English Undergraduate – Year 1
Summer Reading Lists 2020-21

Please see below the list of core compulsory courses for the different English undergraduate degree programmes. Below this list you will find the summer reading list for each of the courses listed.

**DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

**BA ENGLISH**
- EN1001 Introduction to Medieval Literature
- EN1011 Thinking as a Critic
- EN1105 Literature and Crisis
- EN1106 Shakespeare
- EN1107 Reorienting the Novel
- EN1112 Introducing English Poetry

**BA ENGLISH AND CREATIVE WRITING**
- CW1010: Introduction to Creative Writing
- CW1020: Why Write? The History and Theory of Creative Writing
- EN1107: Reorienting the Novel
- EN1011 Thinking as a Critic
- EN1112 Introduction to Poetry

**BA AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CREATIVE WRITING**
- CW1010: Introduction to Creative Writing
- CW1020: Why Write? The History and Theory of Creative Writing
- EN1011: Thinking as a Critic
- EN1112: Introduction to Poetry
- EN1401: Introducing America, 1600-1900

**BA ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE**
- EN1105 Literature and Crisis
- EN1107 Reorienting the Novel
- EN1401 Introducing America, 1600-1900
- EN1011 Thinking as a Critic
- EN1112 Introduction to Poetry

**BA ENGLISH AND FILM STUDIES**
- EN1105 Literature and Crisis
- EN1107 Reorienting the

**BA ENGLISH AND DRAMA**
- EN1107: Reorienting the Novel
- EN1011: Thinking as a Critic
- EN1112: Introducing English Poetry

**BA ENGLISH AND HISTORY**
- EN1001: Introduction to Medieval Literature
- EN1105: Literature and Crisis
• EN1106: Shakespeare

BA ENGLISH AND CLASSICS
• EN1107: Re-Orienting the Novel
• EN1011: Thinking as a Critic
• EN1112: Introduction to Poetry

BA ENGLISH AND PHILOSOPHY
• EN1107: Reorienting the Novel
• EN1011: Thinking as a Critic
• EN1112: Introduction to Poetry

BA ENGLISH WITH PHILOSOPHY
• EN1011 Thinking as a Critic
• EN1105: Literature and Crisis
• EN1107 Re-orienting the Novel
• EN1112 Introduction to Poetry

BA ENGLISH AND MODERN LANGUAGES
• EN1107: Reorienting the Novel
• EN1011: Thinking as a Critic
• EN1112: Introducing English Poetry

BA ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND CULTURE
• EN1107: Reorienting the Novel
• EN1011: Thinking as a Critic
• EN1112: Introducing English Poetry

BA MUSIC AND ENGLISH
• EN1107: Reorienting the Novel
• EN1011: Thinking as a Critic
• EN1112: Introducing English Poetry
SUMMER READING LISTS 2020-21
EN1001: Introduction to Medieval Literature

This course introduces students to the earliest literary writings in English, covering a span of eight hundred years, from 700-1500. To put that period of time in perspective, from the time of Shakespeare up to today is only four hundred years. We cover an extensive range of genres, themes, texts and topics. By the end of the course you will be well acquainted with the range of medieval literature in English.

You may be surprised at how vital and sophisticated the finest of this material is, and how much it has inspired more recent authors such as Seamus Heaney (see his translation of Beowulf), Derek Walcott (who cites Langland as his greatest inspiration), and Ian McEwan (who voted Chaucer as his ‘Man of the Millennium’).

Required Textbooks
Students will need to own the following required textbooks by the start of Spring term (i.e. January 2021):

- Any translation of Beowulf. Most popular recently has been Seamus Heaney’s translation, but you may wish to consult a prose translation to provide a model for your own work, such as E. Talbot Donaldson, Beowulf: A Prose Translation, ed. by Nicholas Howe (London: W. W. Norton, 2002). There are many other translations available in the library and bookshops.
- Any translation of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Good choices include Simon Armitage’s recent translation and the Oxford World’s Classics translation (by Keith Harrison; note especially the introduction by Helen Cooper).

All your set texts (listed below) are included in these textbooks.

Set Texts
Over the summer, try to read as many of these as possible in translation (and, if you’re brave, have a look at them in the original languages, too!). You can find most of them online, but you will need to purchase good editions by the time the course starts (see the list of required textbooks above).

- The Wanderer*
- Beowulf*
- The Dream of the Rood*
- The Battle of Brunanburh*
- Middle English lyrics
- Sir Orfeo
- The Reeve’s Tale
- Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
- The York Play of the Crucifixion

The Old English texts (marked with * above) can also be found in anthologies. You don’t have to buy one, but many are cheaply available online or in a library. Some commonly found anthologies include:

Background Reading
In addition, it is essential to do some background reading. There are many excellent introductions to the period’s literature; the following are merely examples. Note that, although you should read some of these, you are not expected to buy them. You may, however, find it useful to own one or two.

- North, Richard and Joe Allard, Beowulf & Other Stories: A New Introduction to Old English, Old Icelandic & Anglo-Norman Literatures (Harlow: Pearson, 2007)
- Pearsall, Derek, Old English and Middle English Poetry (London: Routledge, 1977)
- Turville-Petre, Thorlac, Middle English Literature: An Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006)
Welcome to EN1011: Thinking as a Critic

Hello! You are already literary critics: this course will make you even better ones. The aim of Thinking as a Critic is to develop your ability to read, write and think like a literary critic, and so to make the transition into university level work. In our Department of English, you are active readers, critics involved in developing your own interpretations, responses and judgements, rather than passive learners. For all of us, literary criticism is a process rather than a final product, a way of thinking not just an essay to complete. So in this course we discuss concepts, theories, skills, ideas and histories that are central to the discipline of English and will be useful for every other course you study.

I love teaching this course because when I began my degree, I always wanted to know why we did things the way we did, and no one told me. And when I began teaching, my students asked me, too, why are we doing English like this? This is a great question: this course is our mutual attempt to work out an answer. And having a sense of the answer makes your work easier and better (of course it does: we like to know why are doing something!).

Core Reading


Course Schedule at a Glance

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9. Metaphors

10. Canon

11. Narrative

12. Identity

About me

Blended learning makes it a bit harder for us to get to know each other, so I’m going to tell you a bit about myself here. My first degree was from Manchester, my Masters is from Southampton and my PhD was from the University of Wales. I have published books and articles on contemporary fiction, on the Holocaust and genocide, and on contemporary philosophy. My Wikipedia entry is here https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Eaglestone and my College profile is here https://pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/robert-eaglestone(f218d7c-da01-4aa8-84e0-09b5c5ae556).html
**EN1105: Literature and Crisis (2020-2021)**

**Set Primary Reading**

Students will need to obtain copies of the following books:

1. H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*
6. Alice Oswald, *Dart* (in any edition)
7. Patrick Hamilton, *Hangover Square*
8. Nadifa Mohamed, *Black Mamba Boy*
9. The Shakespeare plays should be read in any edition with detailed notes (the Norton or other scholarly collected edition, or Arden or Oxford World’s Classics copies of the individual plays). If you decide to buy *The Norton Shakespeare*, 3rd edition (2016), directly from their website—www.wwnorton.co.uk—we have arranged for a 20% discount. Please apply the discount code WN710 at checkout when purchasing.

**Autumn Term**

**Block 1: Literature at the End of the World**


Week 3: The Flood of Genesis in Old English poetry

Week 4: Wulfstan, ‘Sermo Lupi’: the End of the World at Y1K


Week 6: Science Fiction and writing the end of the world now: [*Time Machine*]

**Study Week**

**Block 2: Nations at War (with themselves)**


Week 11. Patrick Hamilton, *Hangover Square*

Week 12. Women’s Poetry of WW1: ACADEMIC SUPPORT WEEK

**Spring Term**

Block 3: Race, Empire, Migration

Week 17: *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Narrated by herself* (1831)


Week 19: George Eliot, *Silas Marner* (1861)

Week 20: Writing Back: Othello/Omkara

Week 21: Nadifa Mohamed, *Black Mamba Boy* ACADEMIC SUPPORT

**Study Week**

Block 4 Planetary Futures

Week 23: Building back better: Life after pandemic in *Piers Plowman* (passus 5-7)


Week 26: Alice Oswald, *Dart* (2002)

Week 27: Climate change and transmedial art writing. ACADEMIC SUPPORT
EN1106 Shakespeare
(Autumn term, 2020)

Course Convenor: Dr Harry Newman, harry.newman@rhul.ac.uk

Set Primary Reading
The list below identifies the plays we will study on the course. Students should read the first three plays on the list in advance, although you are encouraged to read as many as possible before term starts. After an introductory week, we will study one play each week in the following order:

- Henry IV, Part 1
- Henry V
- The Merchant of Venice
- Twelfth Night
- Hamlet
- Othello
- King Lear
- The Winter’s Tale
- The Tempest

Students will need to obtain The Norton Shakespeare (third edition), ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (2016), which is the key course text. If you decide to buy directly from their website—www.wwnorton.co.uk—we have arranged for a 20% discount. Please apply the discount code WN710 at checkout when purchasing. The Norton Shakespeare has good, brief introductions to the individual plays as well as useful background material. Single editions of plays in The Oxford Shakespeare, Arden Shakespeare, New Cambridge Shakespeare series are also recommended. Cheap second-hand editions are usually available online.

Please also WATCH any of the above plays – on stage, in the cinema, on TV/DVD, or online.

