# **English Literature**

# **Module Descriptions 2024/25**

# **Level H (i.e. Final Year.) Modules**

Please be aware that all modules are subject to availability.

For these modules, strong knowledge of Literature and a near native level of English is required. All applications for Level H modules are subject to approval by the English Literature department.

Please note that at the time this document has been prepared (March 2024) the following information is provisional, and there may be minor changes between now and the beginning of 2024/25 academic year.

**Please note: Forms of assessment are currently undergoing review for 2024/25, and as a result the assessment information listed within this handbook may be subject to change.**

# **SEMESTER 1 MODULES**

**Only ONE of the following three modules can be taken:**

## **From Plato to the Post Modern**

MODULE CODE: 29643

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1 x essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 1 (Autumn term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

The module provides an account of the development of theories of literature and art from the classical period to the modern day. It will consider the range, type and purpose of conceptual approaches to the arts, and examine how those theories have been applied to specific works. The course will also reflect on the social and cultural background of the selected theories, and will examine the relationship between writings on aesthetics from different eras (such as in the reconfiguration of romantic ideology in some theories of the postmodern).

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

* Plato, The Republic
* Aristotle, Poetics
* Sidney, ‘The Defence of Poesy’
* Pope, An Essay on Criticism
* Burke, On the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful
* Kant, Critique of Judgment
* Wordsworth, Preface to Lyrical Ballads
* Shelley, A Defence of Poetry
* Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy
* Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy
* Leavis, The Great Tradition
* Cixous, ‘Laugh of the Medusa’
* Johnson, Critical Difference
* Jameson, Postmodernism
* Gilroy, The Black Atlantic

## **Hidden Romanticism**

MODULE CODE: 36982

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1 x essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 1 (Autumn term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

The module provides an opportunity to explore a range of material from the Romantic period—including letters, journals, notebook entries, manuscript drafts, and fragments of abandoned poems—that were hidden from public view. Some texts were withheld from the press for their radical content; some were too personal or painful to be shared; others formed part of a creative exchange between friends. Attending closely to texts that remained unpublished, or were originally circulated privately, will open up discussion of literary coteries, issues of audience and readership, and the significance of interiority and lyric expression. The module will also introduce students to aspects of textual scholarship, encouraging them to think about writing processes and the insights afforded through the study of manuscript revisions. At a time when reviewers had the power to make or destroy a writer’s reputation, and when it was potentially dangerous to make certain utterances publicly, the Romantics produced writings on love, loss, landscape, the imagination, religion, and politics that they kept secret. The module will enable students to study Romantic writing across a range of genres, genders, and geographical locations.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

* William Wordsworth, ‘The Ruined Cottage’, *The Two-Part Prelude*
* Emily Brontë, selected poems
* John Clare, selected poems
* Dorothy Wordsworth, ‘Alfoxden Journals’, selected poems
* John Keats, ‘The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream’, Letters
* Percy Shelley, ‘Julian and Maddalo’, Letters
* Mary Shelley, ‘Journal of Sorrow’
* Samuel Taylor Coleridge, selected poems
* Thomas Lovell Beddoes, *Death’s Jest-Book*

## **Last Year’s Novels**

MODULE CODE: 26673

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1 x essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 1 (Autumn term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

How do literary scholars begin to study contemporary literature? With no existing academic work exploring the texts, how can we ask meaningful questions of, and form compelling arguments about, the newest literary works?  In this module we will read ten novels first published in the UK in 2023 and think about how we might understand the issues and events they address, and the stylistic techniques they use to do so, in order to develop original, research-based arguments.

In the novels this year we will meet a teenager coming of age in contemporary Nigeria, and another struggling to survive in the forests of early colonial America. We’ll read about dysfunction moving through three generations of an Irish family, but also within the relationships between father and sons in a Jamaican immigrant family in Florida. We’ll read a crime epic set in contemporary India, and a speculative dystopic vision of the American prison system. We will visit a courtroom drama in early-twentieth-century Penang, and tabloid exploitation in late-twentieth-century London. We’ll also think about the power dynamics of a New Zealand primary school and reflect on the emotions and sensations of professional boxing.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

* Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, *Chain-Gang All-Stars* (Harvill Secker, 2023)
* Stephen Buoro, *The Five Sorrowful Mysteries of Andy Africa* (Bloomsbury Circus, 2023)
* Catherine Chidgey, *Pet* (Europa, 2023)
* Anne Enright, *The Wren, The Wren* (Jonathan Cape, 2023)
* Jonathon Escoffery, *If I Survive You* (Fourth Estate, 2023)
* Lauren Groff, *The Vaster Wilds* (Hutchinson Heinemann, 2023)
* Deepti Kapoor, *Age of Vice* (Fleet, 2023)
* Megan Nolan, *Ordinary Human* *Failings* (Jonathan Cape, 2023)
* Tan Twan Eng, *The House of Doors* (Canongate, 2023)
* Michael Winkler, *Grimmish* (Peninsula, 2023)

**Only ONE of the following four modules can be taken:**

## **Literature at Sea: 1851 to present**

MODULE CODE: 30632

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1 x essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 1 (Autumn term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

In mid-2017, London’s Natural History Museum replaced its iconic diplodocus skeleton with that of a creature far more modern, but perhaps no less alien: a blue whale. What is the significance of this act; what are its symbolic ramifications; why, out of all of earth’s living creatures, extinct or extant, choose a blue whale?

For centuries, the sea has functioned as an imaginative point of departure for many different kinds of writers and thinkers. It has been crucial for human connectivity, migration, the slave trade and empire-building; it has been granted immense metaphorical power by poets and scientists alike; it remains an ecological barometer for humanity’s effect on the planet; and it is an increasingly important site of critical inquiry in the humanities. This module aims to continue and engage with these numerous discourses, and to explore the variety and significance of literature both set at and written at sea since the mid-nineteenth century. The course will encompass narrative sea fiction, sea poetry, travel writing and passenger diaries, and some remarkable examples of ships’ logbooks. Progressing thematically, our perspective on the sea will take in the ships and human communities who work upon its surface, and plunge into stranger territory to fathom the animals – and stranger creatures – inhabiting its depths.

At the heart of this module is the suggestion that life at sea, and writing at sea, is fundamentally and qualitatively different from the lives and the writings of landlubbers. It is a space in which gender roles, class divisions, and even the boundaries between the human and nonhuman are repeatedly contested and redefined. We will explore how the sea shapes the lives and the writings of those who sail upon it and dive into it, asking what effect the fluidity, instability, or depths, of the sea have on subjectivity and senses of self. Finally, we will ask whether it’s possible to confront the sea on its own terms, and what the value of so doing might be: that is, how can we work not to raise the blue whale from the deep and thereby decontextualize it, but rather glimpse it in its oceanic domain…

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

Our literary heritage is thoroughly sea-soaked, and writers you may study on this course include:

* Herman Melville
* Elizabeth Gaskell
* Virginia Woolf
* Rachel Carson
* Adrienne Rich
* Derek Walcott
* Heathcote Williams
* Elizabeth Bishop
* Horatio Clare
* and unpublished passenger diaries and logbooks.

## **Multiple Voices: New York City Poetics 1960-1985**

MODULE CODE: 30635

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1 x essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 1 (Autumn term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

This module offers a literary-cultural study of textual, visual and material culture in New York City between 1960 and 1985. It maps the poetry produced during the period back onto (and into) the city, attending in particular to the intersections between race, class, gender, and sexuality, to the significance of place and space, and to the connections between poetry, music, and visual art. It examines the interrelations between different locations (from Harlem to the Lower East Side), various poetic groups (e.g. the New York Schools, the Black Arts Movement, punk, the Beats, the Nuyoricans), and individual artists such as Frank O’Hara, Amiri Baraka, Joe Brainard, Patti Smith, Anne Waldman, Miguel Pinero, Melvin Dixon, Frances Chung, and Bernadette Mayer. The module aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of New York City poetics during the period, taking both a literary and a cultural-historical approach (using the poetry to tell the story of the place).

**INDICATIVE READING LISTS**

Poets studied on the module are likely to include: Diane Di Prima, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, Bob Kaufman, Amiri Baraka, June Jordan, Sonia Sanchez, Audre Lorde, Jayne Cortez, Frank O'Hara, Joe Brainard, Bernadette Mayer, Anne Waldman, James Schuyler, Alice Notley, Arthur T. Wilson, Miguel Algarín, Lucky Cienfuegos, Miguel Piñero, Sandra Maria Esteves, Pedro Pietri, Victor Hernandez Cruz, Patti Smith, Eileen Myles, Melvin Dixon, Michael K. White, John Ashbery, and Robert Vazquez-Pacheco... The module will also discuss artists, musicians, and editors.

## **Orwell’s Books**

MODULE CODE: 32236

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1 x essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 1 (Autumn term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

The goal of this module is to introduce students to the full range and complexity of George Orwell’s writing, focusing on the nine longest books of fiction and non-fiction he published between 1933 and 1949. Beginning with Down and Out in Paris and London (1933), the module will look at: Orwell’s ongoing concern about poverty and destitution; his critical account of empire in Burmese Days (1934); the oddly experimental and little-read novel A Clergyman’s Daughter (1935); the self-dramatizing strategies of Keep the Aspidistra Flying (1936); Orwell’s calls for a rethought socialism in The Road to Wigan Pier (1937); the captivating reminiscences of fighting in the Spanish Civil War as told in Homage to Catalonia (1938); the paranoia and inventiveness of Coming up for Air (1939); why the pigs always seem to get the upper hand in Animal Farm (1945); and the fate of ‘the last man in Europe’, Winston Smith, as depicted in Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949). The emphasis throughout will be on drawing connections and threads—at the level of form and theme—between these magnificent works of literature, reportage, and political commentary.

Although Orwell is to some extent responsible for the genre of the literary dystopia, this is not a module about his place in that venerable tradition. As the module’s subtitle suggests, students will be asked to think about how Orwell resisted the work of tyranny by means of political, critical, and cultural-historical analysis. His oft-quoted goal to turn political writing into an art will provide the background note to much of the seminar discussions and many of the lectures, all of which will seek to contextualize Orwell’s writing in political, cultural, and theoretical terms. Although students will not be expected to have substantive political knowledge beforehand, inter-war politics will be a recurrent point of reference throughout the module, ranging from the politics of socialism and capitalism to totalitarianism. Readings from key political thinkers (e.g. Hannah Arendt, Friedrich Hayek) will be set as secondary texts, as will many of Orwell’s own essays. Students who take the module will not only have an opportunity to study the work of one of the twentieth century’s most important writers, but also find themselves face to face with some of the most intractable social and political problems of the last hundred years.

**INDICATIVE READING LISTS**

* *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933)
* *Burmese Days* (1934)
* *A Clergyman’s Daughter* (1935)
* *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936)
* *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937)
* *Homage to Catalonia* (1938)
* *Coming Up for Air* (1939)
* *Animal Farm* (1945)

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)

## **Politics and Terror in the Age of Revolutions**

MODULE CODE: 27596

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1 x essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 1 (Autumn term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

The outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 fundamentally reshaped the political and literary culture of the British Isles, with the hopes and anxieties which it provoked triggering waves of politically radical manifestoes; a conservative backlash that sought to control revolutionary energies; an unprecedented wave of Gothic texts which reflected and responded to post-Revolutionary fears; and a revolution in aesthetic ideologies which attempted to carve out a privileged position for literature above the sphere of political struggle. In this module we will survey the political and literary culture of the Romantic period by examining poetry, novels, and essays by some of the leading writers of the age.  We will examine representations of wrongful imprisonment, visionary prophecy, political apostasy, religious corruption, and sexual deviance, unpicking both the aesthetic techniques employed and their wider implications in shifting social, political and international contexts.

**INDICATIVE READING LISTS**

Writers to be studied may include Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Charlotte Smith, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Matthew Lewis, Ann Radcliffe, Anna Barbauld, William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, the Shelleys, William Hazlitt, and John Keats

# **SEMESTER 2 MODULES**

**Only ONE of the following five modules can be taken:**

## **Bringing Out the Bodies: Technology, Transhumans and Skin**

MODULE CODE: 27598

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1 x essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 2 (Spring term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

The word "technology" is used extensively throughout popular discourse to describe our material culture – something different is meant to be going on right now, something electronic, digital, microscopic, biological. Technology, however, is nothing new, either as a concept or as a fact of human life. What, then, is distinct about the ways in which we use tools in the 21st century and how do the representations of technology, in all forms of media, question the ways in which our contemporary uses of technology might (or should) unfold?

This module focuses on the user’s body, how it might be supported and invaded, improved and supplanted by technology. The aim is to worm our way into the skin, starting with graspable and wearable technologies, then implants, before looking at genetic modifications, pharmaceuticals, the end of aging and, finally, the “ideal” shedding of the human body for another kind of existence entirely, uploading consciousness into "the cloud." In exploring these topics we will consider why we might want to modify ourselves, the role literature and film plays in shaping our desires, how we might go about doing any project of human enhancement, and why we might want to shape or even resist it going forward.

