



School of Humanities
English Literature



Careers

Our graduates have gone into teaching, publishing, IT, banking, university administration, marketing, buying, and librarianship. Some have studied for MAs in English, others have completed postgraduate diplomas in information management and law. The School works closely with the careers office and runs special careers events for its students.

Why study English Literature at the University of Hertfordshire?

English Literature provision at the University of Hertfordshire is characterised by the breadth and depth of its subject matter, a clearly articulated pattern of progression and supportive staff who know their students. Outside formal teaching, students can gain valuable experience helping run the School's on-line writing magazine Orb, as well as working literary conferences and festivals.

Studying English is not just a case of reading. Our Graduates are able to talk and write confidently about a range of literary texts spanning 1550-present. They are able to take responsibility for their own learning, use initiative and have effective time-management and self-discipline. They can communicate ideas, arguments and conclusions clearly and effectively and work collaboratively and effectively in a group towards a designated outcome or completion of a specific project. They can carry out research and analysis and demonstrate professional standards of presentation

The Humanities Programme

This flexible programme allows you to stay in control of the subjects you want to study. We encourage you to broaden your horizons in the first year by taking at least two subjects. Lots of students take up to four subjects which is the maximum. This does not mean you have to do more work if you take more subjects. The modular programme means that however many subjects you take, you still only study 8 modules a year and each has the same amount of reading and study time attached to it.

Many of our students branch out in their first year and try something new. They quickly realise that subjects like a language, Digital Publishing, English Language Teaching, Journalism or Creative Writing help them achieve their goals more quickly than a single honours programme. You can still specialise in your chosen subject in the second and third year when your grades count towards your final degree.



Summary

English Literature Single Honours Q300

English Literature studied with one of the following:

- Acting and Screen Performance QW3k
- American Studies QT3R
- Creative Writing Q3W8
- Digital Publishing Q3G4
- English Language & Communication QQ13
- English Language Teaching Q3XC
- Film Q3PH
- French Q3R1
- History QV31
- Journalism Q3P5
- Media Cultures Q3P3
- Philosophy QV35
- Spanish Q3R4

English Literature combined with any two subjects Q303



Structure of the Humanities Programme

Year 1

Although you might wish to specialize in English straightaway you must study more than one subject in your first year. This provides you with a richer learning experience and an awareness of complementary disciplines which increase your chance of getting the career you want when you graduate. Options include Creative Writing, History, Film, and English Language.

Year 2

At the end of your first year, you can reduce the number of subjects and/or the proportion of time you spend on them according to what type of degree you want. You can go on to single honours, English, joint honours or combined honours study. At the end of your second year, you may choose to spend a year studying at a university in North America or Continental Europe.

Final Year

In your final year, you can continue with your programme or revise the number of subjects and the proportion of your study time spent on them. If you have studied a single honours programme in your second year, you can only continue to single honours in your final year. All other study patterns offer a choice of award.

Learning Resources

The University of Hertfordshire has 2 state of the art Learning Resource Centres. As well as the thousands of books, journals and magazines, each is equipped with over 1000 computer work stations, as well as digital sound and media facilities.

Study Abroad

You can study for a year in North America or Europe through the SOCRATES-ERASMUS exchange programme during the second or third year of the degree. In some cases, you may be able to graduate with a degree from your partner university as well as from Hertfordshire. You may be eligible for a grant if you meet certain conditions.

StudyNet

As a University of Hertfordshire student you have access to one of the UK's most sophisticated on-line learning environments, StudyNet. Every University module has a StudyNet website providing you with access to lecture notes, course guides, news, reading lists, group work and discussion facilities. StudyNet is accessible from any PC in the world with an internet connection.

