

## Preliminary Web Course Description

\*Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.

### School of English and Theatre Studies

Course Code: ENGL*3940-02	Course Title: Form, Genre & Literary Value “The Sensation Novel”	Date of Offering: WINTER 18
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Course Instructor: Michelle Elleray	
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#### Brief Course Synopsis:

Sensation novels are “indications of a wide-spread corruption,” having been “called into existence to supply the cravings of a diseased appetite,” or so at least thought the Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral in 1863. Addressing topics such as madness, murder and the (sexually) transgressive woman, the sensation novel exploded idealizations of the Victorian family as a refuge from the woes and worries of the world. In this course we will read historical articles discussing the sensation novel as “bad” literature, as well as current critical articles that allow us to read the genre as a cultural manifestation of anxieties about women and the family, and that demonstrate the class-based presumptions of high aesthetics where popular literature is concerned. The course thus places debates about literary, moral and aesthetic value alongside arguments for the centrality of works in dialogue with the cultural imaginary. We will read Wilkie Collins’ *The Woman in White* and then turn to a twentieth-century revision of the sensation novel with Sarah Waters’ *Fingersmith*.

Course Format: Seminar	Methods of Evaluation and Weights: Presentation: 15% Participation: 5% Close reading 1: 10% (2 pages) Close reading 2: 10% (2 pages) Essay 1: 30% (7-8 pages) Essay 2: 30% (7-8 pages)
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Texts and/or Resources Required (e.g. Internet access, specific textbook title, lab kit, etc.)  
Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (Oxford UP)  
Sarah Waters, *Fingersmith* (Virago)

Other information that you wish share about the course (optional):  
Fulfills .5 FCE of 18th-/19th-century literature requirement  
Fulfills .5 FCE pf 20th-/21st-century literature requirement  
Required seminar for English majors, optional seminar for minors

