

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes Joint Honours Degree programme in **English and American Literature** taught within the Department of English. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2016**.

The principal aim of the programme is to allow the study of English and American literature as separate and related traditions, with different characteristics produced by the distinct histories, politics and geographies of the two countries. The aims of the programme are as follows:

- to enable students to develop independent critical thinking and judgement;
- to engage students imaginatively in the process of reading and analysing literary texts;
- to encourage students to appreciate the expressive resources of language;
- to encourage students to reflect critically upon the act of reading;
- to promote an understanding of formal, generic and aesthetic aspects of literary texts;
- to encourage an awareness of literature's historical and political dimension
- to consider literary tradition and aesthetics as they relate to national contexts;
- to foster an awareness of contextual aspects of the production and determination of meaning;
- to develop a range of subject-specific and transferable skills;
- to provide a basis for further study in English or related disciplines, and a foundation of knowledge for teachers of English at all levels;
- to provide an intellectually stimulating and satisfying experience of studying;
- to encourage in students a sense of enthusiasm for the subject, and an appreciation of its continuing social and cultural importance;
- to encourage students to take progressive responsibility for their own study through negotiating subject areas of specialism with each other in seminars and study groups, through the informed choice of options, and through an extended piece of writing in the final year.

Programmes are delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which the student must follow courses to the value of four units (one unit is equivalent to 30 national credits). The programmes provide progressive structures in which students are able to gain ever-wider knowledge and understanding, and appropriate skills. The programmes contain a combination of compulsory core courses to introduce students to historical periods, to the principle historical and literary genres, and to contemporary critical and theoretical approaches, with a range of stage two and three specialist options. In each case the structure encourages students, in stage two and three, to develop their own interests through informed choice among specialist options. In stage three all students are required to write a dissertation and/or long essays. The programmes aim to produce graduates with a range of personal attributes relevant to the world beyond HE, who are able to engage in lifelong learning, to consider ethics and values, and to contribute to the wider community.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

### **Learning outcomes**

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff, particularly in the areas of American literature; Shakespeare and Renaissance literature; eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature; modern and post-modern literature; literary theory; drama and poetry from all periods. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

#### *Knowledge and understanding*

- English literature from the 9<sup>th</sup> Century to the present day or from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century to the present day, depending on exact programme taken by student;
- American literature from 1600 to the present day, with a particular focus on literature from 1800;
- the principal literary genres (fiction, poetry and drama);
- creativity and expressivity in literary forms and language;
- a range of contemporary critical and theoretical approaches to literature;
- advanced scholarship in chosen areas of the discipline;
- appropriate critical and theoretical terminology;
- a range of relevant linguistic, literary, cultural and socio-historical contexts in which literature is written and read, including the two main national contexts considered in the degree;
- literature's relations to cultural change;
- some of literature's relations to other disciplines, media and forms of knowledge.

#### *Skills and other attributes*

- critical skills in close reading, the analysis and critical interpretation of text and data;
- sensitivity and responsiveness to language and literary form and an understanding of generic conventions;
- the ability to evaluate relevant critical, theoretical and contextual research;
- the ability to conduct literary research independently using traditional and electronic resources;
- the ability to articulate knowledge and the understanding of texts, concepts and theories relating to English literature;
- command of a wider vocabulary and appropriate critical and theoretical terminology;
- bibliographical skills appropriate to the subject including accurate citation of sources and consistent use of conventions in the presentation of scholarly work;
- judging and evaluating evidence;
- assessing the merits of competing theories, explanations and interpretations;
- analysing and interpreting bodies of information;
- abstracting and synthesising information;
- developing a reasoned argument;
- planning and execution of essays and project-work;
- developing habits of reflection on reading, learning and of study, learning and research;\*
- listening to, and learning from, criticism;\*
- advanced written and oral communication skills;\*
- the ability to present logical and coherent written and oral arguments of varying lengths;\*
- the capacity to analyse and critically examine diverse forms of discourse;\*

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- the ability to organise and interpret complex information in a structured and systematic way;\*
- the ability to comprehend and develop sophisticated concepts;\*
- the capacity for independent thought and judgement;\*
- skills in critical reasoning;\*
- information technology skills (including word processing, email and WWW);\*
- information handling and retrieval skills (including the use of online computer searches); identifying, retrieving, sorting and exchanging information; investigating a wide range of sources;\*
- the ability to engage with the textual use of new media, video, TV, DVD and electronic;
- interpersonal skills, involving recognising and respecting the viewpoints of others;\*
- time management and organisational skills including working to deadlines, prioritising tasks, organising work-time.\*
- In addition, this programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important in the world of work, and that strengthen the graduates' abilities to engage in lifelong learning and contribute to the wider community. These include: personal motivation; the ability to work autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; empathy and insight; intellectual integrity; awareness of responsibility as a local, national and international citizen; interest in lifelong learning; flexibility and adaptability; creativity.\*

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\* transferable skills

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### Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures; seminars; study groups; essay consultations; oral presentations and guided independent study. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by formal examinations, coursework, examined essays, translation exercises, online tests and exercises, oral presentations and the dissertation or long essay. In addition, students may be involved in workshops and may produce various forms of creative or editorial work. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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### Details of the programme structure

Please note that the list of available optional courses offered is subject to change and not all courses run each year. A full list of courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department](#).

#### **Stage one:**

Students must take the following **mandatory** courses:

EN1401 (1 unit) Introducing America, 1600-1900 (1 unit)

EN1106 Shakespeare (1 unit)

EN1107 Re-orientating the Novel (1 unit)

EN1112 Introduction to Poetry (0.5 unit)

EN1011 Thinking as a Critic (0.5 unit)

Part time students must take:

#### **Stage one (a):**

Courses equivalent to two full units of the following in consecutive terms, as timetabled:

EN1401 (1 unit) Introducing America, 1600-1900 (1 unit)

EN1106 Shakespeare (1 unit)

EN1107 Re-orientating the Novel (1 unit)

EN1112 Introduction to Poetry (0.5 unit)

EN1011 Thinking as a Critic (0.5 unit)

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**Stage one (b):**

The remaining courses equivalent to two full units of the following:

- EN1401 (1 unit) Introducing America, 1600-1900 (1 unit)
- EN1106 Shakespeare (1 unit)
- EN1107 Re-orientating the Novel (1 unit)
- EN1112 Introduction to Poetry (0.5 unit)
- EN1011 Thinking as a Critic (0.5 unit)

**Stage two:**

Students must take the following:

- EN2401 The American Century: American Literature 1900-2000

**and** choose options equal to the value of three full units from a list of Stage two courses offered by the Department. They must take at least one of those units in American literature, or alternatively balance English and American courses which cover both literatures in a manner approved by the programme director (sample courses which focus on and/or include American Literature are listed below as Appendix I). Over their second and third years, students must take at least one whole unit or two half units focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare). Students on the programme will be actively encouraged to take a half-unit in another department in years 2 and/or 3 of their degree (e.g. American History, American Film).

Part time students must take:

**Stage two (a):**

Students must take the following:

- EN2401 American Literature 1900-1940

**and** options equal to the value of 1 full unit from a list of Stage two courses offered by the Department. Over the course of Stage two and Stage three, students must take at least one whole unit or two half units focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare).

**Stage two (b):**

Students choose options equal to the value of 2 full unit from a list of Stage two courses offered by the Department. They must take at least one of those units in American literature, or alternatively balance English and American courses which cover both literatures in a manner approved by the programme director.

**Stage three:**

Students are recommended to take at least two full units from the range of options offered by the Department in any of the following three areas:

- Special Author Project (1 unit);
- Special Topic (1 unit) **and**
- Dissertation (1 unit). **Only one Dissertation is permitted.**

Students must (whether they accept that recommendation or not) choose options from the list of Stage three courses offered by the Department to a total of four full units or equivalent, balancing English and American courses in a manner approved by the Programme Director (sample courses which focus on and/or include American Literature are listed below as Appendix I). If not already completed in Stage Two, the requirement for one whole unit or two half units focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare) must be completed in

Stage Three. Students on the programme will be actively encouraged to take a half-unit in another department in years 2 and/or 3 of their degree (e.g. American History, American Film).

Part time students must take:

***Stage three (a):***

Students are recommended to take at least one full unit from the range of options offered by the Department in any of the following three areas:

Special Author Project (1 unit);  
Special Topic (1 unit) **and**  
Dissertation (1 unit). **Only one Dissertation is permitted.**

Students must (whether they accept that recommendation or not) choose options from the list of Stage three courses offered by the Department to a total of two full units or equivalent, balancing English and American courses in a manner approved by the Programme Director. If not already completed in Stage Two, the requirement for one whole unit or two half units focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare) must be completed in Stage Three.

***Stage three (b):***

Students are recommended to take at least one full unit from the range of options offered by the Department in any of the following three areas:

Special Author Project (1 unit);  
Special Topic (1 unit) **and**  
Dissertation (1 unit). **Only one Dissertation is permitted.**

Students must (whether they accept that recommendation or not) choose options from the list of Stage three courses offered by the Department to a total of two full units or equivalent, balancing English and American courses in a manner approved by the Programme Director. If not already completed in Stage Two or Three (a), the requirement for one whole unit or two half units focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare) must be completed in Stage Three.

***Please see the Progression and Awards Requirements section below and the College's Undergraduate Regulations with respect to the number of courses which need to be passed in order to qualify for the combined degree title.***

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**Progression and award requirements**

The progression and award requirements are essentially the same across all Honours Degree programmes at Royal Holloway as outlined in the College's Undergraduate Regulations. Students must pass units to the value of at least three units on each stage of the programme. Failing marks of 30 – 39% can normally be condoned in up to 30 credits across stages 1 and 2. In the final stage failing marks in up to 30 credits can normally be condoned. However, on some programmes there may be a requirement to pass specific courses in order to progress to the next stage or to qualify for a particular degree title and this will put restrictions on courses in which failing marks can be condoned (see programme structure above for details). Additionally there are requirements on the number of courses that must be passed in order to qualify for particular joint or combined Honours degrees.