Part-time Study

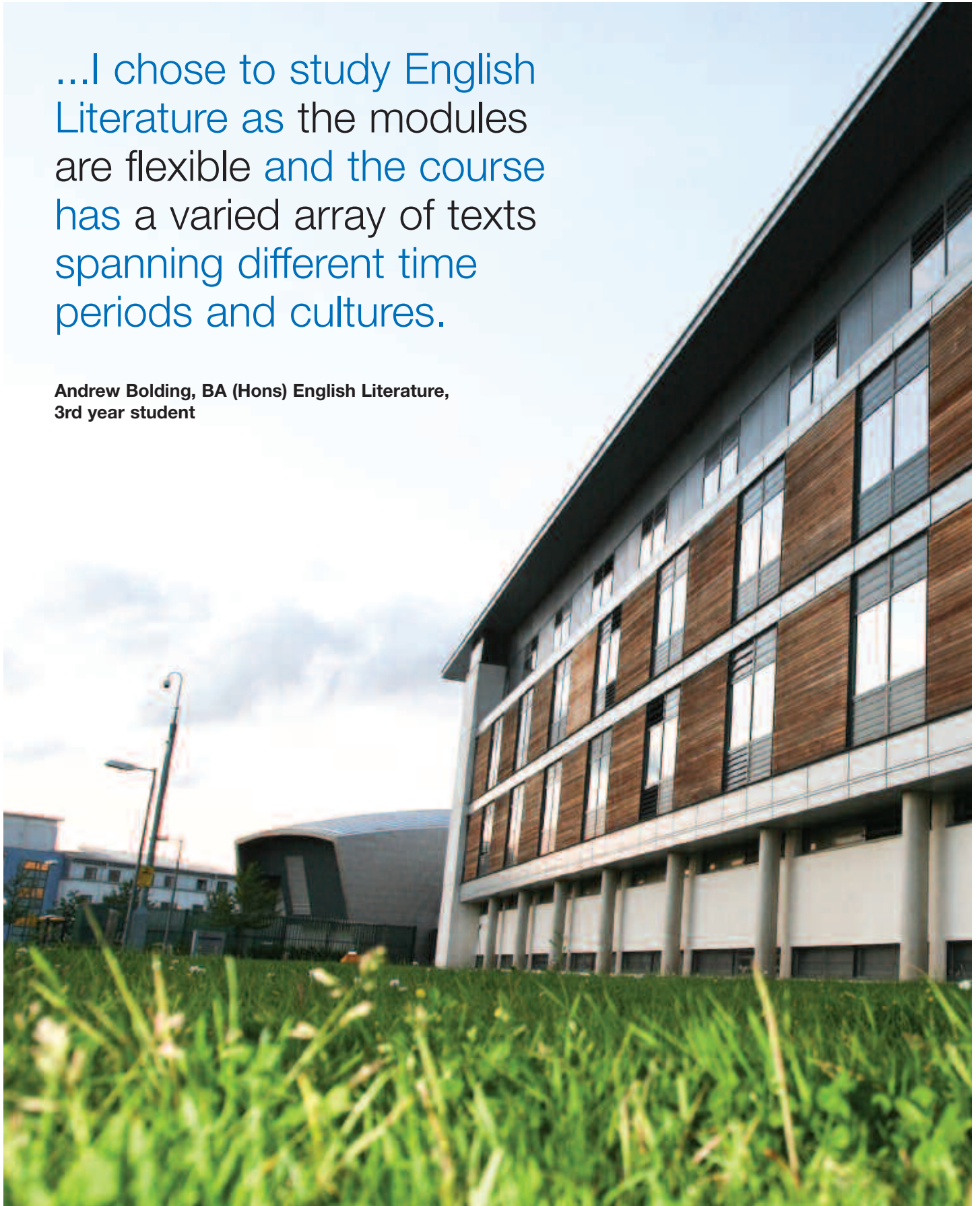
The school of Humanities allows students to study part-time over four years. For further information on this study option please visit www.herts.ac.uk

Find out more...

Come to an Open Day to meet tutors, students and see the facilities. You will find dates on the website. Do not be shy about emailing staff they will be happy to help you.

...I chose to study English Literature as the modules are flexible and the course has a varied array of texts spanning different time periods and cultures.

**Andrew Bolding, BA (Hons) English Literature,
3rd year student**





Year 1 Modules:

Reading the Short Story: Form, Technique, Theory

Year: 1 Assessment: 100% coursework

This core module introduces you to the study of the short story, an important but often neglected literary form. The module will explore the antecedents of the short story through fables, fairy tales and sketches, and identifying two major lines of development, the 'realistic' and the 'supernatural'. You will be encouraged to think about the compositional tools and methods used by different writers and to make connections between textual meaning and narrative technique. The module is designed to provide you with a narrative grounding in the study of fiction in an accessible way and with some of the critical tools and study skills necessary for the study of literature at university level. Texts to be studied will vary from year to year but might include works by 'Aesop', the Brothers Grimm, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Anton Chekov, Katherine Mansfield, D.H. Lawrence, Ian McEwan, Angela Carter and A.S. Byatt.

