

Center for Modern Greek Studies
The Nikos Kazantzakis Chair
San Francisco State University

**“Crisis Noir: Petros Markaris’s Detective Novels
and the Greek Financial Crisis”**

As literary critics like William J. Nichols and others have argued, hardboiled noir has emerged as a global phenomenon that “explor[es] the social effects of globalization” and “examine[s] the revolutionary possibilities of literature and popular culture.” Contemporary noir writers recycle the sense of disillusionment and anti-institutional worldview found in canonical American noir, while parodying many of its conventions, in order to launch culturally resonant critiques of the global economy and financial crime. One such writer is Greece’s respected and much-lauded crime novelist Petros Markaris. His recent Inspector Haritos “Crisis Trilogy” tackles head-on the devastating effects of the financial crisis on Greek society, which has practically demolished the social safety net and left the majority of the country’s youth with virtually no prospects. Markaris does this both by tapping into the way noir crime writers before him use culturally resonant gendered anxieties to “unleash demons bottled up in the national psyche” and by underscoring the genre’s thorny relationship to commodity culture, which often treads a fine line between pointed critique and covert reinforcement. In the face of a social chaos brought about by deep systemic inequities, Markaris’s novels explore models of grass-roots community building that depends on his protagonist’s ability to move beyond the constraints of identity conventionalized in the traditional noir detective novel.

Professor Patricia Barbeito
Department of English, Rhode Island School of Design
Wednesday, April 9, 2014
4:10 to 5:30
HUM 113

Bio:

Patricia Felisa Barbeito received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at Harvard University and is currently Professor of American Literatures at the Rhode Island School of Design where she teaches courses on race and ethnicity. Focusing on the Intersection of literature and race/ethnic politics, her publications on both American and Greek literature have appeared in a variety of journals, including *American Literature*, *The Journal of American Culture* and *the Journal of Modern Greek Studies*. She is cotranslator (with Vangelis Calotychos) of Menis Komandareas’s *Their Smell Makes Me Want to Cry* (The University of Birmingham Modern Greek Translations, 2004), and translator of *The Interrogation* (Birmingham Modern Greek Translations, 2013), as well as shorter pieces by Vasilis Gkourogiannis and Sotiris Dimitriou for the online international literature journal, *Words Without Borders*. She is currently working on a book about the African-American author Chester Himes titled, *One Jump Ahead of Disaster: The Politics of Race, Interracial Sex, and Literary Style in Chester Himes’s Writing*.

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