

COLLOQUIUM BY MARK ULETT

THE SCIENCE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

TIME: 7-8PM, WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2015

VENUE: CC 1103

Speaker: Mark Andrew Ulett, Thompson Postdoctoral Fellow at Duke University, Professor of Writing across Cultures in DKU.

ABSTRACT:

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's character Sherlock Holmes is the most widely recognized man of science in modern fiction. The original stories written from 1887 to 1927 provide a fascinating window into the history and philosophy of science at a critically important time and place, British society at the turn of the twentieth century. From this perspective, we can ask fascinating questions about Sherlock and Victorian science. Would a psychologist in the 19th century think Sherlock was sane? Was Sherlock's method scientific? What information can we actually learn from a footprint? What can Sherlock's use of cocaine tell us about the medical views of the drug? This lecture explores these and other interesting questions related to the science of Sherlock Holmes, showcasing how student work on a charismatic topic can be used to promote the public understanding of the history and philosophy of science.

BIO:

Mark Andrew Ulett is an historian of science and Thompson Postdoctoral Fellow at Duke University whose research focuses primarily on non-Darwinian theories of evolution in the 19th and 20th centuries. He is an avid fan Conan Doyle's original Sherlock Holmes stories and recently taught a writing course combining his interests in the history of science and Sherlock.