

THE THRILLER

AN AMERICAN GENRE ?

Dozent: Priv.-Doz. Dr. Stefan L. Brandt

Angaben

Proseminar, 2 SWS, ECTS-Studium, ECTS-Credits: 7
Unterrichtssprache: Englisch; anmeldepflichtig
Zeit und Ort: Do 14:00 - 16:00, AR-K 601
ab 19.10. 2006

Studienfächer / Studienrichtungen:

ANG-M-AmL5 ab 2 / MPEB ab 2 / LCMS-BA-M2.1/2.2 ab 2 / ENG-SII-B4 ab 2 / ENG-GHR6.2 ab 2 /
ENG-GYM7.2 ab 2 / ENG-BK6.1 ab 2

Inhalt:

This seminar traces the evolution of the thriller genre in American short stories, novels and films. Our primary texts will be read against the cultural and literary background of their production and reception by US readers and viewers. We will also conduct close readings of these texts and look at basic theoretical approaches to the thriller genre. One of the key concerns of the course is to consider the ways in which we can define the thriller and how its perceived status as <popular literature> may feed into this definition. Examples to be examined include literary texts such as Edgar Allen Poe's «The Murders in the Rue Morgue» (1841) and Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* (1928) as well as films such as *GASLIGHT* (1944), *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN* (1951), *PSYCHO* (1960), *THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* (1990), *SEVEN* (1995), *PANIC ROOM* (2002), and *WRONG TURN* (2003).

Credit requirements: Regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class (30%), an oral presentation, possibly as part of an expert group (20%), and a final paper (35%). There will be a few surprise quizzes on the readings to ensure that you keep up with the assignments (15%).

Deadline for Final Papers: February 28, 2007 There is no (!) extension of this deadline.



Syllabus:

19. October 2006

Introductory texts:

Film clip:

Introduction: What Is a Thriller?

Georg Seeßlen, *Thriller: Kino der Angst* (1995): 9-30.

Charles Derry, *The Suspense Thriller* (1988): 55-69.

THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE (Robert Siodmak, 1946)

26. October 2006

Read and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Beginnings

Edgar Allen Poe, «The Murders in the Rue Morgue» (1841): 397-431.

J.A. Leo Lemay, «The Psychology of «The Murders in the Rue Morgue»» (1982): 165-188.

02. November 2006

Read and prepare:

Secondary text:

The *Noir* Thriller

Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (1930): 1-37.

William Marling, from *The American Roman noir* (1995), on *The Maltese Falcon*.

09. November 2006

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Psychotraumatic Thriller

GASLIGHT (George Cukor, 1944)

Charles Derry, «The Psychotraumatic Thriller» (1988): 194-216.

16. November 2006

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Suspense Thriller

STRANGERS ON A TRAIN (Alfred Hitchcock, 1951)

Martin Rubin, «The Psychological Crime Thriller: STRANGERS ON A TRAIN» (1999): 203-225.

23. November 2006

Read and prepare:

Additional text:

The Pulp Thriller

Mickey Spillane, *Kiss Me Deadly* (1952): 349-380; 512-517.

KISS ME DEADLY (Robert Aldrich, 1955)

30. November 2006

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Shocker

PSYCHO (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)

Robin Wood, «PSYCHO» (from *Hitchcock's Films Revisited*) (1989): 142-151.

07. December 2006

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

True Crime

IN COLD BLOOD (Richard Brooks, 1967)

David Schmid, «Next Door Monsters: The Dialectic of Normality and Monstrosity in True-Crime Narratives» (2005): 175-184 & 190-207.

14. December 2006

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Adventure Thriller

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE (1989)

Brian Taves, «What Is Adventure?» from: *The Romance of Adventure* (1993): 3-14.

21. December 2006

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

Serial Killers & Co.

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (Jonathan Demme, 1991)

Joseph Grixti, «Consuming Cannibals: Psychopathic Killers as Archetypes and Cultural Icons» (1995): 87-96.

04. January 2007

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Action Thriller

SPEED (Jan de Bont, 1994)

Richard Dyer, «Action!» (2002): 64-69.

11. January 2007

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Crime Thriller

THE USUAL SUSPECTS (Christopher McQuarrie, 1995)

Britta-Karolin Öhding, zu «The Usual Suspects» (aus: »*Thriller der Neunziger Jahre*, 1998): 43-59.

18. January 2007

Watch and prepare:

Secondary texts:

The Hardcore Thriller

SEVEN (David Fincher, 1995)

David Schmid, from: «Natural Born Celebrities: Serial Killers and the Hollywood Star System» (2005): 117-122,

Britta-Karolin Öhding, zu «Seven» (aus: »*Thriller der Neunziger Jahre*, 1998): 60-75.

25. January 2007

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Cyber Thriller

CUBE (Vincenzo Natali, 1997)

Shelia Kunkle, «Lacan's Life, the Universe, and Vincenzo Natali's CUBE» (2000): 281-297.

01. February 2007

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Locked-Room Thriller

PANIC ROOM (David Fincher, 2002)

Ulrike Kadi, «Apparat, Raum, Angst» (2006): 139-152.

08. February 2007

Watch and prepare:

Secondary text:

The Horror Thriller

WRONG TURN (Rob Schmidt, 2003).

Ron Tambourini and James B. Weaver, «Frightening Entertainment» (1996): 1-13.

— *Final Paper due February 28, 2007* —

! Note: There is no extension of this deadline. Late essays will not be accepted!