Course Title: Metaphysical Mysteries
Course Number: COLT 211
Term: Spring 2015
Credit: 4 credits
CRN: 36956
Grading Options: Graded for Majors; Optional for all other students

Instructor Contact Information
Dr. Michael C. McCann
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Office: 310 Villard
Office Hours: By appointment via Skype or on campus.
Skype username: michaelcmccann (Email first to setup a Skype or on-campus appointment.)

Course Description
Traditional mystery stories rely on literary devices to create the illusion of reality for both the crime and its solution. Metaphysical Detective
Metaphysical mysteries employ metafictional techniques such as intertextuality, author intrusion, meta-reference, and reflexivity in lieu of a
conventional plot, self-consciously exposing the storyteller's bag of tricks. The effect can be beguiling, making "the real seem even more real
by not pretending to be real." In this course, we examine the unconventional techniques of metafiction in the context of murder mysteries,
foregrounding larger psychological, metaphysical, or cultural mysteries that create more complex puzzles and provide greater satisfaction
once solved. We will study these literary conundrums across a spectrum of four cultures and three genres: Italo Calvino's Italian novel, If On
A Winters Night A Traveler, Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Swiss novelette, The Pledge, short stories by Argentine Jorge Luis Borges and American
Edgar Allan Poe, as well as Paul Auster's American novel, City of Glass.

Course Objectives
Beyond acquiring a better understanding of the rules and conventions of traditional fiction and deconstructing metafictional puzzles through
intertextual references, allusions, and reflexivity, students in COLT 211 will be pushed to read with an eye to complexities and ambiguities of
literature with an understanding of genre across cultures and disciplines, and develop a competent sense of selected theoretical approaches
in relation to the materials covered. Students will be asked to submit written analyses that demonstrate, in addition to effective writing skills,
the ability to read critically with a comprehension of the central course concepts, both literary and theoretical.

Course Materials
The following required texts are available at the UO Bookstore:

- Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction, Patricia Waugh
- Detecting Texts, Patricia Merivale & Susan Elizabeth Sweeney
- Labyrinths, Jorge Luis Borges
- Selected Tales, Edgar Allan Poe
- The Pledge, Friedrich Dürrenmatt
- City of Glass, Paul Auster
- If On A Winters Night A Traveler, Italo Calvino
Assignment Overview and Descriptions

All assignments for this course must conform to the academic standards set for the discipline of Comparative Literature, in both form (thesis-driven, MLA style) and content (idea-based, academic writing), as posted on the COLT Website at http://complit.uoregon.edu/courses/images_crs/COLT%20Grading%20Policies.pdf)

Papers, Discussion Board Posts, and Blog Posts are due on the dates and times listed in this Syllabus. Late papers and blog posts lose as much as 2 full letter grades for each day late. Late discussion board posts receive 0 points.

During this course, you’ll complete the following assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description/Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Participation</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
<td>20 discussion responses (3-6 sentences)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Blog Posts</th>
<th>1 percent</th>
<th>Self-Introduction</th>
<th>Introduce yourself in Week 1 (See directions in Week 1 Folder)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 percent</td>
<td>100-Word Response</td>
<td>During Weeks 2-7, post one comment on the readings for a particular week in the course blog.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Response Papers</th>
<th>25 percent</th>
<th>Response 1</th>
<th>2-4 pages</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 percent</td>
<td>Response 2</td>
<td>2-4 pages</td>
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| Final Paper      | 35 percent    | Final Paper                                                                        | 4-6 pages                                                                             |

| Extra Credit     | 1 Percent     | Additional Discussion Responses                                                    | You can post up to 4 additional Discussion Responses for an additional 1 percent extra credit. |

100-Word Blog Post

In this Blog Post, you will comment on one of the assigned readings by briefly developing an idea you find interesting in the text, i.e., the attitude or situation of a character, a compelling scene, a plot point (how and why something happens), a theme, or a motif. You might find it easier to compose your text in a word processor and cut-and-paste it onto the blog when you are finished proofreading and editing it. Be sure to write at least 100 words, but try not to exceed that count by much. During Weeks 2 through 7, you are required to make one post in the blog, i.e., just one post, not a post every week. You’ll find a rubric in the Course Information section.

Response Papers

For each of two Response Papers, you write about elements of Metaphysical Detective Stories in relation to a specific text. These papers should run between 2 and 4 pages in length, word-processed with 1-inch margins. Be sure to include a descriptive title and a Works Cited page, which does not count toward the total page count. You’ll find detailed instructions and a sample thesis/prompt for each Response Paper in the Weekly Lesson the week before it is due, along with a rubric, which also appears in the Course Information section.

