

## VIC 324H: Introduction to Forensic Semiotics

2016

### INSTRUCTOR:

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### TEXTBOOKS:

- M. Danesi, *Signs of Crime: Introducing Forensic Semiotics* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2013).
- A. Nicaso and M. Danesi, *Made Men: Mafia Culture and the Power of Symbols, Rituals, and Myth* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013)
- F. Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (any edition of the novel)
- E. A. Poe, *Short Stories* (any edition)

### GRADING:

- Test 1: 25% (February 22)
- Test 2: 25% (April 4)
- Final Essay: 50% (Due: last class)

### TESTS

The tests will involve a brief analysis of a famous crime, a topic in forensic semiotics, or a media representation of crime (from TV documentaries to famous movies). The focus should be on the use of semiotic theory.

Final Essay:

### Topics

- (1) The meaning of crime in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*
- (2) The persona of the detective in Poe and Holmes
- (3) The study of any linguistic aspect of crime or a particular crime
- (4) The relation between fictional serial killers and real serial killers
- (5) The meaning of crime versus sin

- (6) Study of any movie or TV program dealing with crime
- (7) Any other topic

NOTE: Essays suspected of plagiarism will be assessed according to the university policy regarding plagiarism. The policy can be found at [www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students](http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students).

LATE PENALTY: A late penalty of one percentage point per day will be used for late essays unless a valid reason is provided and permission granted by the instructor.

OUTLINE:

(Monday, 2-4)

(1) January 11

*Signs of Crime*—Chapter 1

(2) January 18

*Signs of Crime*—Chapter 2

(3) January 25

*Signs of Crime*—Chapter 3

(4) February 1

*Signs of Crime*—Chapter 4

(5) February 8

Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*

(6) February 15

READING WEEK

(7) February 22

TEST 1

(8) February 29

Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Gold Bug"

(9) March 7

*Signs of Crime*—Chapter 5

(10) March 14

*Signs of Crime*—Chapter 6

(11) March 21

*Signs of Crime*—Chapter 7

(12) March 28

*Made Men*—Overview of Organized Crime

(13) April 4

TEST 2

ESSAY: Due today

**Accessibility Needs ([www.accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca))**

If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

**Academic Misconduct (<http://uoft.me/CodeofBehaviour>)**

The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. **Teaching Assistants and Instructors are required to report any instance of suspected academic dishonesty to the Program Office.**

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work).

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers.
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me or other available campus resources like the College Writing Centers [www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/centres/arts-and-science](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/centres/arts-and-science) , the Academic Success Centre [www.asc.utoronto.ca](http://www.asc.utoronto.ca) , or the U of T Writing Website [www.writing.utoronto.ca](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca).