

Contemporary European Crime TV series (6 ECTS)

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In the recent decade there has been – partly due to the business practices of streaming services like Netflix – a surge in production and recognition of European TV series. Especially crime, police and detective shows like *Gomorra* (Italy, 2014-2021), *La Casa del Papel* (*Money Heist*, Spain 2017-2021) and *Babylon Berlin* (Germany 2017-) have been acclaimed on both sides of the Atlantic and received huge commercial and artistic success. In keeping with the American noir and hard-boiled tradition, the aforementioned shows (as well as a host of others most notably Scandinavian crime series) do not only provide thrills and entertainment, but seek to create a twilight world of moral and psychological turmoil in order to open up aesthetic spaces for reflection on political and social frictions and the still festering wounds of a traumatic history torn by war and dictatorship. The first session will establish a framework for the analysis of TV series. In the second session we will take a look at the most important narrative and aesthetic aspects of American noir cinema. Following this, we will widen our perspective by discussing influential theories on the social impact of crime fiction in general. With the fifth session we will conclude the theoretical part of the class by investigating possible connections between aesthetics, politics and history, now drawing on more philosophical approaches, while the final two sessions will be reserved for the analysis of episodes from some of the most important contemporary European crime TV series. The shows and episodes for analysis will be chosen and compiled in accordance with the interests of the participating students.

GRADING (see example below):

Home essay (8 pp.):	40 %
1 presentation (15 minutes):	30 %
Participation/Engagement:	30 %

TERMS

Presence

Students are requested to attend to classes in order to get graded. **More than one absence will automatically lower your final grade after your point total is calculated**, unless you can **document** that **all** the absences are related to an illness and/or official university event. For each additional absence your final grade will be lowered by 1/3 (a B becomes a B-, etc.). Late

arrival and early departure will not be tolerated.

Policy on Academic Integrity. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

Your writing must be your own work. If you plagiarize egregiously on an assignment, you will fail the course. Simple rule of thumb: “If you use words or ideas that are not your own you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism.”

	Topic	Readings	Recommended
1	Establishing an Analytical Framework	Mittell 2015	Hanson / Peacock / Turnbull 2018 Hanson / Re 2023
2	Perspectives on American Noir Cinema	Gustaffson 2013 Schrader 1973	Dussere 2013 Neale 2000
3	The Impact of Crime Fiction	Boltanski 2014	Jameson 2016
4	Aesthetics, Politics, and History	Kappelhoff	Elsaesser
5	Analytical Session	./.	./.
6	Analytical Session	./.	./.

COURSE READINGS

Boltanski, Luc. 2014[2012]. *Mysteries and Conspiracies - Detective Stories, Spy Novels and the Making of Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dussere, Erik. 2013. *America is Elsewhere. The Noir Tradition in the Age of Consumer Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Elsaesser, Thomas. 2013. *Terror and Trauma. German Cinema after 1945*. New York: Routledge.

Gustafsson, Henrik. „A Wet Emptiness. The Phenomenology of Film Noir“. In: Andrew Spicer and Helen Hanson (Ed). *A Companion to Film Noir*. Oxford: Blackwell 2013, pp. 50-66.

Hansen, Kim Toft / Peacock Steven / Turnbull, Sue (Ed.). 2018. *European Television Crime Drama and Beyond*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hansen, Kim Toft / Re, Valentina (Ed.). 2023. *Peripheral Locations in European TV Crime Series*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Jameson, Frederic. 2016. *Raymond Chandler. The Detection of Totality*. New York/London: Verso.

Kappelhoff, Hermann. 2015. *The Politics and Poetics of Cinematic Realism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mittell, Jason. 2015. *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Storytelling*. New York: New York University Press.

Neale, Steve. 2000. *Genre and Hollywood*. Milton Park/Andington/Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Schrader, Paul. 1972. „Notes on Film Noir.“ In: *Film Comment*, 8(1), 1972, pp. 8–13.