

**First Year Seminar**  
**GNED 1300-18; Fall 2008**  
**Religion in the Mystery Novel**  
**Dr. Frank Walmsley**

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Office Hours: Tues, Wed. 1:00 – 4:00 pm; others by appointment

Peer Tutor: Lindsey Handley

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Office Hours: Announced weekly

The books to be read will be:

1. *Dreaming of the Bones* by Deborah Crombie
2. *Reverend Randolph and the Fall From Grace, Inc.* by Charles Merrill Smith
3. *Masquerade* by William X. Kienzle
4. *One Fine Day the Rabbi Bought a Cross* by Harry Kemelman
5. *Skinwalkers* by Tony Hillerman
6. *Snakeskin Shamisen* by Naomi Hirahara

Book number 2 will be provided to the class. Books 3 and 4 will need to be purchased by each student from a used book source such as Amazon.com, alibris.com, abebooks.com or a mystery book store. The Trinity Bookstore has been asked to stock books 1, 5 and 6 but used books may be available.

The purposes of First Year Seminar are:

- To improve communication, both written and verbal
- To develop critical thinking skills
- To learn research skills
- To evaluate materials
- To be respectful of divergent opinions

This class will fulfill these purposes through three types of written papers, discussion of the materials read in the assigned books and in the research papers. The religion and religious principles in the mystery novels will be evaluated as to correctness and relevance to the story. Similarities and differences in the religious principles among different religions will be an important part of the discussion, where applicable. The personalities of the characters in the books will be discussed including their relevance to the story which leads to seeing if the story is well crafted.

## **Grading**

Class participation: 25%. First paper: 5%. Second paper: 5%. Third paper: 5%. Fourth paper: 15%. Fifth paper: 20%. Last paper: 25%. Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory.

**Class Participation.** Students are expected to come to each class prepared having read the material carefully, fully, and with thought. Questions raised during the reading should be researched. This will enable everyone to participate in the discussion of the topics for the day. Since class participation is a significant part of the course grade, each student is expected to participate in the discussion by raising questions and by responding to issues. If a topic is controversial, listen carefully, respond politely and recognize that the others may have valid points embedded in their opinions and recognize that maybe you have some invalid points in yours. We are learning together. The nature of the class requires all of this. Accordingly, each unexcused absence beyond two (that is, the equivalent of one full week) will result in the lowering of the course grade by one unit (e.g., from A- to B+). Dr. Walmsley will decide whether an absence is excused or not.

**Papers.** All papers must be written in grammatically correct English. The writing must be clearly understood. For help with these points, consult Dr. Walmsley, Lindsey (the Peer Tutor), a writing style guide, or the Writing Center in the library. Where appropriate, references must be cited completely. References are where specific information is obtained. I believe that general bibliographic listings are not appropriate in this course because they are too vague; citations must be specific. Correct use of superscripts, subscripts, special symbols, etc. is required. The format for references is a part of this syllabus. All papers must be your own original work. Know what plagiarism and theft of intellectual property are and review Trinity University's rules on academic integrity. All students fall under the University Honor Code and are required to pledge all written work submitted for a grade: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this work." and their signature. The pledge may be abbreviated "pledged" with a signature. For work submitted electronically, including "Pledged" on page one or a separate email indicating the paper and the pledge will be sufficient. There is no group work in this class. Consultation with the professor and/or the peer tutor can be invaluable.

## **Written Papers**

All papers will be typed with 1" margins on all sides in either Times New Roman or Arial font at 10 or 12 point. These are to be turned in via email to both Dr. Walmsley and to Lindsey, the peer tutor, or sent to (you must send to, not just place in) Blackboard's Digital Drop Box in either MSWord or Adobe Acrobat format. Drafts of papers in advance of the due date are strongly encouraged.

**First Paper:** This will be a discussion of an assigned topic from "Dreaming of the Bones". It is to be one page single spaced. You will need to adjust your discussion to fit

this space requirement. This paper is due by 10 pm the day before discussion of the books begins.

Second Paper: This is to be a list of at least 15 discussion items based on your reading of the "Masquerade" book.

Third Paper: Like the Second Paper, this is to be a list of at least 15 discussion items based on your reading of the "Fall From Grace, Inc." book.

Fourth Paper: This will be a critical review of either the book "Dreaming of the Bones" or "Masquerade" and is to be 3 to 5 pages long double spaced. The audience for the review is to be one of the following (your choice): (1) Trinity University students such as might be published in *The Trinitonian*; (2) The general public such as would be published in the local newspaper; (3) Members of a mystery book club; or (4) Sophomores in high school. A different audience may be used with Dr. Walmsley's permission. The final paper is due as given on the schedule. The writing style should be that of a book review and be appropriate for the audience. This paper probably will need no references. Be sure to identify your audience when the paper is turned in. Reviews of books, if you want to see some examples, can be found at [www.reviewsofbooks.com](http://www.reviewsofbooks.com) or in the Sunday "New York Times" or Sunday "San Antonio Express-News".

