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
Introduction: What Is a Thriller?
Introductory texts:
Film clip:
- THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE (Robert Siodmak, 1946)

26. October 2006
The Beginnings
Read and prepare:
Secondary text:

02. November 2006
The Noir Thriller
Read and prepare:
Secondary text:
- William Marling, from The American Roman noir (1995), on The Maltese Falcon.

09. November 2006
The Psychotraumatic Thriller
Watch and prepare:
- GASLIGHT (George Cukor, 1944)
Secondary text:

The Suspense Thriller
Watch and prepare:
- STRANGERS ON A TRAIN (Alfred Hitchcock, 1951)
Secondary text:

23. November 2006
The Pulp Thriller
Read and prepare:
- Mickey Spillane, Kiss Me Deadly (1952): 349-380; 512-517.
Additional text:
- Kiss Me Deadly (Robert Aldrich, 1955)

30. November 2006
The Shocker
Watch and prepare:
- PSYCHO (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)
Secondary text:

07. December 2006
True Crime
Watch and prepare:
- IN COLD BLOOD (Richard Brooks, 1967)
Secondary text:

14. December 2006
The Adventure Thriller
Watch and prepare:
Secondary text:

21. December 2006
Serial Killers & Co.
Watch and prepare:
- THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (Jonathan Demme, 1991)
Secondary text:
04. January 2007  The Action Thriller
Watch and prepare: SPEED (Jan de Bont, 1994)

Watch and prepare: THE USUAL SUSPECTS (Christopher McQuarrie, 1995)

18. January 2007  The Hardcore Thriller
Watch and prepare: SEVEN (David Fincher, 1995)

25. January 2007  The Cyber Thriller
Watch and prepare: CUBE (Vincenzo Natali, 1997)

01. February 2007  The Locked-Room Thriller
Watch and prepare: PANIC ROOM (David Fincher, 2002)

08. February 2007  The Horror Thriller
Watch and prepare: WRONG TURN (Rob Schmidt, 2003).

— Final Paper due February 28, 2007 —

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