

# Sherlock Holmes: Canon and Curiosities

ENG 245 (Popular Culture Issues)

Spring 2015

Sherlock Holmes is immortal. Ever since *A Study in Scarlet* appeared in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* in 1887, the world's first consulting detective has been its favorite. Though Arthur Conan Doyle tried to kill off his creation—infamously tipping him over the Reichenbach Falls—ultimately, Doyle could not withstand the enormous pressure from his audience, publishers, friends, and family (even his mother!) to revive Sherlock Holmes. Over the past century, fans, poets, novelists, illustrators, filmmakers, television producers, and comic book authors have joined these efforts to keep him alive and reinvent him for different cultural and historical moments. As we sample Doyle's own original writings (the canon) and various adaptations and pastiches (the curiosities), we will examine "Sherlock Holmes" both as a set of texts and as a cultural touchstone.

This fast-paced course will introduce you to Sherlock Holmes in a wide variety of media formats and will ask you to complete a wide variety of assignments as you encounter these Holmesian iterations. You will learn about the relevant social, cultural, technological, criminal, political, geographic intertexts that will make these stories come alive for you intellectually. Five units will focus on specific topics: first, Genre and Style; second, Criminality; third, London; fourth, Imperialism and Geopolitics; and fifth, Adaptation and Afterlives. On average, during each three-week-long unit, you will read a novella and six short stories, read three or four short "curiosities," listen to podcasts, watch about two or three hours of Holmes on TV or film, and complete a project.

By the end of this course, you will have encountered Sherlock in just about as many media and textual forms as the great detective has disguises: novels, short stories, illustrated serials in *The Strand*, plays, poems, essays, parodies, TV episodes, silent films, Hollywood films, comic books, and fan fiction. And you will participate in this flowering of Sherlockiana by producing a pastiche, a juridical ruling, a map, an introduction, and a book review. In short, you will become an expert on all things Sherlock Holmes, not only as a fan, but also as a literary critic, cultural historian, and media scholar.

## Texts: Paper (Buy)

Arthur Conan Doyle. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes: All 4 Novels and 56 Short Stories*.

Bantam Classics, 1986 (about \$8 [here](#)): ISBN 0553328255

Nicholas Meyer, *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* (1974).

Norton, 1993 (about \$16 [here](#)): ISBN 0393311198

Laurie R. King, *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* (1994).

Picador, 2007 (about \$13 [here](#)): ISBN 1250055709

Ian Edginton and David Fabbri, *Victorian Undead*

WildStorm, 2010 (about \$14 [here](#)): ISBN 1401228402

## Texts: Online (Free)

### By Arthur Conan Doyle

#### Pastiches

“The Field Bazaar” (1896) [here](#)

“How Watson Won the Trick” (1924) [here](#)

“The Lost Special” (1898) [here](#)

*The Strand Magazine* editions: “The Crooked Man,” “The Final Problem” (1893)

Both in volume 6. CM is July 1893: (p. 22-32). FP is Dec. 1893 (p. 558-570)

GoogleBooks [here](#): After you click on the link, scroll till you see the table of

contents. Click on the title of the relevant story. For “The Final

Problem,” make sure you start at page 558 to see classic illustration!

HathiTrust [here](#): Type in the first page number in the box that says “Jump to”

Play script: “The Speckled Band” (1910) [here](#)

Essay: “How I Made My List” (1927) [here](#)

Poems: all [here](#): “A Voyage” (1909), “A Hymn of Empire” (1911), “Empire Builders” (1911), “The Empire” (1902)

### By Other Authors

#### Pastiches

P. G. Wodehouse, “Dudley Jones, Bore-Hunter” (1903) [here](#)

John Bangs, “Introducing Mr. Raffles Holmes,” “The Dorrington Ruby Seal.”

Both in *R. Holmes & Esq* (1906) [here](#)

J. M. Barrie, “The Adventure of the Two Collaborators (1923) [here](#)

#### Poems

Vincent Starrett, “221B” (1942) [here](#)

William Shweickhart, “A Long Evening with Holmes” (1984) [here](#)

Alan Olding, “In Memoriam Moriarty” (1991) [here](#)

Fan fiction: David Marcus, “Descent into Madness” (2011) [here](#)

## Media: Films and Television

*Sherlock Holmes Baffled* (1900) – view on You Tube: [here](#)

*Sherlock Holmes* feat. John Barrymore (1922) – view on You Tube: [here](#)

*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* feat. Basil Rathbone (1939)

YouTube: [here](#) OR Netflix: [here](#) OR Amazon: [here](#)

*The Scarlet Claw* feat. Basil Rathbone (1944)

YouTube: [here](#) OR Netflix: [here](#) OR Amazon: [here](#)

*Sherlock Holmes* feat. Robert Downey, Jr. (2009)

Netflix: [here](#) OR Amazon streaming: [here](#) OR disc [here](#)

