



# Crime Films and Society

CRJU 340

## Course Description

Crime films are so ubiquitous, so numerous, and so popular that they have become an experience shared by people of diverse ages, backgrounds, and political persuasions. Moreover, due to the globalization of cinema, today crime films create a common reference point for people all over the world as they think and talk about crime.

Most of us, however, do not spend much time thinking about the implications of this globalized experience of crime films. Rather, we view crime films on an additive basis—first one, then the next—without pausing to analyze their social implications. Nor do we usually attempt to analyze the meanings of crime films’ continuities and changes over time, or how screen crimes relate to crime and justice in the “real” world, or how perceptions of the “real” world may be shaped by crime films and other media.

Crime Films and Society focuses on these issues. The course explores the roles of crime movies in contemporary life and culture, examining the history of these films and attempting to explain changes in the various genres over time.

## Course Goals

The goals of this course are:

- to encourage visual literacy;
- to analyze ways in which crime films shape perceptions of crime and criminals;
- to examine the idea of crime as a cultural resource and the impact of crime on popular culture.

Toward these goals, students will view and content analyze over two dozen full-length crime dramas produced across a span of historical periods and cultures.

**Consumer warning:** This course requires the viewing of films that depict offensive language, violence, sex, murder, and other forms of mayhem. You are welcome to hit the fast-forward button if the material becomes distressing; but if you are fundamentally offended or dismayed by such subject matter, you should not take this course.