

Wieland Schwanebeck, M.A.

1220 **Sherlock Holmes and Literary Theory** **Tue (2)** **HSZ 103**
70320
2220
2420
73120
73130

Ü 2 KP (regular and active participation, 15-minute presentation or written assignments)
PS 6 KP (regular and active participation, 15-minute presentation or written assignments, term paper)

Sherlock Holmes was arguably the foremost literary phenomenon of *fin de siècle* England – people went so far as to believe his adventures were real, and they even sent personal letters to his address in 221B Baker Street in London (which hosts a museum dedicated to his memory today).

In our seminar, we will deal with both the original stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and some more contemporary variations on Holmes, which will provide us with an opportunity to get to the bottom of the myth, and to discuss a number of concepts of literary studies and literary theory. In our readings of Conan Doyle's texts, we will address some basic (or, to speak with Holmes, *elementary*) questions of narratology and genre, including:
What are story and plot, narrative functions and narrative perspective?
What is detective fiction, and how is it structured? Why is it sometimes considered an inferior genre?
How does the narrative structure of tales like *The Hound of the Baskervilles* contribute to their enduring appeal?

The second part of the seminar will be dedicated to contemporary re-writings of the Holmes character, both in literature and film. Using texts which read the Holmes myth "against the grain," we will approach concepts such as intertextuality, parody, or deconstruction.

Please note: This course is also aimed at students who have not yet attended the introductory lecture to Literary Studies.

Please buy and read:

Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. London: Penguin Classics, 2004. [ISBN 978-0140437867]

Other texts to be studied during the term include Conan Doyle's short fiction, Pierre Bayard's *Sherlock Holmes Was Wrong*, and Michael Chabon's *The Final Solution*, and some audiovisual adaptations of Holmes, including the Universal series (1939-1946) and contemporary re-workings (such as medical drama *House, M.D.* or the BBC's recent *Sherlock*).

Some of these adaptations will be available to watch in the SLUB ("Audiovisueller Semesterapparat") at the beginning of term. If you want to access them, please write an eMail stating your **name** and **SLUB account number** to wieland.schwanebeck@gmx.de