Reading Drama

Year: 1 Assessment: 100% coursework

Running alongside Reading the Short Story, this module gives you opportunity to study a selection of very different plays and/or screenplays from different periods. The module will look at how selected works convey characterisation, setting, plot, and how the techniques used in plays and/or screenplays differ from those used in prose fiction. Although this is not a practical drama module, it will also ask you to think how the writing in these texts implies particular ways of performing and how performance can be seen as an interpretation of the text. The set texts will vary from year to year but they may include plays by William Shakespeare, Margaret Cavendish, Joanna Baillie, Henrik Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, Eugene O'Neill, George Bernard Shaw, Brendan Behan, Harold Pinter, David Mamet or Caryl Churchill.



Year 1 Modules continued:

Introduction to Poetry

Year: 1 Assessment: 50% coursework 50% examination

This module will introduce you to the study of poetry, and aims to develop greater understanding and enjoyment of the genre. We will examine selected works by a number of significant twentieth-century poets, in order to explore the use of some key poetic forms (for example the lyric, the sonnet, the dramatic monologue) and the ways in which twentieth-century poets engage with a range of social, political and intellectual ideas (for example, representations of nature and the urban environment, alienation and loss, gender and sexuality, war, violence and the experiences of marginalised groups). While the module offers a chronological overview of some of the major developments of twentieth-century poetry, it will also emphasise the close reading of a relatively limited number of primary texts, in order to give you time and space to develop a measure of confidence in relation to the genre, and develop the skills necessary for in-depth engagement with the material. Authors studied may include Thomas Hardy, Charlotte Mew, T. S. Eliot, Philip Larkin, Ted Hughes and Carol Ann Duffy.

Reading the Novel: Form, Technique, Theory

Year: 1 Assessment: 50% coursework 50% examination

This core module introduces you to some of the key developments in the history of the novel and some of the ways in which the novel might be critically analysed as a literary form. It will focus on a small number of novels from the eighteenth century onwards. These texts will be read as case studies, chosen to highlight some of the different ways in which the novel has developed, including examples of realist, picaresque, epistolary, gothic/horror, fantasy, stream-of-consciousness and post-modern forms. The module will also consider some of the recent critical issues that have arisen in discussions of the set texts and their place in the literary canon. The module is designed, therefore, to provide you with a sound basis for the study of fiction at Levels Two and Three. Novels to be studied will vary from year to year, but may include works by Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, John Fowles, Angela Carter, Ian McEwan.



Year 2 Modules:

Nineteenth Century Literature I: The Romantics 1789-1832

Year: 2 Assessment: 100% coursework

This module focuses on British literature from 1789 to 1832. Taking a cultural and historical perspective on the literature of this period, we will discuss a broad range of works as they intersect with historical events, cultural practices, and philosophical ideas - both within and outside of England. You will be invited to consider the extent to which the set texts can be seen to be products of the revolutionary-charged atmosphere of the period and the chosen writers' engagement with such wider questions as: class conflict, the monarchy, the 'mob', tyranny, gender and sexuality, crime and science. Writers studied on this module may include Jane Austen, William Blake, Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley, George Gordon (Lord) Byron, William Wordsworth and Felicia Hemans.

Studies in Twentieth Century Literature, 1900-1945

Year: 2 Assessment: 100% coursework

Building on the study of narrative begun at Level One this course will examine some key texts published in the period 1900 - 1945 and offer an historical and theoretical framework in which the set texts can be read. A central part of the course will be the attempt to explain the literary developments of the period by reference to a central concept in twentieth century cultural history: Modernism. Attention will also be given to such common thematic motifs such as urban ambience, the 'presence of the past', social class and sexual politics. The writers studied on the course will vary from year to year but are likely to include such key figures as Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, May Sinclair, Jean Rhys, James Joyce and T.S. Eliot.

Nineteenth Century North American Writing to 1900

Year: 2 Assessment: 100% coursework

This course will examine the making of the American literary canon by focusing upon texts taken from a range of genres (novel, poetry, short story). The texts will be related to the cultural conditions of their production in order to examine how their authors represent America. Attention will be paid to issues such as America's relationship with England, religion, transcendentalism, the Civil War, slavery, democracy, gender and sexuality. Authors who may be studied include: Louisa May Alcott, James Fenimore Cooper, Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, Edgar Allen Poe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton.



