

Classics of Detective Fiction: From the 1960s to Today

This series will consider trends and innovations in detective-suspense fiction since the 1960s. Including works by the esteemed Ross Macdonald, the superstar Ian Rankin and the brash Sara Paretsky among others, the series will focus on the steady growth of "niche" genres within detective-suspense fiction since the close of WWII. A key theme will be how these new forms of detective-suspense fiction speak to the changing times. Storytelling forms we'll examine include post-Chandler American noir, Scandinavian noir, post-Golden Age British historical mystery, the humorous Canadian cozy mystery, and the 21st century female detective story.

Questions we'll ask include:

- has the hard-boiled detective disappeared?
- can a whodunnit be "serious" literature?
- what is the gothic detective novel?
- whatever happened to Sherlock Holmes?
- does geography matter, eh?
- what's funny about crime?
- what's a nice girl like you doing in a crime like this?
- how does the past affect today?

Join us as we discuss the conventions and transformations that keep us reading this intriguing genre. Each week we'll examine one author and a work of fiction, considering how that work expresses its author's unique voice, relates to its own time and yet remains relevant to readers today.

Suggested reading schedule:

Please note participants are not obligated to do any readings. All readings are available through the public library.

Week	Author	Reading	Category
1	Ross Macdonald,	<i>The Barbarous Coast</i>	Post-Chandler American noir, age of psychology
2	Henning Mankell,	<i>The Dogs of Riga</i>	Scandinavian noir, criticism of social welfare ideal
3	Ian Rankin	<i>Black and Blue</i>	Post-Christie, British realism noir, working class anti-hero

4	David Pirie,	<i>The Dark Water</i>	British historical mystery, gothic Victorian era and revisiting Conan Doyle
5	Howard Engel	<i>There Was an Old Woman</i>	Comic Canadian, small town, Jewish detective
6	Sara Paretsky	<i>Critical Mass</i>	21 st -century urban female detective

Additional sources: Clips of film adaptations of the readings or related works will be shown each week.