

University of Roehampton
International Summer School

Department: Humanities

Module: Magic, Murder & Mystery in London Literature

Module Code: ENG020N261H

Convener: Lucas Townsend (townsenl@roehampton.ac.uk)

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this module will:

- Foster a curiosity about London as a setting for texts using magic, murder, and mystery as core themes.
- Have a secure knowledge of a range of London-based texts from the Victorian period to the present day.
- Develop historical, literary, and geographical knowledge of key locations for London texts in the module, and beyond.
- Express themselves using differing pedagogical forms, including a class presentation, creative self-guided walking project, and a research-based academic essay.

Assessments

Assessment for this module will consist of two assignments:

1. **Individual class presentation** on one aspect of the module and/or the text(s), to be arranged in class. Can also cover material from other excursions and your own relevant material about London's relationship with magic, murder, and/or mystery. (6-8 minutes – 25% of grade)
2. **Psychogeography project**, which involves an hour-long exploratory walk in the City of London and Barbican Estate. In groups of up to 3, students will record their journey using psychogeographical methods and their choice of media, over the course of the hour, and report back to the instructor and their class. (2 page // 500 word report, and additional creative media attached – 25% of grade)
3. **Research essay** on any aspect of the module which covers at least one of the class texts in detail, and incorporates secondary critical sources. The topic of the essay will need to be decided and shared with the instructor in class (see schedule). (4-6 pages // between 1000-1500 words, *not* including references – 50% of grade)

(Note: this essay format is subject to change to an in-class, written exam on the final day of class, should the instructor find it necessary.)

Excursions

There will be two “excursions” into London proper as part of the course. During these trips, we will visit, explore, and interact with parts of the city relevant to the course texts and their surrounding issues. The specific times, dates, and activities of these excursions will be decided closer to the running dates of the course, but please bring an Oyster card, as well as additional spending money for food/drink/souvenirs (or pack your own). These will occupy the same time as class, and will last between 2 and 3 hours.

Important note: the last two summers have been incredibly hot, so please prepare yourself by bringing hot weather clothing, walking shoes, hats, sunscreen, and water for the excursions.

Reading List

Please read the following three novels in full by the class that said text will be covered. A limited number of these books will be made available at the Roehampton Library in E-book form (please see the Moodle for the requisite links, and download the Libby app. However, if you are a person who prefers a physical copy of the book for your own use, please purchase it separately for yourself, either at home or at local UK bookstores, in which all of these novels are available. There will also be additional short texts that will be required to read, but will be provided as handouts and/or on the Moodle. Research assistance and supplementary critical materials will also be made available.

- Ballard, J. G. *High-Rise*. 1973.
- Fleming, Ian. *Moonraker*. 1955.
- Spark, Muriel. *The Driver's Seat*. 1970.

Other texts, available through Moodle or will be read/viewed in class:

- Coverly, Merlin. *Psychogeography*. 2010.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. “The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans.” 1908.
- Eliot, T. S. *The Waste Land*. 1922.
- Gaiman, Neil. “A Study in Emerald.” 2003.
- Henry, Eva M. “The Curse of Vasartas.” 1889.
- Wilson-Cairns, Krysty, and Edgar Wright. *Last Night in Soho*. 2021.

Class Schedule (the two excursion dates are subject to change)

Week 1

10 June: Introduction to class; important critical theory; *The Waste Land*

11 June: *Moonraker* (Chapter 1-7)

12 June: *Moonraker* (Chapter 8-end)

13 June: Excursion 1 Spy Locations Walk & Museum: Green Park Station to Imperial War Museum (free entry)

Week 2

17 June: *High-Rise* (Chapter 1-9)

18 June: *High-Rise* (Chapter 10-end)

19 June: “Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans”; “A Study in Emerald”;
“The Curse of Vasartas”

20 June: Excursion 2. Psychogeography Project: Barbican Estate to Borough St Market

Week 3

24 June: *The Driver’s Seat*; **Psychogeography Project Due**

25 June: *Last Night in Soho* (in-class film); **Essay Ideas Due**

26 June: Essay assistance/office hours/tutorials; presentation overflow

27 June: Essay assistance/office hours/tutorials; presentation overflow

28 June: Research essay due at midnight on Turnitin