Students will consider a provocation from a theoretical, philosophical, legal, and/or scientific work and then pair these insights with an artwork (typically literature or film). The aim is to explore cutting edge thought, so many examples will be drawn from the 21st century, but ideas about technology and the body will also be grounded in work across history so that we might talk about the first stone tools and their direct lineage to mobile phones and beyond. Students with an interest in any time period will therefore be able to pursue many of these same discussions and find their own examples.

**INDICATIVE READING LISTS**

* Ramez Naam – Nexus
* Ramez Naam – More Than Human
* Sabrina Vourvoulias – Ink
* Kate Devlin – Turned On: Science, Sex and Robots
* Daniel Keyes – Flowers for Algernon
* Nancy Kress – Beggars in Spain
* Altered Carbon: Season 1
* Douglas Lain – Aubrey de Grey: Advocate for an Indefinite Human Lifespan
* Caroline Bassett, Ed Steinmueller, and George Voss – “Better Made Up: The Mutual Influence of Science fiction and Innovation"
* Nick Payne, Elegy
* Robert Venditti, The Surrogates Volume 1
* Limitless
* Advantageous
* Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
* Gattaca
* Her
* Muireann Quigley and Semande Ayihongbe, “Everyday Cyborgs: On Integrated Persons and Integrated Goods,” Medical Law Review, Volume 26, Issue 2, Spring 2018, Pages 276–308

These kinds of materials will be analysed and critiqued from a range of theoretical perspectives including discussions of race, class and economics, gender, sexuality, and disability. We will also discuss attitudes towards mental health.

## **Fantasy and Fandom: writing back to the medieval in modern fantasy**

MODULE CODE: 22837

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1 x essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 2 (Spring term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

From heroes and quests to magic and hidden identities, modern fantasy has looked to the literature of the medieval period for inspiration. Yet it has also consistently transformed and reshaped its source material, rewriting the significance of key motifs and ideas in order to address the issues of its own time and place of production. This module will examine the ways in which modern fantasy writing both adopts and adapts the culture, language, characters and narratives of medieval texts, and in so doing identifies its authors as an (albeit diverse) fandom. Although not fanfiction in the strictest terms, modern fantasy writing often shares with it the desire to extend and appropriate the plots and protagonists of earlier texts, and to challenge or re-examine them by writing in an avatar who explores the textual world in a metaphorical representation of the author's own discovery of the original work.

This module will look at forerunners for this in the medieval period too, and will encourage students to analyse the communally-driven nature of textual production and circulation in the Middle Ages, as well as the communities of interest which have written fantasy in response, from the late nineteenth century to the present.  The module will provide the opportunity to examine a range of fantasy writing, which may include texts from George MacDonald and William Morris through C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien to contemporary writers such as Neil Gaiman, Michael Moorcock, J. K. Rowling and Ursula LeGuin.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

* Mary Stewart, *The Crystal Cave*
* Ursula Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea*
* J. R. R. Tolkien, T*he Fellowship of the Ring*
* George R. R. Martin, *A Game of Thrones*
* Neil Gaiman, *Stardust, Beowulf*
* Marie de France, *Launval*,
* Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath’s Tale',
* Malory, *Morte Darthur*
* Lord Dunsany, *The King of Elfland’s Daughter*

## **Islamophobia and the Novel**

MODULE CODE: 30677

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1x Book review (30%) and 1x Essay (70%)

SEMESTER: 2 (Spring term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

Islamophobia and the Novel will offer students an opportunity to study contemporary novels that address the question of intercultural relations between Muslims and others in an era of rising anti-Muslim prejudice. Taking examples from Britain, the United States and beyond, it will explore how novelists have addressed the issues of cultural difference and a perceived ‘clash of civilisations’ – in terms of the form and content of their work – while also considering the contexts of dissemination and reception which help give these novels their meaning in the world.

The module looks at texts that have appeared in the last 30 or so years, exploring topics which have become central to today’s society such as multiculturalism, citizenship, migration, cultural difference, and the role of the literary market in creating and preserving certain hegemonic values. We will think about what the experience of Muslims, and the prejudice they often face, tells us about ideas of Britain and ‘the West’, while also thinking about how these debates are constructed and by whom.

The role of literature is central to our considerations, not least because of the claims that are often made about it. Since the 1989 Satanic Verses affair, when Salman Rushdie’s novel created widespread offence among Muslims, issues of freedom of expression and censorship have often been taken to mark a civilizational divide between the secular West and Islam. We will interrogate this binary, see how some writers tend to reinforce it while others deconstruct its terms and the stereotypes it often creates. The role of readers, critics, academia, the publishing industry, and cultural elites all serve to shape this debate.

