

**HISTORY 2148A**  
**Police Work and Forensics in Victorian Britain**  
**Fall/Winter 2022-23**  
**Tuesdays, 3:30-5:30 pm**

**Instructor: Professor Allyson N. May**

Office Hours: TBD  
Department of History, Office: Lawson Hall 1205  
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**Course Description:**

Late Victorian Britain was the setting for Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional 'consulting detective,' Sherlock Holmes, whose afterlife in television and film would have astonished his creator. We examine Holmes's world. Our subjects include the nineteenth-century obsession with murder and the history of policing and detection.

**Course Syllabus:**

This lecture course explores the late Victorian British world, using the short stories of Arthur Conan Doyle, whose fictional 'consulting detective' has enjoyed an afterlife that would have astonished his creator, as a springboard. Criminal justice subjects include the real-life history of policing and detection, the nineteenth-century obsession with murder, the evolution of crime fiction, and the famously unsolved case of Jack the Ripper. We will also use the Holmes stories as points of entry for discussion of late Victorian empire; medicine, drink, and drugs; and male friendship. The course concludes with a brief examination of the ways in which those stories have been adapted, from the twentieth-century to the present day.

Students will write a book report based on the first Holmes story, a mid-term test, and a final exam.

On completion of this course students will:

Be familiar with the basic contours of late Victorian society

Possess an understanding of the history of Victorian policing and detection

Be aware of the discrepancies between crime and policing in the real world and their fictional representation

Have gained insight into the way history is reinterpreted and stories retold and remediated over time

## **Course Materials:**

### ***Required text:***

Haia Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective: Police Sleuths in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford, 2011)

<https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/view/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199577408.001.0001/acprof-9780199577408>

Students will also be assigned Sherlock Holmes stories; these too can be accessed online.

## **Methods of Evaluation:**

Students must complete all coursework. Failure to complete all assigned coursework will result in a failing grade.

Attendance at lectures is necessary to pass the mid-term and final exam. I do not provide notes for students who have missed lectures.

Students will write a 2000-word report on the original Sherlock Holmes story, ‘A Study in Scarlet’, exploring the fictional portrayal of an amateur sleuth and his relationship with professional detectives. You are expected to meet the word-length specified; do not exceed it. A late penalty of 2% per day, including weekends, will be assigned if the report is not received on the due date. Extensions **must** be applied for via Academic Counselling.

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|------------------------|-----|
| Book report (due TBD): | 30% |
| Mid-term (TBD):        | 35% |
| Final exam:            | 35% |

## **Accommodation for missed tests/midterms:**

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test will be required to write a makeup test.

Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

In-person classes have scheduled makeup tests scheduled at the following times:

TBD

No other make-up opportunities will be provided. Students who fail to write a makeup test in the designated time slots will receive a grade of zero.

Course professors may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup test slots.

**Additional Statements:**

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document,

<https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>,  
for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness

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