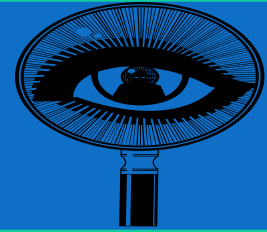


LET'S STUDY A PLAY TOGETHER

THE MOUSETRAP By Agatha Christie



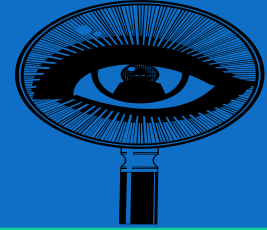
The Mousetrap



COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Read a play together – a fun group exercise
- Learn about the history of the play, the genre, the playwright, the background, etc., as time permits
- Discuss the play, e.g., the humor, the suspense, the stage effects, the characters
- Enjoy the reading, the class and our analysis of the play

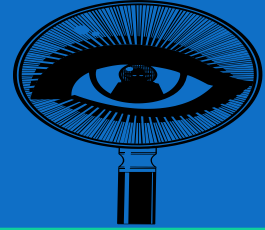
The Mousetrap



CLASS LOGISTICS

- Instructors will assign roles weekly in an e-mail attachment
- Each person will have one or more roles to read each week – please try to read in advance (except for the last few pages of Act II, where we learn whodunit!)
- Roles will shift before each class, depending on class absences – we need to cover all the characters

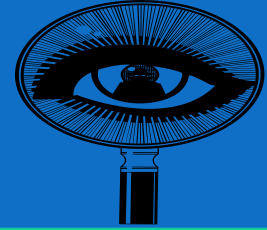
The Mousetrap



CLASS LOGISTICS (CONT.)

- We will read a scene or an act per week
- Each week the roles will rotate among class members – equal reading times for everyone
- Please let the instructors know ASAP of any planned or unplanned absences

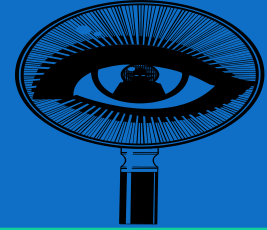
The Mousetrap



CLASS LOGISTICS (CONT.)

- We will have a short lecture to start each class
- Class members will read aloud the assigned scene(s) or act
- We (all of us) will discuss what we see/read/hear and ask or answer questions

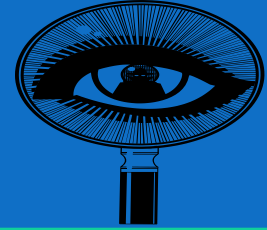
The Mousetrap



CLASS LOGISTICS (CONT.)

- Are there any questions so far as to our class procedure?
- Does everyone have a copy of the script?
- Now to explain the role assignments:
 - To give everyone an opportunity to read a part, we have arbitrarily split up the scene into “chunks”
 - Scene I has five “chunks”, so five assignments

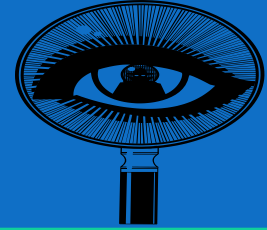
The Mousetrap



DISCLAIMER

- This class is not Readers Theater, because:
 - We read, rather than act (no British accents required)
 - Everyone reads at every class meeting
 - We don't rehearse
 - We don't critique the readers' technique
 - We read an entire play from start to finish
 - We study the play in context
 - We are multi-media, e.g., we watch video clips, listen to music, etc.

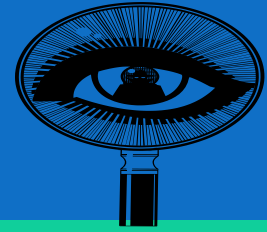
The Mousetrap



Why was this play chosen?

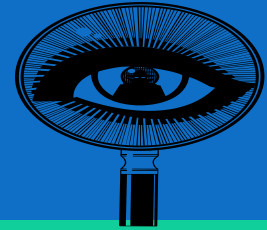
- Longest running play ever in London
- More contemporary than the previous plays we have studied – written in 1952
- Different genre (mystery) than we have considered before
- Entertaining, light-hearted
- Characters fun to act out
- Lots of video clips available

The Mousetrap



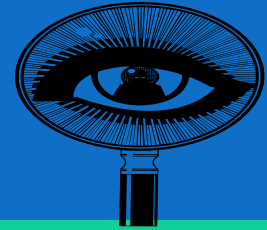
- Has anyone seen this play on the stage?
- Is there anyone in class who has never read an Agatha Christie story?
- Never seen one on TV?
- Never heard one on the radio?
- Never read a “cozy” mystery?
- Never wanted to live in a small English village?
- Never wondered about the person living in the house or cottage next to you?
- Never wondered about the person sitting next to you?