For these reasons, Islamophobia and the Novel is very much a module about the way we live today and how we orient ourselves in the world.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

* *Martin Amis, ‘The Last Days of Muhammad Atta’*
* Hanif Kureishi, *The Black Album*
* John Le Carré, *A Most Wanted Man*
* John Updike*, Terrorist*
* Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*
* Amy Waldman, *The Submission*
* Leila Aboulela, *Minaret*
* Kamila Shamsie, *Home Fire*
* Sanjeev Sahota, *Ours Are the Streets*
* Ayisha Malik, *This Green and Pleasant Land*

## **The Pre-Raphaelite Circle**

MODULE CODE: 27755

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1x Presentation (25%) and 1x Essay (75%)

SEMESTER: 2 (Spring term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

This module focuses on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of mid-nineteenth century artists and writers, as an entry point to explore a series of art/text movements of the Victorian era. Derided in the press as the “Fleshly School” of poetry, the PRB engaged many of the most pressing debates of literary and artistic production and consumption during the period: the role of craft versus inspiration, the relationship between realism and idealism, the pressures of facing an increasingly vocal public, and the wages of industrialization, among others. In this module, students will consider the ways that that Pre-Raphaelites—as well as the Aesthetes, the Arts and Crafts movement, the Century Guild, and other groups that the PRB inspired—responded to these debates in the various artistic forms they advocated.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

Texts to include verse by Tennyson, Keats, Browning, Barrett Browning, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, Swinburne, and Wilde; prose by Pater, Ruskin, Arnold, Morris, Beerbohm, and Buchanan; and images ranging from the fine arts to cartoons from the popular periodical press.

## **Literary Ecologies: Environmental Crisis in American Writing**

MODULE CODE: 39959

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1x Written assignment (30%) and 1x Essay (70%)

SEMESTER: 2 (Spring term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

This module explores the relationship between literary expression and environmental concerns in American writing. Drawing on novels, poetry and non-fiction writing from the nineteenth century to the present across a range of genres (which may include sci-fi, nature writing, and journalism), we will read texts through an ecological lens that traces the connections between an emerging environmental crisis and human values. By exploring a diverse array of imaginative American writing, we will explore urgent themes about the current climate emergency and its roots in American history. We will see how powerfully literature represents the burgeoning awareness of a crisis at the heart of nature and how it exists within a web of interrelated issues about land, social justice, colonialism, and community.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

* Ursula K Le Guin, The Word for World is Forest
* Leslie Marmon Silko, Ceremony
* Rachel Carson, Silent Spring
* Richard Powers, The Overstory
* Grace Paley, ‘Faith in a Tree’ and ‘Enormous Changes at the Last Minute’ (short stories)

Poems: e.g. Denise Levertov; Tommy Pico, Joyce Harjo

**Only ONE of the following four modules can be taken:**

## **Making Global Literatures in Britain**

MODULE CODE: 30727

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: 1x Written reflection OR poster (25%) and 1x Essay (75%) SEMESTER: 2 (Spring term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

This module studies writing from – or somehow connected to – Britain's former colonies from 1831 to 2021.

In weeks 1-5 we’ll examine a handful of case studies of writers from places like Jamaica and Nigeria who “made” their careers in imperial Britain. Weeks 7-11 switches focus as we explore how contemporary literature and art reckons with how to “archive” the global entanglements and difficult histories born of colonialism.

This module will be of interest to undergraduates with interests in postcolonial, twentieth century and contemporary literature. It will introduce you to literary voices from the archive – that is, writers beyond the conventional canon of “English Literature” -- and some contemporary voices too.

We’ll talk about “race”, cultural identity and the role of artistic craft amid the fraught past still haunting the present. Along the way we’ll visit an archive and a gallery or two, learning more about how “gatekeeping” institutions like the BBC, literary publishing and even the courts have shaped what we read in this country.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

Part one: colonial writers in the metropolis

* Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince* (1831)
* Una Marson, *London Calling* (1934)
* Edgar Mittelholzer, *A Morning at the Office* (1950)
* Amos Tutuola, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952)

Part two: contemporary literature: a living archive?

