

Midcoast Senior College  
Spring 2026  
Flanders

## Dorothy L. Sayers: The Holy Mysteries – *Strong Poison* Class Schedule

### Class 1, Hour 1

A. Who are we and why are we interested in Dorothy Sayers?

B. General Introduction to Sayers

1. Born Oxford
2. Raised in Father's East Anglia parish
3. Attended Somerville College, Oxford, grad 1915
4. Received one of first Women's degrees, 1920
5. Works at ad agency: 1922-1929
6. 1923: *Whose Body*
7. Has a son out of wedlock, 1924
8. Marries 'Mac' Fleming 1926
9. 1930: *Strong Poison*
10. 1934: *The Nine Tailors*
11. 1935: *Gaudy Night*

C. *Strong Poison*: Themes, Ideas, Characters

1. Wimsey/Vane relationship
2. Feminism
3. Religion
4. Post WWI trauma and culture
5. Spiritualism

Class 1, Hour 2: Sayers sets up her plot – First Chapters

- A. The judge: character, fairness, expository usefulness
- B. What do we learn about Harriet Vane?
- C. What do we learn about Peter Wimsey?
- D. Rhythm: How does DLS break up the judge's summation?
- E. Characters: How do we meet the major characters? Who are they?

Class 2, Hour 1:

- A. Katharine Climpson
  - 1. High Church Anglicanism
  - 2. Spiritualism
- B. Norman Urquhart
  - 1. The Law
  - 2. The office
- C. Bill Rumm, Religion, and Locks
- D. Arsenic

Class 2, Hour 2:

Why don't Peter and Harriet fall into each other's arms and have a happy ending?

The setup for the next five years.