**Year 2 Modules
continued:**

Texts and Screens: Case Studies in Literary Adaptation

Year: 2 Assessment: 100% coursework

Literature and film have had a close and complex relationship since the beginning of the twentieth century when silent cinema adopted the novel as a fruitful source for its own stories. The cinema is still one of the most frequent ways by which we first encounter literary texts. By using a number of case studies this module aims to introduce you to some of the key issues involved in adapting literary texts for the cinema, including questions of narrative technique, concepts of genre, questions of representation and notions of fidelity and authorship. As well as close readings of the set texts (both written and cinematic) the module will also engage with recent theoretical approaches to film and literary studies. The texts chosen for study will vary from year to year but might include such notable examples as *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare; Zeffirelli; Lurhmann); *Goldfinger* (Fleming/Hamilton) and *Trainspotting* (Welsh/Boyle).

Studies in the English Literature Renaissance to Enlightenment 1550-1740

Year: 2 Assessment: 100% coursework

This core module focuses on a range of texts (plays, poetry, prose narratives) produced in Britain in the period 1550-1740. On one level the module is designed to build on the close-reading and analytical skills you developed at Level One but we will also explore the set texts in the context of a number of key issues and events in the turbulent history of the period. The texts to be studied will range from plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, to the love poetry of John Donne and Andrew Marvell; from bawdy, sexually aggressive, Restoration comedies, to the stinging satires of the early eighteenth century 'wits' such as Alexander Pope. As well as studying the work of writers whose works have often been seen to make up the 'canon' of 'great' English literature, we will also look at works by other writers of the period such as Mary Wroth, Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn, writers who have been excluded from literary histories until very recently.



Year 2 Modules continued:

Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature II: 1832-1901

Year: 2 Assessment: 75% coursework 15% examination

This module seeks to introduce you to the major forms, and genres of the period. and writing. It will explore the relations between literary poetics and the wider cultural and intellectual history of the period, thereby encouraging you to consider the range of issues which informed and shaped nineteenth-century writing (for example, industrialisation, the sense of the past, the role of art and aesthetics, the 'Women Question', sexuality, the city, crime, psychology, religion and science). Authors studied may include: Alfred Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Elizabeth Gaskell, William Morris, Matthew Arnold, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.

The Rise of the Novel: 1700 – 1800

Year: 2 Assessment: 50% coursework 50% examination

Building on the study of prose fiction begun at Level One, this module will continue the history of the novel. It traces the rise of the novel from the late seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. In addition to focusing on such issues as story-telling, the role of the narrator and characterisation, the module will explore the ways in which different genres fed into the emerging novel (e.g. romance, journalism, spiritual autobiography, travel narrative). You will also be invited to consider the set texts' engagement with such issues as gender and sexuality, colonialism, crime and class. Texts studied will vary from year to year but might include the following: Daniel Defoe, 'Robinson Crusoe'; Jonathan Swift, 'Gulliver's Travels'; Henry Fielding, 'Joseph Andrews'; Lawrence Sterne, 'A Sentimental Journey'; Anne Radcliffe, 'A Sicilian Romance' and Mary Wollstonecraft, 'Maria'.

Twentieth Century North American Writing

Year: 2 Assessment: 50% coursework 50% examination

The course considers the diversity of twentieth century North American writing and the plurality of American culture and identity. It will consider some recent American writings about America as well as looking at theories of race, ethnicity and citizenship as explored in the selected texts. It will address the ways in which ideas about community and American citizenship and nationhood are historicized. The course will also explore the repercussions and ramifications on recent American literature of such major American events and ideas as the American dream, immigration over the twentieth century, 'annexing' of native American lands, America's involvement in WWII and Vietnam and the legacy of slavery.



Year 2 Modules continued:

Writing in Britain Since 1945

Year: 2 Assessment: 50% coursework 50% examination

Drawing on a wide variety of writing produced since the Second World War, this module focuses on the changing situations of both writers and readers of British fiction. At the centre of the module will be an examination of realism in post-war writing through the texts of a wide range of authors. You will be asked to consider the cultural representations of the period as they are evinced in both fiction and drama, including those of the late 1950s and early 1960s, a time of unprecedented change in British Society. The module provides examples of this writing by investigating such authors as for example: John Osborne, Pat Barker, Alan Sillitoe, Shelagh Delaney, Tony Harrison and Jeanette Winterson. As well as considering the ways in which the set texts deal with such issues as class antagonisms, constructed masculinity and femininity and differing sexualities, you will be invited to consider the extent to which the set texts can be seen to be representative of post-war writing.

