



上海财经大学

Shanghai University of Finance & Economics

中国上海市国定路777号 邮编200433 777 Guoding Road, Shanghai, 200433, China

Shanghai University of Finance & Economics

2020 Summer Program

ENG 400 Pulp Fiction

Course Outline

Term: June 1 – June 26, 2020

Class Hours: 10:00-11:50 (Monday through Friday)

Instructor: Professor Robert Barsky

Home Institution: Carleton University

Office Hours: by appointment

Email: Robert.barsky@carleton.ca

Credit: 4

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

Course Overview:

Pulp Fiction: The term “pulp fiction” originally referred to cheap paperback books aimed at the mass market rather than the cultural elite. Some of the original “pulp” were reprinted literary classics, but the term “pulp fiction” became most familiarly associated with lurid, sensational stories. Today “pulp fiction” is sometimes used as a general label for popular genres like mysteries, westerns, or romances, but the early connotations of cheap thrills and low quality lingers, and in some circles genre fiction gets as little critical respect as the “pulp” once did.

Course Description:

In this class, we will read a selection of novels and short stories from three genres associated with the “pulp” tradition—a Western, a mystery, and a romance—considering their historical contexts, their formal features, and the vexed question of their literary merit – all while enjoying their often spectacular story-telling and entertainment value.

Learning Outcomes:

By the completion of this course, students will have a strong understanding of the history, role and importance of Pulp Fiction.



Required Textbooks and Films:

Selected readings by such authors as Frank Miller, Mickey Spillane, William S. Burroughs, Doris Sommer, John Le Carré, D. H. Lawrence and Diane di Prima

Grading & Evaluation:

Attendance and Participation 10%

Analysis of Pulp Fiction's history: 20%

Pulp Fiction and their relation to the literary and artistic canons: 20%

Pulp Fiction and texts deemed smut or obscene: 20%

Final project: 30%

Grading Scale

A	94-100	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	F	0-59

Course Schedule:

Week 1:

- 1) what is the history of pulp fiction, and how does it develop, from early nineteenth-century dime novels right up to the proliferation of mass-produced paperbacks;
- 2) what are the links between "canonical" works and writers of pulp fiction? Here we will foray into Paris, where a number of famous writers got their start by writing notoriously bawdy fiction for the consumption of Parisian tourists.

Week 2:

- 3) how does pulp fiction relate to such terms as "national romance," "obscene literature," "the culture industry," "mass culture," and "smut"?
- 4) what do we learn from pulp fiction about plot-driven narratives, the so-called cliff-hangers, and what this means about the genre.

Week 3:

- 5) what do "pulp" and "popular" have in common? This will lead us into discussions of populism, mass culture, subculture, the "people," and the politics of style.
- 6) what do we learn about pulp fiction through our examinations of the detective novel, adventure story, science fiction, the romance, the spy thriller and the western, among others;

Week 4:

- 7) and demonstrate comprehension of how pulp fiction intersects with other popular mediums such as radio, film, television, music, and advertising.