From Granada Television’s *Sherlock Holmes* series featuring Jeremy Brett

*The Solitary Cyclist* (1984)

Netflix: [here](#) (choose Season 1, Disc 1) or YouTube: [here](#)

*The Sign of the Four* (1987)

Netflix: [here](#) or YouTube: in 11 parts beginning [here](#)

From BBC Television's *Sherlock* series featuring Benedict Cumberbatch  
*The Hounds of Baskerville* (2012) (Season 2, Disc 1)

YouTube [here](#) (fee) OR Netflix [here](#) OR Amazon [here](#)

*The Sign of Three* (2014) (Season 3, Disc 1)

YouTube [here](#) (fee) OR Netflix [here](#) OR Amazon [here](#)

## Projects

Each project is worth 20% of your grade

PROJECT 1: PASTICHE: You write your own Sherlock Holmes scene/anecdote of around 900 words (though you may certainly exceed this range if you wish). You can change **only one** of the following elements: 1) place (outside of England), 2) time (can be before or after Victorian period), 3) Watson (Sherlock's companion can be a different person). You should not change anything about Sherlock or about Doyle's writing style. Make sure your crime is typical of the canon (kidnapping, murder, blackmail, theft of something extremely valuable/political). You will be graded on how accurately you matched Arthur Conan Doyle's style, plot, characters, etc, not on how "artistic" your writing is. (However, as you should expect, grammar and proofreading will be graded.)

PROJECT 2: SENTENCING: Pick some contemporary criminal (Bin Laden, Dahmer, the Craigslist killer, Pirate Bay, even Julian Assange or Edward Snowden), and basically create a judicial ruling for it. Learn what happened to this criminal (how they were found out, how they were punished, and how the media represented their guilt), and then tell me how Sherlock (the detective) and late-19th century Scotland Yard/courts (justice), handled it differently from contemporary courts, media, and writers. Choose one specific Sherlock Holmes story we have read for *this* unit as your proof for how criminality was defined and treated in Doyle's era. Reflect in an essay of at least 900 words about how these differences reflect different concepts of guilt, criminality, justice, and human rights.

PROJECT 3: MAPPING LONDON: Choose one of the stories we have read for *this* unit. Pin at least 15-20 spaces on a GoogleMap that includes a thesis and makes a coherent, essay-worthy argument by using the description functions on the map. (Aim for 2-4 sentences of explanation per pin.) Pins should focus on spaces mentioned and/or visited by Sherlock Holmes in the story. They can include spaces relevant for Arthur Conan Doyle's life and other Sherlock Holmes stories *if they contribute to your thesis about your chosen story/novel*. You will have to plan, carefully, the order of your pins and how you assemble an argument as your reader navigates your map. (A more detailed set of instructions will be available to you on our course website.)

PROJECT 4: INTRODUCTION: Select a single Sherlock Holmes short story or novel that has a focus on geopolitics, imperialism, and/or national identity. Then write an Introduction of at least 900 words that explains historical events, places, and people the reader should know about before reading the story (wars, weapons, treaties, kings/queens, politicians, soldiers, spies, scandals, economic agreements, emigrants, colonies, bureaucratic organizations, etc). It should end with a "web" bibliography of at least 5

hyperlinks you used to learn about these political issues. You should prepare your readers so that they can approach the text in an educated, informed manner. *Avoid spoilers!*

PROJECT 5: REVIEW ESSAY: Your book review essay will cover our three major adaptations (Meyer, King, or Edginton/Fabbri) by comparing them to each other and to Doyle's originals. Make detailed criticisms regarding what works and doesn't work in the adaptation. How would you have done it differently? What did you think was done well? You will write a 900-word formal, comparative analysis with me as your audience, and Make sure to take full advantage of your solid authority as someone who has just read a very substantive chunk of the Sherlock canon! You should be able to conclude something rather original and specific about how Sherlock Holmes is depicted today. Why do we need Sherlock? Why do we keep returning to him? How have we changed him?

## Schedule

### Unit I: Genre and Style

Monday, January 12 – Friday, January 30

Week one		
Listen	Syllabus Podcast	Fri, Jan 16
Read Novel	Doyle, <i>A Study in Scarlet</i>	Fri, Jan 16
Listen	Study in Scarlet Podcast	Fri, Jan 16
Week two		
Read Stories	Doyle, "The Musgrave Ritual," "The Resident Patient," "The Priory School," "A Scandal in Bohemia," "The Devil's Foot," "The Lion's Mane"	Fri, Jan 23
Listen	Genre and Style Podcast	Fri, Jan 23
Week three		
Listen	Doyle Biography and Reception Podcast	Fri, Jan 30
Read Curiosities	Doyle, "The Field Bazaar," "How Watson Won the Trick," <i>The Speckled Band</i> (1910 play)	Fri, Jan 30
Watch	Silent films: <i>Sherlock Holmes Baffled</i> (1900) and <i>Sherlock Holmes</i> (1922)	Fri, Jan 30
Submit	Project 1: Pastiche	Fri, Jan 30

