through Thursday Review Friday)

Course Code: ENG 400

Instructor: Dr. Gurnis

Home Institution: Washington University

Office Hours: TBA

Email: musa.gurnis@aol.com

Credit: 4

Class Hours: This course will have 52 class hours, including 32 lecture hours, 8 professor office hours, 8 TA discussion session hours, and 4 review session hours.

Course Overview: Cheaply produced paperbacks called “pulp fiction” offered American readers alluring fantasies of adventure, exoticism, sex, heroism, and crime. From the early decades of the 20th century through the 1950s and beyond, pulp fiction shaped the dominant genres of American popular culture: sci-fi, westerns, romance, and detective stories. This course samples all these genres, exploring their distinctive pleasures as they cross into other media such as radio and film.

Course Description: Students will explore examples of pulp genres across multiple media while discussing the American cultural fantasies they offer.

Learning Outcomes: Students will develop their skills as close readers of text and film, deepen their understanding of American cultural history, and practice articulating cultural analysis both orally in classroom discussions and in well crafted essays.

Required Texts:

Students should arrive with hard copies of the three main novels. With pdfs of short stories by Cornell Woolrich, J. Allan Dunn and others to be provided.



Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep*

Dorothy B. Hughes, *In a Lonely Place*

Grading and evaluation:

Essay 1: 20%

Essay 2: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Final: 20%

Participation: 20%

Essays:

Students will produce two short essays discussing the cultural significance of these texts and adaptations through detailed analysis of their formal features.

Midterm and Final Exams:

Students will sit two exams consisting of short essay questions on the texts and adaptations.

Participation:

This is a discussion class. Everyone is encouraged to speak every day.

Lateness and Absence:

Students are permitted to miss two classes without penalty. Excessive absences and frequent, extreme lateness will negatively affect your grade.

Grading scale

A+ 97-100

A 94-96

A- 90-93

B+ 87-89

B 84-87

B- 80-83

C+ 77-79

C 74-76

C- 70-73

D 65-70

F 64 or below

Schedule:

Week 1: Cowboys and Crime

Mon. July 13: Cover art, mass marketing, and genre style

Tues. July 14: J. Allan Dunn “Ranger Style” (short story 1928)

Wed. July 15: Cornell Woolrich “Face Work” (short story 1937); Suspense, “Angel Face” (radio play 1950)



Thurs. July 16: Raymond Chandler “Red Wind” (short story 1938); “Adventures of Philip Marlowe: Red Wind” (radio play 1948)

Fri. July 17: Review. First essay due.

Week 2: Noir

Mon. July 20: Dorothy B. Hughes, *In a Lonely Place* (novel 1947)

Tues. July 21: Hughes, *In a Lonely Place*

Wed. July 22: Hughes, *In a Lonely Place*

Thurs. July 23: Dir. Nicholas Ray, *In a Lonely Place* (film 1950)

Fri. July 24: Midterm

Week 3: Hardboiled

Mon. July 27: Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep* (novel 1939)

Tues. July 28: Chandler, *The Big Sleep*

Wed. July 29: Chandler, *The Big Sleep*

Thurs. July 30: Dir. Howard Hawks, *The Big Sleep* (film 1946)

Fri. July 31: Review. Second essay due.

Week 4: Sci-Fi Detectives

Mon. Aug. 3: Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (novel 1968)

Tues. Aug. 4: Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

Wed. Aug. 5: Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

Thurs. Aug. 6: Dir. Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner* (film 1982)

Fri. Aug. 7: Final Exam