Final Paper

For the Final Paper, you will select one of the themes of Metaphysical Detective Stories we have identified and develop it in relation to at least two of the texts we have read. The paper should run no less than four pages and no more than six pages in length. This is to be an argumentative essay constructed around a well-reasoned thesis and supported by textual evidence and analysis. Your paper should be word-processed and double-spaced, using a 12-point font (either Times New Roman or Arial) with one-inch margins. Be sure to include a descriptive title and a Works Cited page, which does not count toward the total page count. You’ll find detailed instructions and sample theses/prompts for the Final Paper in the Lesson for Week 10, along with a rubric, which also appears in the Course Information section.

Extra Credit: Additional Discussion Responses

You may earn extra credit by posting up to 4 extra Discussion Responses, worth 1/4 percent each, for a maximum of 1 percent.
## Assignments & Readings Schedule *(Subject to change at Instructor's discretion)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week &amp; Dates</th>
<th>Assignments Due Date &amp; Times</th>
<th>Required Assigned Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong> 3/30–4/3</td>
<td>Self-Introduction Discussion Board Post and Discussion Board Response due by 4/3 @ 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Merivale, pp. 2-11; Borges, pp. 19-29; Merivale, pp. 61-70.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong> 4/6–4/10</td>
<td>Discussion Board Response due by 4/10 @ 5:00 p.m. Reminder: any week from Week 2 through Week 7, you need to make one Blog Post. See the Syllabus for more information on this assignment.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong> 4/13–4/17</td>
<td>Discussion Board Response due by 4/17 @ 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong> 4/20–4/24</td>
<td>Discussion Board Response by 4/24 @ 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong> 4/27–5/01</td>
<td>Response Paper 1 due by 5/1 @ 5:00 p.m.; Discussion Board Response due by 5/1 @ 5:00 p.m. Reminder: if you have not yet created your Blog Post by the end of this week.</td>
<td>Poe, pp. 74-94; Merivale, pp. 249-251; Poe, 95-103; Merivale, 101-112</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong> 5/4–5/8</td>
<td>Discussion Board Response by 5/8 @ 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Dürrenmatt, The Pledge, pp. 1-88.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong> 5/11–5/15</td>
<td>Discussion Board Response by 5/15 @ 5:00 p.m. Reminder: complete your Blog Post by the end of this week.</td>
<td>Dürrenmatt, The Pledge, pp. 89-176.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 8</strong> 5/18–5/22</td>
<td>Response Paper 2 due by 5/22 @ 5:00 p.m.; Discussion Board Response by 11/21 @ 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Auster, City of Glass, pp. 7-92.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 9</strong> 5/25–5/29</td>
<td>Discussion Board Response by 5/29 @ 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Auster, City of Glass, pp. 93-203.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Finals Week</strong> 6/8–6/12</td>
<td>Final Paper due by 6/9 @ 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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### Grade Percentages

- **A+** 100% or More
- **A** 93%-99%
- **A-** 90%-92%
- **B+** 87%-89%
- **B** 82%-86%
- **B-** 80%-82%
- **C+** 77%-79%
- **C** 73%-76%
- **C-** 70%-72%
- **D+** 67%-69%
- **D** 63%-66%
- **D-** 60%-62%
- **F** Less than 60%
Policies

Student Conduct
The University of Oregon has promulgated a Student Conduct Code which contains important regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to student life. It is intended to inform students and members of the University community who work with them of students' rights and responsibilities during their association with the institution and to provide general guidance for enforcing those regulations and policies essential to the educational and research missions of the University. The full terms and conditions of the Student Conduct Code are contained in Oregon Administrative Rules Chapter 571, Division 21—University of Oregon. Highlights of the Student Conduct Code are published on the Dean of Students website.

Academic Honesty
Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course or at this university. All work submitted for this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. See the Library's website for more information about plagiarism in general, and about specific UO policies: http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html

Academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failing grade for this course. For more information about the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the Student Conduct Code: http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx Please also see me if you have any questions about your use of sources, or about this policy.

Access for Students with Disabilities
If you have a physical or learning disability that may affect your performance in this class, please email me during the first week of the term so we can make arrangements, if necessary, for your full access to all classroom activities. If you require additional help for this course in any way, please let me know at any time during the term so that we can work together to get you the help you need in the course. Please be aware also that the Center for Academic Learning Services, in 68 PLC (Phone: 541-346-3226), is a great resource for improving grammar and writing needs outside the scope of this class.

Grievance Policy
Information on filing a student grievance may be found at http://uoregon.orgsync.com/org/associatedstudentsofuo/YourRights

UO Acceptable Use of Computing Resources
The guidelines for acceptable use of University of Oregon computing resources may be found at https://it.uoregon.edu/acceptable-use-policy

Respect for Diversity
It is the policy of the University of Oregon to support and value cultural diversity. To do so requires that we:

- Respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals.
- Promote a culture of respect throughout the University community.
- Respect the privacy, property, and freedom of others.
- Reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind.
- Practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others.
- Promote the diversity of opinions, ideas, and backgrounds, which is the lifeblood of the university.