## Unit 2: Criminality

Monday, February 2 -Friday, February 20

Week one		
Read Novel	Doyle, <i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i>	Fri, Feb 6
Listen	Hound of the Baskervilles Podcast	Fri, Feb 6
Week two		
Listen	Victorian Crime and Punishment Podcast	Fri, Feb 13
Read Stories	Doyle, “The Solitary Cyclist,” “The Dancing Men,” “The Illustrious Client,” “The Dying Detective,” “Charles Augustus Milverton,” “The Copper Beeches”	Fri, Feb 13
Listen	Criminality Stories Podcast	Fri, Feb 13
Week three		
Listen	Forensics, Weapons, and Props Podcast	Fri, Feb 20
Read Curiosities	Doyle, <i>The Strand</i> version of “The Final Problem” (1893); Barrie, “The Adventure of the Two Collaborators” (1923)	Fri, Feb 20
Watch	Battle of the TV Channels I: BBC’s “The Hounds of Baskerville” (2012); Granada’s “The Solitary Cyclist” (1984)	Fri, Feb 20
Submit	Project 2: Sentencing	Fri, Feb 20

## Unit 3: London

Monday, February 23 - Friday, March 20

(of course, with time taken out for Spring Break March 8-15)

Week one		
Read Novel	Doyle, <i>The Sign of the Four</i>	Fri, Feb 27
Listen	Sign of the Four Podcast	Fri, Feb 27
Week two		
Listen	Sherlock’s London Podcast	Fri, Mar 6

Read Stories	Doyle, “The Empty House,” “The Man with the Twisted Lip,” “The Red-Headed League,” “The Six Napoleons,” “The Cardboard Box,” “The Norwood Builder”	Fri, Mar 6
Listen	London Stories Podcast	Fri, Mar 6
Week three		
Listen	221B Baker Street Podcast	Fri, Mar 20
Read Curiosities	Wodehouse, “Dudley Jones, Bore-Hunter” (1903), Bangs, “Introducing Mr. Raffles Holmes,” “The Dorrington Ruby Seal” (1906)	Fri, Mar 20
Watch	Battle of the TV Channels II: Granada’s <i>The Sign of the Four</i> (1987); BBC’s <i>The Sign of Three</i> (2014)	Fri, Mar 20
Submit	Project 3: Mapping London	Fri, Mar 20

## Unit 4: Imperialism and Geopolitics

Monday, March 23 - Friday, April 3

Week one		
Listen	Geopolitics and Imperialism Podcast	Fri, Mar 27
Read Stories	Doyle, “The Greek Interpreter,” “The Naval Treaty,” “The Bruce Partington Plans,” “His Last Bow,” “The Yellow Face,” “The Second Stain”	Fri, Mar 27
Read Curiosities	Doyle’s political poems: “A Hymn of Empire” (1911), “Empire Builders” (1911), “The Empire” (1902)	Fri, Mar 27
Listen	Geopolitics and Imperialism Stories Podcast	Fri, Mar 27
Week two		
Read Curiosities	Doyle, “The Lost Special” (1898); <i>The Strand Magazine</i> version of “The Crooked Man” (1893)	Fri, Apr 3
Watch	Basil Rathbone films: <i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i> (1939); <i>The Scarlet Claw</i> (1944)	Fri, Apr 3
Submit	Project 4: Introduction	Fri, Apr 3

## Unit 5: Adaptation and Afterlives

Monday, April 6 - Friday, May 1

Week one		
Read Novel	Meyer, <i>The Seven-Percent Solution</i>	Fri, Apr 10
Listen	Seven-Percent Solution Podcast	Fri, Apr 10
Week two		
Read Novel	King, <i>The Beekeeper's Apprentice</i> (first 200 pages only)	Fri, Apr 17
Listen	Beekeeper's Apprentice Podcast	Fri, Apr 17
Week three		
Read Novel	King, <i>The Beekeeper's Apprentice</i> (read until the end)	Fri, Apr 24
Read Curiosities	Marcus, "Descent into Madness" (2011); Doyle, "How I Made My List" (1927)	Fri, Apr 24
Watch	Ritchie's <i>Sherlock Holmes</i> (2009)	Fri, Apr 24
Listen	Girlfriends, Feminists, and Actresses Podcast	Fri, Apr 24
Week four		
Read Comic	Comic Omnibus: Edginton and Fabbri, <i>Victorian Undead</i> (2010)	Fri, May 1
Read Poems	Doyle, "A Voyage" (1909), Starrett, "221B" (1942), Shweickhart, "A Long Evening with Holmes" (1984), Olding, "In Memoriam Moriarty" (1991)	Fri, May 1
Listen	Sherlock's Fans and Zombies Podcast	Fri, May 1
Submit	Project 5: Review Essay	Fri, May 1