- Some productions of Shakespeare plays at Shakespeare's Globe (the reconstructed early modern playhouse in London) are available via YouTube. You could watch, for example, the 2018 Globe production of Hamlet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meNaI6lrFbg.
- Check out this guide to streaming Shakespeare, provided by the Folger Shakespeare Library: https://shakespeareandbeyond.folger.edu/2020/04/10/your-guide-to-streaming-shakespeare-in-april/?utm_source=wordfly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ShakespearePlus15Apr2020&utm_content=version_A&promo=
Secondary reading
Reading the plays and the introductions in The Norton Shakespeare should take priority. But students can also prepare by reading one or more of the following critical works. Emma Smith’s This is Shakespeare (2019) is particularly recommended.

David Bevington, Shakespeare (Blackwell, 2002)
Terry Eagleton, William Shakespeare (Blackwell, 1986)
Frank Kermode, Shakespeare’s Language (Allen Lane, 2000)
Simon Palfrey, Doing Shakespeare (Arden Shakespeare, 2005)
Kiernan Ryan, Shakespeare, 3rd edn (Palgrave, 2002)
Emma Smith, This is Shakespeare (Penguin, 2019), also available as an audio-book

Podcasts / online interviews / audiobooks
Emma Smith’s excellent book This is Shakespeare (Penguin, 2019), is available as an audio-book. You can listen to podcast lectures on Shakespeare by Emma Smith here: https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/approaching-shakespeare

Listen to some of the interviews with scholars, actors and directors available through the Shakespeare Unlimited Podcast: https://www.folger.edu/shakespeare-unlimited. Episode 50 on "Othello and Blackface" is particularly recommended.

A Bit Lit is a collection of accessible online interviews with scholars, creative writers, and theatre practitioners: https://abitlit.co/all-posts/. Many of the interviews are focused on Shakespeare and/or early modern drama (i.e. drama from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries). For example:

- Ian Burrows on Shakespeare for Snowflakes: https://abitlit.co/conversations/shakespeare-for-snowflakes-ian-burrows-chats-to-emma-whipday/
- Kimberley Sykes on directing, theatrical space and lockdown reading: https://abitlit.co/conversations/kimberley-sykes-on-directing-theatrical-space-and-lockdown-reading/
- Stay at Home Shakespeare 4: Emma Whipday talks locks, keys and privacy in Othello: https://abitlit.co/schools/stay-at-home-shakespeare-4-emma-whipday-talks-locks-keys-and-privacy-in-othello/

Assessments [excluding formative work]
Mid-term commentary, 1000 words (worth 40%)
Final essay, 2000 words (worth 60%)

Content notes
Some of the texts on this course include the following themes: suicide, mental illness, physical violence, sexual violence, racism and ethnic abuse, pejorative terms aimed at illness or disabilities.
When preparing for the course, students are asked to research the reading lists and raise any concerns with their Personal Tutor or the course leader.
EN1107 Re-Orienting the Novel 2020-21

Reading List (in the order in which we will study them):

Term 1

Term 2

It would be useful if you have read at least the first two books by the start of teaching. We recommend that you use print copies of all these books. In our experience, students retain more information if they have read a book in hard copy rather than in digital form. It also makes discussion in seminars easier. Please use the editions we recommend. In many cases they have useful introductions and notes. They can be purchased at reasonable costs new or second hand, e.g. from https://www.johnsmith.co.uk/rhul, https://www.hive.co.uk [they support high street bookshops]; https://foyles.co.uk [they have a student discount scheme]; https://www.bookfinder.com [a vast marketplace for second hand books]. We have also indicated electronic versions of the book; some are available via the RHUL library; the newer titles are only available as Kindle books.
Contents warning:

The texts on this course reflect and sometimes interrogate the racist, sexist, and ableist views of their time. You may encounter the following themes in these texts:

- rape and sexual assault, extreme violence, racism or ethnic abuse, abuse relating to sexuality, pejorative terms aimed at illness or disabilities, and representations of depression and suicide.

When preparing for the course, students are asked to research the reading lists and raise any concerns with their Personal Tutor or the course leader.
EN1112 Introduction to Poetry 2020-21

Course description
This course is designed to introduce first-year students to a variety of major poems in English. The course ranges widely from the Renaissance to the present day, involving practice in close reading while also engaging with issues of historical understanding and critical judgement. Throughout the term, we hope you will develop the confidence to engage with a range of stylistic elements in relation to poetry, and that you will seek to develop a critical awareness of the complex ways in which poetry relates to social and political events. As the course progresses, you will develop your critical awareness of the different kinds of responses that certain poems elicit, in relation to aspects of their historical reception by previous readers. The course is organised thematically rather than chronologically: we will look at a variety of poems from different periods each week.