The Mousetrap



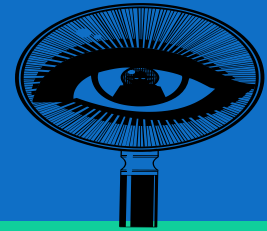
- Some references – English terminology and *Mousetrap*-specific explanations
 - Stoke the Aga: built up the fire
 - Paddington: railroad station
 - Benares brass: Indian metalwork
 - Etc. (also see next page)
- (If only the British would learn to speak the English language as well as we do, they could understand us! And we them.)

The Mousetrap

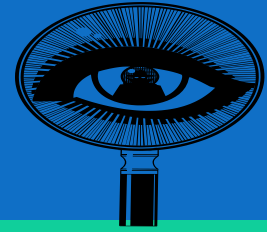


- **Canterbury:** a piece of portable, occasional furniture, consisting of an open-topped rack with slatted compartments for sheet music, music books, magazines or newspapers and often a drawer underneath as well; rests on four legs, which are typically on casters; developed in the 1780s in England (reputedly deriving its name from the Archbishop of Canterbury, who commissioned one), it grew increasingly ornate throughout the 19th century: Victorian pieces often have an upper galleried shelf, and panels shaped like lyres or treble clefs

The Mousetrap



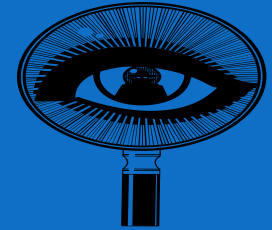
The Mousetrap



Video Clips:

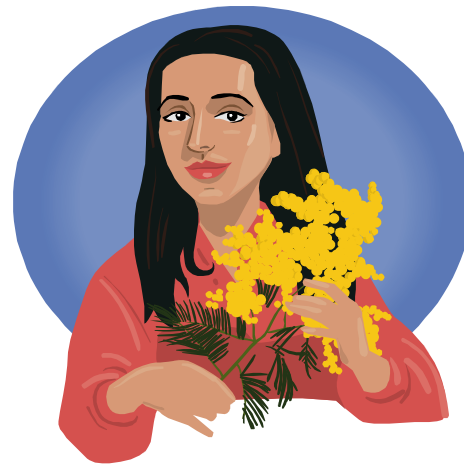
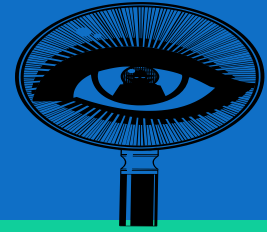
- [Video Clip Intro. to the Characters](#)

The Mousetrap



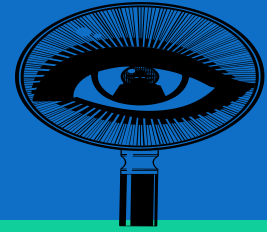
Characters

The Mousetrap



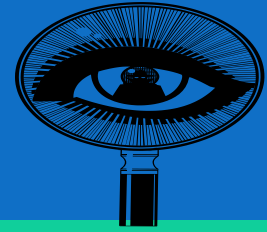
Molly Ralston

The Mousetrap



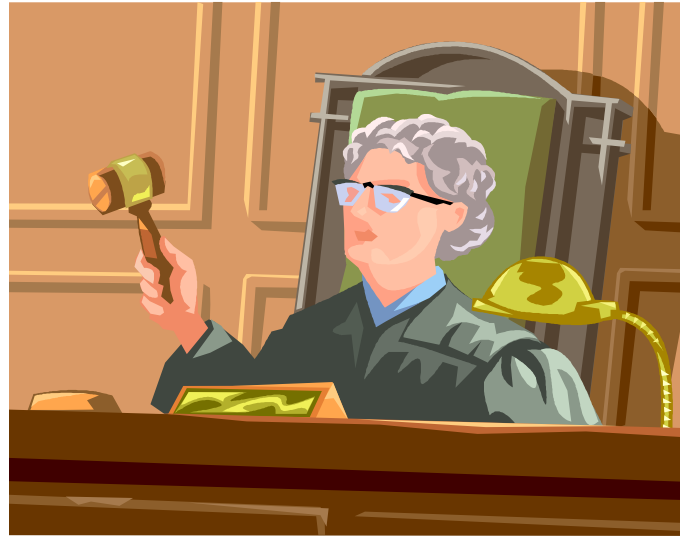
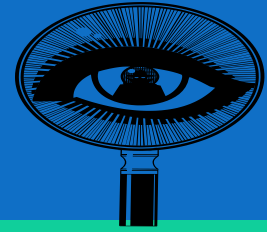
Giles Ralston