Students are considered for the award and classified on the basis of a weighted average. This is calculated from marks gained in courses taken in stages two and three, and gives twice the weighting to marks gained in stage three. The College's Undergraduate Regulations include full details on progression and award requirements for all undergraduate programmes offered by the College.

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### **Student support and guidance**

- Personal Advisers: All students are allocated a personal adviser who meets with them regularly through the programme. The adviser's role is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. Students meet with their personal advisers two or three times during the first term. Subsequently, responsibility for meetings is placed on the student. Joint Honours students will have a Personal Adviser in each department.
- The Year Tutor is at the centre of the Department's student support systems. Year Tutors are available for academic, pastoral and welfare advice. They play a pro-active role in all three areas. They are in regular communication with students, course leaders, seminar leaders, the administrator and the Programme Co-ordinator.
- The Programme Co-ordinator and the administrator provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice. They also monitor Year Tutors, personal advisers, course leaders and seminar leaders.
- All staff available and accessible through dedicated office hours system.
- Detailed student handbook and course resources.
- Departmental reading room, with collection of articles and books supporting teaching and learning.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College libraries and Computer Centre.
- College Careers and Employability Service and Departmental Careers and Employability Tutor.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre and the Disability and Dyslexia Services for students with disabilities and Specific Learning Difficulties.
- Representation on the Student-Staff Committee.

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### **Admission requirements**

Details of the Department's typical offer for each programme of study is available on the [Course Finder](#) web page. However, the Department also has flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. For further guidance it may be helpful to contact the [Recruitment and Partnerships Office](#).

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### **Further learning and career opportunities**

Graduates from English programmes have successfully progressed into a wide range of professions which include: Broadcast Researcher, Newspaper Reporter, Live TV Subtitler, Publishing Assistant, Publishing Rights Assistant, Press Officer, Advertising for Financial Times, Advertising Operations Co-ordinator for Yahoo UK & Ireland, Marketing Trainee for Unilever, Marketing Assistant for Publishing Company, Fundraiser for English National Opera, HR Administrator, Recruitment Consultant, Bookseller, Assistant Manager of a Clothing Company, Local Council Housing Management, Council Education Welfare Assistant, Officer Cadet, Trainee Chartered Accountant, Auditor, Trainee Mortgage Broker, Management Consultant for IBM, Web Writer, Service Analyst for IBM, Assistant Librarian at Surrey Institute of Art, Vice President – Students' Union Royal Holloway, University of London, Researcher for Chartered Institute of Building.

Other graduates have continued with further studies including vocational courses such as PGCE's for teaching, journalism courses, training at Drama School, Law conversion courses and Postgraduate Studies, mainly Masters in English but also in other subjects including Film and Philosophy. For further details please refer to the [Careers & Employability Service](#).

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### **Indicators of quality and standards**

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The scoring system for the REF 2014 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4\* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour and 3\* indicating research that is internationally excellent. 81% of the College's research profile was deemed to be within the 4\* or 3\* categories, an increase of over 20% since 2008. This result placed Royal Holloway 31<sup>st</sup> overall in the UK for 4\* and 3\* research and 33<sup>rd</sup> based on an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) score.

The Department of English is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the UK for research of 4\* standard and 31<sup>st</sup> for 3\* and 4\* research.

The programme is taught by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and leads to the award of the University of London. Programmes in English are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The QAA subject benchmark statement in English describes the general features which one might expect from Honours Degree programmes in the subject, and can therefore be used as a point of reference when reading this document (see [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)). UCAS codes are given in parentheses (see [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)).

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## APPENDIX I

Sample courses which focus on and/or include American Literature  
(Note: only a selection are offered in any one year)

### A. American-focussed courses

EN2306: American Modernist Poetry  
EN2321 Dark Reform: Scandal and Satire in American Arts  
EN3303 African American Literature  
EN3322 Literature of Chicago  
EN3329 The Great American Novella  
EN3332 The New York Schools  
N3512 Special Author: Hemingway  
EN3513 Special Author: Ashbery

B. In addition a number of courses have a substantial American component as part of a comparative perspective:

EN2309 Literature of the Fin de Siècle, 1883-1903  
EN2323: Modernist Short Stories  
EN2325 Modernist Literature  
EN3310 Rites of Passage  
EN3316 Odysseus' Scar: Time in Modern Literature and Film  
EN3119: Painting / Writing  
EN3223 The Girl in the Book  
EN3224 Ideas in Contemporary Fiction  
EN3308 Science Fiction  
EN3311 Poetic Practice  
EN3317 The Art of Noise  
EN 3333: Thinking and Writing about Popular Music