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102 Course Proposal: "Inquiry into American Mysteries"

Course Description:

"Inquiry into American Mysteries" will explore the subject of *mystery* in a variety of definitions, contexts, cultures, and literary genres. We will consider definitions of mystery seen in

mainstream and minority American cultures and in particular contexts such as the Wild West, the supernatural world, crime-solving and the "unsolved mystery." We will examine a wide spectrum of literary genres, from mystic poetry to murder mystery. Hands-on inquiries could range from visiting Native American burial grounds to exploring haunted houses.

Historical inquiries might reach from African voodoo's American introduction to the contradictory theories about JFK's assassination. Academic inquiries might be anything from the biogenetic testing of Thomas Jefferson's DNA to Poe's singlehanded invention of the detective story.

Besides written texts, cinematic literature (movies) will make unique and also supporting contributions to our study of American mysteries.