

## **Gothic, Mystery and Science Fiction/The Short Story Summer Reading Assignment 2018**

### **\*\*All works are required:**

1. *And Then There Were None*- Agatha Christie
2. “The Black Cat”- Edgar Allan Poe (short story- PDF Attachment)
3. “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (short story- PDF Attachment)
4. “Long Gone”- Sue Grafton (short story- PDF Attachment)

Haunted castles and supernatural doings, crimes that need to be solved and fiction that incorporates scientific possibilities into its plots make up the works of the first course you will be taking in your senior year of English. While there seems to be some diversity in the three genres in the Gothic, Mystery and Science Fiction course, they are related to one another in a myriad of ways and a sort of evolution has occurred within the three. An underlying connective thread is the desire of the authors to frighten, baffle and amaze their readers.

Because the nature of the two classes you will be taking in September and January allow for integration of works, you will read one short mystery novel by famed author Agatha Christie and three mystery short stories. Each of the works is written by an author considered a giant in their respective realms. Edgar Allan Poe has the distinction of being called the virtual inventor of the short story and also “The Father of the Detective Story.” While the short story that you will read by Poe, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” may have been the first, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s famed detective, Sherlock Holmes, cracks a mystery in “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” and follows the formula that Poe prescribed for detective fiction (which will be covered in more depth during the course of the year.) Sue Grafton—who just passed

away in December—is a contemporary author whose private investigator breaks a missing persons case.

Detective and mystery stories are everywhere. From the popularity of great television shows like *Law and Order*, *Criminal Minds* or *C.S.I.* to films, video games, comic books, short stories—let’s face it—we Americans love a mystery!

**A paper will be written in class during the first cycle of classes in September- the week of 9/10/17.**

**“Long Gone”- Sue Grafton:**

[http://www.suegrifton.com/pdf/Grafton\\_KINSEY\\_AND\\_ME\\_preview.pdf](http://www.suegrifton.com/pdf/Grafton_KINSEY_AND_ME_preview.pdf)

**“The Black Cat”- Edgar Allan Poe:**

<http://poestories.com/print/blackcat>

**“The Speckled Band”- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:**

<https://sherlock-holm.es/stories/pdf/a4/1-sided/spec.pdf>

It does not matter which edition of *And Then There Were None* that you buy (I do ask that you purchase a copy-for annotating purposes). There are a number of copies available from Amazon that are extremely reasonable. Please be sure to print these versions of the short stories and annotate as you read all of the works as there will be an in-class essay in the beginning of the year in which you may use your notes/books.

## **Annotating a Text**

Annotating a text is one of the essential ways to be an active reader and a highly effective study skill for the college-bound student. There are different techniques which will be discussed here. The objective of annotating is to locate important information in a text that will be easily found when looking back and reviewing. It is also a way to understand and organize what you read.

A well-annotated text will help one clearly locate and identify important information and display the reader's thoughts, questions and reactions to what was read. The reader should circle unfamiliar vocabulary.

A brief description of three techniques are described here:

- **Highlighting/Underlining-** this is the most common form of annotating. It is an efficient way of noting important information. However, many students “over-highlight.” Highlighting should be used only for especially insightful passages. It is also suggested that one use only yellow markers—they do not interfere or distract with the reading as other colors sometimes do.
- **Paraphrasing/Summarizing of Ideas-** this is a very effective tool in making sure the reader understands the ideas being propounded. It is an excellent preparation for any future writing assignments one may have to do based on reading. Even notes in the margins, as a quick summation of ideas, is good.

- **Commenting/Questioning/Responding-** this is where the reader writes her/his personal reflections while reading. It is a wonderful way to sort out what is being read, and signal places that evoked a response.

Don't forget to annotate wisely; you will be able to use both books for the writing assignment in class. For mystery works, in particular, you should be "looking for clues." These will include details that the authors include to help the reader solve the mystery; characterization that portrays characters in certain ways; clues that are meant to send the reader off the "trail". Keep an eye out for those kinds of passages.

Some Supplemental Course Materials that you should view.

Brief biographies of:

Edgar Allan Poe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-387NMCR6w>

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7toqzP16H4c>

Dame Agatha Christie

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCxYdwVihoU>

A Brief History of Science Fiction:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNficZQdh2Q>