Year 3 Modules:

Renaissance Tragedy

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

This course considers a range of tragic drama produced during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It aims to introduce you to the diversity of the drama written during this period and to its classical heritage and contemporary critical context. It will examine the popularity of revenge tragedy and seek to locate the contemporary fascination with revenge in political developments and debates. Plays to be studied may include Kyd's 'The Spanish Tragedy', Shakespeare's 'Hamlet', Webster's 'The White Devil', and Middleton's 'The Revenger's Tragedy'.

Twentieth Century Authors: Case Studies

Year: 3 Assessment: 50% coursework 50% examination

This course offers you the opportunity to study the work of two or three twentieth-century authors in depth and detail. Particular attention will be paid to the authors' use of genre, developments in style and subject matter, and the ways in which their literary texts interact with wider historical and cultural contexts. Through a combination of lectures, seminar discussions and independent study, you are encouraged to become 'experts' on these authors, gaining a thorough knowledge both of primary texts and the available body of criticism, and participating in relevant critical and theoretical debates. The authors chosen for study will vary from year to year. Recent examples include Pat Barker and Roddy Doyle.



**Year 3 Modules
continued:**

Spies, Detectives and Flappers: Inter-War Popular Fiction

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

This module considers the origins and development of some popular literary genres at the start of the twentieth century. We will look at examples of spy fiction, the detective novel, the romance novel and working-class fiction and think about what sorts of codes or assumptions these texts reproduce. We will also ask how individual writers are able to bend or subvert the formula of their genre in order to write new and exciting fictions. By studying texts by writers such as John Buchan, Raymond Chandler, Anita Loos, E. M. Hull, Agatha Christie and Walter Greenwood we will also consider questions about how different genres have developed during the period and what sort of relations they have with culture at large.

Transatlantic Currents: Literary Exchange between Britain and North America

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

This module will attempt to explore something of how conceptions of 'America' in the minds of Europeans, and 'Europe' in the minds of Americans, have evolved over the last five hundred years. We will read a diverse selection of texts - including poems, travel writings, novels, and films - from a broad historical period, focusing on how the American landscape and American people were initially defined by the European gaze; how American culture has subsequently sought to define itself in relation to a European (and particularly British) heritage; and how, over the last century, the balance of power has shifted. Possible topics for study may include: early narratives of discovery and settlement; the colonial experience of immigration and revolution; the Romantic idea of America; nineteenth century American writers in Europe; European literary travellers in America; the immigrant experience; Americans in the Great War; the English experience in Hollywood.

Writing Now: Identity and Politics in the Contemporary Novel

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

This module explores some recent trends in the publishing industry by examining a selection of bestseller novels - both 'literary' and 'popular' - published within the past five years. It considers the concept of the bestseller and explores the range of narrative and literary strategies employed by a range of such novels. Possible texts for study include: Monica Ali's 'Brick Lane', Dan Brown's 'The Da Vinci Code', Alan Hollinghurst's 'The Line of Beauty', Andrea Levy's 'Small Island', Ian McEwan's 'Atonement', DCB Pierre's 'Vernon God Little', Alice Sebold's 'The Lovely Bones', Zadie Smith's 'White Teeth.'



Year 3 Modules continued:

Children's Literature: Growing up in Books

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

This module critically analyses works of children's literature published since 1950. Primary texts will range from picture books designed for very young children to works of cross-over fiction which aim to bridge the gap between the child and the adult reader. This will enable us to consider the ways in which children's literature works on the page and in culture to mediate and interpret the process of growing up in modern society. We will engage in close critical analysis of the primary material (considering, for example, questions of genre, narrative conventions and the relationship between words and illustrations) and this will be linked at every stage to a consideration of the ways in which literature for children interacts with wider cultural and historical contexts. Authors studied may include Sendak, Seuss, Dahl, Lewis, Morpurgo, Rowling and Pullman.