Preparation
Over the summer please purchase a copy of the latest Norton Anthology of Poetry, which is the 6th edition (for a 25% discount, enter the code ‘WN711’ at the Norton site). We suggest that you read widely and often in this book, starting with the poets you know already and reading outwards as your interests lead you (if you’re at a loss, then start with Emily Dickinson and Frank O’Hara!) The notes and appendices are very useful. In addition to the Norton anthology, we make regular reference on the course to Poetry: The Basics by Jeffrey Wainwright (London: Routledge, 2016), which is a set text. This will be available directly through the library as an e-book when you have completed registration.
EN1401 Introducing America

This is the core first-year course for students on the BA English & American Literature. The aim of the course is to provide an introduction to the main topics of American literature and culture, while studying the writings of the period from the first colonial encounters - before America was - through the establishment of the republic to the mid-century ferment around slavery, and the work which followed the Civil War in which the pressures of industrialization and modernity are apparent. As well as examining how texts respond to and mediate their cultural, historical and political contexts (America’s foundational myths, its geography, gender, race), the course will discuss more formal topics such as genre (the rise of the short story in America; the importance of the essay; the formal features of the slave narrative), poetic form, and the uses of emotion in literature. The course is taught in four five-week blocks:

Block 1: Puritan Settlement and Frontier Encounters
We look at puritan settlement, Mary Rowlandson’s captivity narrative, early texts by Native Americans, some of Cooper’s The Last of the Mohicans, and Hawthorne’s re-appraisal of the Puritans in The Scarlet Letter.

Block 2: Becoming Americans
Crevecoeur’s ‘What is an American?; the Declaration of Independence, Irving’s ‘Rip van Winkle’ and other documents; essays by Emerson and Whitman’s poetry; stories by immigrant writers.

Block 3: Slavery and Its Legacies
We examine the print and visual culture of slavery; Frederick Douglass’s foundational slave narrative; Harriet Wilson’s Our Nig; Herman Melville’s ‘Benito Cereno’, stories by Charles Chesnutt.

Block 4: Modernity and Its Critiques
Emily Dickinson’s poetry, Edgar Allan Poe’s stories, Henry Thoreau’s Walden; Rebecca Harding Davies’s Life in the Iron Mills, Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper”.

Teaching is by lecture and seminar, though methods may be adjusted in the light of the Covid-related ‘flexible offering’. Assessment is by essays submitted at the beginning of terms 2 and 3, with a small mark component for presentations and class participation.

Summer Reading: the set text is The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volume B: 1820-1865, Ninth Edition, which contains many of the texts taught and a great deal of other useful material. If you have trouble getting it, however, most of the texts studied are available in free online versions. Please try to sample some of the main texts: Rowlandson’s captivity narrative, The Scarlet Letter, Whitman’s Leave of Grass, Dickinson’s poems, Life in the iron Mills.
Summer Reading for CW1010 – The Prose Fiction Weeks

Read the opening story in The Emigrants, W.G. Sebald – you can read the rest, too, but we’ll concentrate on that first section.

Read Goodbye, Columbus, Philip Roth. Just the novella – not the other stories in the collection.

Both are short and you should be able to read them in term time, before class.
Below you’ll find the list of essays we’ll be reading on the course. You may wish to read ahead this summer. The other great thing you can do to prepare yourself for studying on a degree in creative writing is read as many novels and short stories, poems, and plays as you can. You’ll be writing in all these forms, and thinking about how and why to write in these forms, for the next three years, so read at least one short story, at least one novel, at least one play, and half a dozen poems this summer, and think about what you like about each of them, what you don’t like about each of them, and—importantly—why you like or don’t like those things. “I don’t know, it just wasn’t relatable” isn’t really a reason why. Why? Why? Why? Pretend you’re three years old and keep asking that question, and see where it takes you.


Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'A Defence of Poetry'.

Walt Whitman, Preface to the 1855 edition of Leaves of Grass.

Matthew Arnold, 'Sweetness and Light' in Culture and Anarchy.

Oscar Wilde, 'Preface to A Picture of Dorian Gray'.

Friedrich Nietzsche, excerpts from The Birth of Tragedy (“An Attempt at Self-Criticism” and Sections I-V, XI-XII, XIV, XXIII).

Sigmund Freud, “Creative Writers and Daydreaming”.

Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own.

Henry James, Preface to The Portrait of a Lady.

T.S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent”.

William Carlos Williams, “Spring and All”, in Imaginations.

Bertolt Brecht, The Messingkauf Dialogues.

Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”.

W.H. Auden, “The Virgin and the Dynamo” and “The Poet and The City”, from The Dyer’s Hand and Other Essays.
Adrienne Rich, ‘When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision’.

Ralph Ellison, “Introduction to Invisible Man”.

Aleksandar Hemon and Colum McCann, “On Writers and History”, from Pretext 7 (Spring/Summer 2003).

