

Englische Literaturwissenschaft

Dr. Wieland Schwanebeck

PS Detective Fiction

Die (2) Ort (wird von
Bearbeiterin
eingetragen)

No matter if the protagonists are Scandinavian police-officers, British 'armchair detectives' or resourceful old ladies with too much time on their hands: detective fiction continues to fascinate millions of readers around the world. Just consider the ritualistic Sunday gatherings of dedicated *Tatort* viewers or the fact that crime writers like Agatha Christie (whose 125th anniversary will be celebrated in Autumn) are the only ones whose book sales rival those of the Holy Scripture, and you realise that the 'Golden Age of the Detective' probably never ended.

This seminar will introduce the participants to the origins of detective fiction in 19th-century literature. We will discuss early forerunners like Edgar Allan Poe and his Dupin stories, as well as the most prominent literary detective of all time: Sherlock Holmes. In the process, we will theorise the indispensable basic elements of all detective fiction, the most popular generic formulas and stereotypes, as well as the philosophical concepts underlying it. From a narratological viewpoint, we will apply elementary categories such as plot, narrative functions and narrative perspective to a variety of British 'whodunits'.

Our subsequent case studies will include the works of Agatha Christie (*The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, 1926), contemporary 'rulebooks' of detective fiction, and post-modern rewritings of the genre formula.

Please buy and read:

Agatha Christie: *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*. 1926. London: Harper Collins, 2002.
[ISBN 0007141343]

Additional texts will be provided at the beginning of the term. They must be read on a weekly basis in order to pass the course.

You do not have to register beforehand – just be there for the first meeting.