Independent study and Research Project

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

This is an independent study module, which requires you to plan, research and devise a short literature-based project on a topic of particular personal interest. The module will be taught in tutorial groups covering topics such as bibliographical research, including electronic resources and the internet; literature reviews, the use of literary theory in planning and completing a project; procedures for drafting and editing work. If you are intending to graduate with a Single Honours degree in English Literature, you must take this module or the two-semester Literature Project as part of your programme of study.

Literature Project

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

The Literature Project is intended to give you the opportunity to carry out a substantial up-to-date research project based on a topic or author of particular interest. As well as enabling you to follow up particular enthusiasms, the module aims to further develop skills in planning, research, time-management and presentation. The module is taught via a programme of one-to-one tutorials with a designated supervisor. If you are intending to graduate with a Single Honours degree in English Literature your programme of study must include this module or the Independent Study and Research Project, but not both.



Year 3 Modules continued:

Worlds Apart: Studies in Utopian and Dystopian Writing

Year: 3 Assessment: 50% coursework 50% examination

In this module you will study some of the fantastic, futuristic worlds created by writers to reflect upon their own societies and analyse the implications of these utopian or dystopian visions. These may include writers such as George Orwell, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Octavia Butler, Angela Carter, Ursula Le Guin, Anthony Burgess and H.G.Wells. The module will also consider the set texts' engagement with major political and cultural movements such as fascism, totalitarianism, mass production and feminism. The module will also critically assess and compare the narrative strategies of both male and female writers of the genre.

Eighteenth Century Bodies

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

Gender and sexuality have histories; this module will explore some of the ways in which they were constructed in the shifting social contexts of the long eighteenth century and their intertwining with concepts of power, class, nation and ethnicity. By examining a generically broad range of textual materials - plays, poems, novels, medical and religious discourses, advice books - this module will analyse a variety of models of sexual behaviour and male and female identities, paying close attention to the historical moment in which the text was written. Possible topics for study include: Restoration libertinism as represented in the works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, Aphra Behn and William Wycherley; bourgeois sexuality as in Samuel Richardson's 'Pamela' and Henry Fielding's 'Shamela'; prostitution and the commodification of sexuality as in Defoe's 'Roxana', John Gay's 'The Beggar's Opera' and John Cleveland's infamous novel, 'Fanny Hill; or Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure'.

Crime, Sin and Sensation: Studies in Victorian Popular Fiction

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

This module explores representations of criminality and madness in a selection of novels and short stories of the Victorian period. The main focus will be the increasing interest displayed by nineteenth century writers and readers in crime and deviance - bigamy, madness, murder, adultery, detection - an interest epitomized in the emergence of the so-called 'sensation' novel in the 1850s. Amongst the writers likely to be studied are Mary Braddon, Ellen Wood, Wilkie Collins and Anthony Trollope. In addition to considering literary texts alongside other contemporary discourses (including those of medicine, painting and journalism), we will also consider the posthumous reputations of writers such as Wood and Braddon and their places (or lack of them) within the canon.



Year 3 Modules continued:

Modern African and Caribbean Writing

Year: 3 Assessment: 100% coursework

Over the last fifty years writers from Africa and from the Caribbean have been celebrated as some of the most imaginative authors in English. In this module we will attempt to explain this judgement by considering the diverse range of literary styles that writers from these regions have written. We will also examine how authors from Africa and the Caribbean have attempted to represent the social contexts from which they are writing and what impact these contexts have upon the texts that they produce. By studying authors such as Sam Selvon, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa- Thiong'o, Linton Kwasi Johnson, Nuruddin Farah, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Caryl Phillips Jean Binta Breeze and J.M. Coetzee this module will provide you with an introduction to some of the most exciting writing of the twentieth century.

Post-Modern Genders

Year: 3 Assessment: 50% coursework 50% examination

This module focuses on representations of gender in twentieth and twenty-first century literature. Of particular interest will be a selection of texts which mount innovative challenges to conventional understandings of gender difference as fixed and natural, treating gender instead as a variable and unstable cultural production. So, for example, primary texts may include: Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* (both texts where the protagonist changes sex); Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (whose narrator-protagonist never reveals whether s/he is a woman or a man); Iain Banks's *The Wasp Factory* (which interrogates hypermasculinity), Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* (about a woman who successfully passes as a man), Jeffrey Eugenide's *Middlesex* (whose protagonist is a hermaphrodite), and Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife* (which offers playful new perspectives on gender relations). The module will also offer sessions which explore recent theoretical approaches to sex, gender and sexuality.