Crime fiction has been popular throughout the twentieth century. Its traditional heroes epitomized male freedom and autonomy, but many of the best crime writers have been women, and it is a literary form with both challenges and temptations for the feminist. This course will trace the influence of women on the genre and consider the question: what is a feminist crime novel? We will dissect the traditions and conventions of crime fiction and analyze the work of past and present women writers against this background. Images of women - including examples from the screen as well as the page - attitudes to crime and authority, and the role of the hero will be themes central to our enquiry.

Required books:

*Please note: the books are listed in the order in which we will read them. Students are welcome to use their own copies, but should be aware that page numbers may differ.*

One early Nancy Drew mystery

One of the following pieces of “hardboiled” crime fiction:
- Mickey Spillane. *I, the Jury*. *Kiss Me Deadly.*

Two Sherlock Holmes short stories and selections from recent critical works: these will be available as course packs or on reserve at the Belzberg library.

Library reserves:
Sally Munt. “An Unsuitable Genre for a Woman”, in *Murder by the Book*. Ch.8, pp.191-207

Assignments:
Written report (5 pp.) on assigned reading; due class #4, week 2. 20%
Oral report (10 minutes) on assigned reading and additional reading: due weeks 2 - 7. 20%
Participation in class discussion 15%
Final essay (15 pp.); due in the last class 45%