* Hazel Carby, *Imperial Intimacies* (2019)
* Jay Bernard, *Surge* (2019)
* Shola von Reinhold, *LOTE* (2020)
* Zoe Wicomb, *Still Life* (2020)
* Gail McConnell, *The Sun is Open* (2021)

## **Shakespeare’s Tragedies**

MODULE CODE: 26835

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: Essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 2 (Spring term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

Shakespeare’s Tragedies will offer a powerful and pleasurable – and sometimes painful – encounter with our most valued writer. We will explore what is tragic in Shakespeare, and what is Shakespearean in tragedy, and we will place those things in the complicated early modern and modern genealogies of tragedy. Shakespeare’s Tragedies will offer students the opportunity to read texts from across the whole span of Shakespeare’s writing career and will not be limited to those printed in the First Folio as ‘Tragedies’, allowing us also to think about genre, and about the difference between tragic drama and tragic poetry.

Shakespeare’s Tragedies is founded on the close reading and experience of the plays as deeply multi-vocal, multi-dimensional texts for reading and performance, and on the myriad opportunities for exploring and analysing them as such, so you are encouraged to move beyond the question of genre in your weekly thinking and reading. Shakespeare’s Tragedies seeks, above all, to equip students to think about and enjoy some of Shakespeare’s most enduring plays and poems for themselves.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

A selection of Shakespeare's tragic writing, usually including:

* *Titus Andronicus*
* *Richard III*
* *The Rape of Lucrece*
* *Julius Caesar*
* *Hamlet*
* *King Lear*
* *Macbeth*
* *Antony and Cleopatra*
* *Coriolanus*

Complemented by a week specifically focussing on ideas of tragedy and tragic art.

## **The Figure of the Witch**

MODULE CODE: 37352

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: Essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 2 (Spring term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

The Figure of the Witch explores how pre-modern communities in Europe and America understood magic and witchcraft, how they 'thought' with the figure of the witch, and how we might critically engage with their complex legacies today. In this module you will be introduced to the development of magical beliefs and moral panics across three hundred years of 'witch-writings' and two continents, as well as their later reception.

The module encompasses a rich variety of texts, beginning with medieval and early-modern magical practices, alongside literary narratives of supernatural transformation and flight, before considering the ways in which earlier beliefs and stories appear in writings of the early-modern witch hunts. These will include the famous witch-hunter's manual, the Malleus Maleficarum (1487), James VI's Daemonologie (1597), and the records of the seventeenth-century Salem Witch Trials. We will encounter the testimonies of the accused and their accusers, alert to gaps and absences in the record, before finally we turn to modern creative responses to the trials (including Maryse Conde's I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem; the writings of feminist activist Starhawk; and the recent Netflix film Coven of Sisters). The module therefore concludes with an exploration of the voice of the witch as it has been reclaimed by modern authors writing back to the archive.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

* *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487)
* James VI's *Daemonologie* (1597)
* the records of the seventeenth-century Salem Witch Trials
* Maryse Conde's *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*
* the writings of feminist activist Starhawk
* Netflix film *Coven of Sisters*

## **Virginia Woolf**

MODULE CODE: 37163

CREDIT VALUE: 20

ASSESSMENT METHOD: Essay (100%)

SEMESTER: 2 (Spring term only)

***Please note: this module is only available to students who study English Literature at their home institution.***

**DESCRIPTION**

This module explores the work of one of the most iconic and important writers of the early twentieth century, Virginia Woolf. The module will address Woolf’s works chronologically in order to explore the complex development of her writing across the span of her career. Reading all nine of Woolf’s novels alongside selected short stories, essays and forms of auto/biography, we will consider the full range of literary genres Woolf adopted and adapted as a writer. Paying close attention to Woolf’s formal and stylistic innovations, the module will also consider the various political, historical and social contexts that influenced her writing, and you will become familiar with the kinds of conceptual and theoretical questions that Woolf’s work has provoked in subsequent criticism. Discussion will cover topics as diverse as war and violence, pacifism, the visual arts, gender and sexuality, the city and everyday life, race and empire, science and nature, class and social inequality. Across the course of this module, students will gain a broad yet intimate knowledge of Woolf’s writing, as well as a developed understanding of the place this work occupies within wider cultural and critical debates.

**INDICATIVE READING LIST**

* The Voyage Out (1915)
* Night and Day (1919)
* Jacob’s Room (1922)
* Mrs Dalloway (1925)
* To the Lighthouse (1927)
* Orlando (1928)
* The Waves (1931)
* The Years (1937)
* Between the Acts (1941)