The Mousetrap



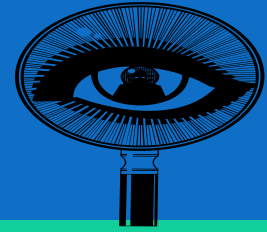
Christopher Wren

The Mousetrap



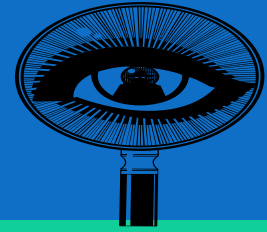
Mrs. Boyle

The Mousetrap



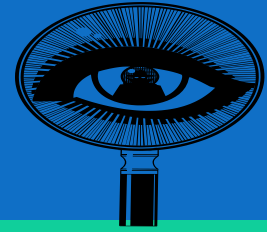
Major Metcalf

The Mousetrap



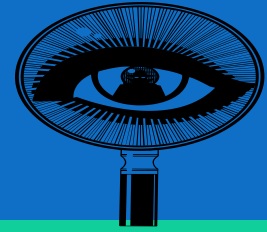
Miss Casewell

The Mousetrap



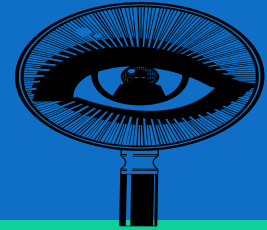
Mr. Paravicini

The Mousetrap



**Detective Sergeant
Trotter**

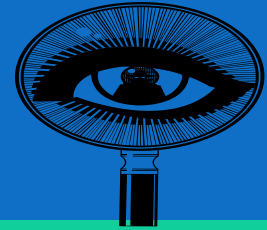
The Mousetrap



Agatha Awards

- Does everyone know about the “Agatha” awards?
- The Agatha Awards are given annually for materials first published in the United States by a living author during the calendar year, either in hardcover, as a paperback original, or e-published by an e-publishing firm.
- The Agatha Awards honor the “traditional mystery”, i.e., books best typified by the works of Agatha Christie, as well as others. This genre is loosely defined as mysteries that:
 - are in a closed setting
 - Include an amateur detective
 - contain no explicit sex
 - contain no excessive gore or gratuitous violence
 - Materials generally classified as “hard-boiled” are not appropriate.

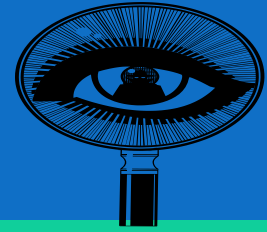
The Mousetrap



Agatha Awards (cont.)

- Agatha Awards are handed out in six categories: Best Novel; Best First Mystery; Best Historical Novel; Best Short Story; Best Non-Fiction; Best Children's/Young Adult Mystery.
- Additionally, in some years the Poirot award is presented to honor individuals other than writers who have made outstanding contributions to the mystery genre, but it is not an annual award.
- FYI: In 2011, the winner of the Best Novel Agatha Award was Margaret Maron, who coincidentally is the subject of another OLLI class this term..

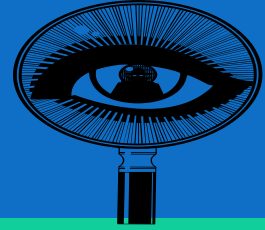
The Mousetrap



Cozy Mysteries Genre:

- Most cozy mysteries take place in a small, picturesque town or village, with characters who could be neighbors or friends.
- Note that there exists a web site: www.cozy-mystery.com, for those who love this sort of thing.
- Mousetrap is a play, not a novel, but may fall into the cozy mystery genre – let's see what we think once we read it.

The Mousetrap



Video Clips:

- [Monty Python Spoof](#)