Fifth Paper: This will be a research paper on a religion topic taken from a mystery novel. The topic will be assigned during the first week of class. It is to be 5 to 7 pages long double spaced. The final paper is due by noon one week before the topic is to be discussed in class. The paper should be appropriately referenced. The writing style should be that of a formal report. The actual use of the topic in a novel will be given to the student researching the topic and should be included in the discussion in the paper. Choices will need to be made concerning content. For each topic, the student will lead a 15 to 20 minute discussion about the topic. This is not to be a presentation but a student led discussion to bring out the points in the paper.

Last Paper: A short mystery novel using an aspect of religion as a theme or as a significant part. It is to be at least 15 pages long double spaced. An outline is due as given on the schedule and the final paper is due the last class of the semester. Writing styles for mystery novels can vary depending on the story and on the author – choose what fits best. This paper may or may not need references.

## Class by Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Date	Topic
R 8/28	Introductions	T 10/21	Fall From Grace (cont.)
T 9/2	Intro to Mystery Novels	R 10/23	#7, #8
R 9/4	Sherlock Holmes	T 10/28	#9, #10
T 9/9	Mr. Monk	R 10/30	Guest
R 9/11	Why?	T 11/4	One Fine Day
T 9/16	Library Instruction	R 11/6	One Fine Day (cont.) Paper 4 due
R 9/18	Dreaming of the Bones Paper 1 due 9/17	T 11/11	The Mirror Crack'd
T 9/23	Dreaming (cont.)	R 11/13	The Mirror Crack'd
R 9/25	Masquerade Paper 2 due	T 11/18	Skinwalkers Novel outline due
T 9/30	Masquerade (cont.)	R 11/20	Skinwalkers (cont.)
R 10/2	Review	T 11/25	Novel Writing
T 10/7	#1, #2	R 11/27	Thanksgiving
R 10/9	#3, #4	T 12/2	Snakeskin
T 10/14	#5, #6	R 12/4	Snakeskin (cont.)
R 10/16	Fall From Grace, Inc. Paper 3 due	T 12/9	Last paper due Course Evaluation

### Due Dates for Fifth Paper

Assignment No.	Due Date
1, 2	Oct. 6
3, 4	Oct. 8
5, 6	Oct. 13
7, 8	Oct. 22
9, 10	Oct. 27

**Individual topics within other books.** These books will be loaned to the students with only limited pages in the particular book that need to be read.

- Christmas spirit  
*Let There be Suspects* by Emilie Richards
- Roman Catholic attitude toward marriage  
*Till Death* by William X. Kienzle
- Prayer  
*Novena for Murder* by Sister Carol Anne O'Marie
- Why priests or nuns leave/remain in priesthood  
*Masquerade* and *Till Death* by William X. Kienzle
- Religious meditation  
*Wednesday the Rabbi Got Wet* by Harry Kemelman
- Killing  
*Sister Simon's Murder Case* by Margaret Hubbard

7. Grace/Divine punishment  
*Sins Out of School* by Jeanne Dams
8. WWJD: Would Jesus smoke a cigar?  
*Reverend Randollph and the Unholy Bible* by Charles Merrill Smith
9. The church as a social club  
*Reverend Randollph and the Wages of Sin* by Charles Merrill Smith
10. Retribution  
*Let There Be Suspects* by Emilie Richards
11. Religious law vs civil law  
*Wednesday the Rabbi Got Wet* by Harry Kemelman
12. Forest and animal spirits  
*Amazon Gold* by Dirk Wyle
13. Amish attitudes such as forgiveness  
*broken english* by Paul Gauss
14. Divine punishment  
*Reverend Randollph and the Wages of Sin* by Charles Merrill Smith
15. Adjusting to post-Vatican II  
*Reverend Randollph and the Holy Terror* by Charles Merrill Smith  
*'Till Death* by William X. Kienzle  
*The Sacrifice* by William X. Kienzle
16. American natives adjusting to civilization  
*Amazon Gold* by Dirk Wyle
17. Communion with nature  
*The Purification Ceremony* by Mark Sullivan
18. Heaven, hell, and funerals  
*Reverend Randollph and the Wages of Sin* by Charles Merrill Smith
19. Vengeance  
*Reverend Randollph and the Avenging Angel* by Charles Merrill Smith
20. Are You Saved? or Are You Born Again?  
*Reverend Randollph and the Holy Terror* by Charles Merrill Smith
21. The clerical detective as a Christ type
22. Navajo stories of the origin of the world  
*The Shape Shifters* by Tony Hillerman
23. The Navajo system of values such as greed  
*The Shape Shifters* by Tony Hillerman
24. Are you governed by a moral law?  
*Reverend Randollph and the Unholy Bible* by Charles Merrill Smith
25. Christian behavior  
*Blessed is the Busybody* by Emilie Richards
26. Guardian angels  
*Blessed is the Busybody* by Emilie Richards
27. One true church  
*Funny Money* by Taylor McCafferty
28. Clerics as murderers