

Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for an undergraduate award
BA American Literature and Creative Writing (3141)

Section 1 – Introduction to your course

This course specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your course and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the University prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the University's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the University's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

Your degree programme in American Literature and Creative Writing is delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which you must follow modules to the value of 120 credits 60 credits of those being in American Literature and 60 credits of those being in Creative Writing. In American literature, you progress from period surveys in years one and two to options in years 2 and 3. The first year of the degree is fixed, while the second and third year involve a high level of choice.

In Creative Writing the structure is pyramidal: in the first year you will take a broadly focused module, intended to introduce you to a wide range of creative forms, not only fiction, poetry and performance writing, but also song writing, television and screenwriting, stand-up comedy, and others. In the second year you choose two from a range of creative forms, and one of those forms is taken on to an advanced level and an extended project in the third year. Year three also includes a module designed to engage you more directly with the creative industries in which many writers have to work.

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, courses and the availability of individual modules, especially optional modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and you are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect your decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform you as soon as is practicable of any significant changes which might affect your studies.

The following is a brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

Degree course – May also be referred to as 'degree programme' or simply 'programme', these terms refer to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies.

Module – May also be referred to as 'course', this refers to the individual units you will study each year to complete your degree course. Undergraduate degrees at Royal Holloway comprise a combination of modules in multiples of 15 credits to the value of 120 credits per year. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	May 2024	Location of study	Egham Campus
Course award and title	BA American Literature and Creative Writing	Level of study	Undergraduate
Course code	3141	UCAS code	Q324
Year of entry	2025/26		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	English	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time	Duration of the course	3 years
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A		
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/	For queries on admissions:	https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery

Section 3 – Degree course structure					
3.1 Mandatory module information					
The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study					
Year	Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (Mandatory Condonable MC or Mandatory Non-Condonable MNC)
1	CW 1010	Introduction to Creative Writing	30	4	MNC
1	CW1020	Why Write? The History and Theory of Creative Writing	30	4	MNC
1	EN1401	Introducing America: Literature to 1900	30	4	MC
1	EN1011	Critical Foundations: Thinking as a Critic	15	4	MC
1	EN1112	Introduction to Poetry	15	4	MC
2	EN2401	The American Century	30	5	MC
<p>This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory modules on your degree course. These modules are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree course will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these modules each year. Mandatory modules fall into two categories: 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.</p> <p>In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module before you can proceed to the next year of your course, or to successfully graduate with a particular degree title. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) modules, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them. Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree course may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example: where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.</p>					
3.2 Optional modules					
<p>In addition to mandatory modules, there will be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. Although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, new options may be offered or existing ones may be withdrawn. For example, where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback</p>					

and/or the advice of External Advisors, to enhance academic provision. There may be additional requirements around option selection; please contact the Department for further information.

In **Year 2** for **Creative Writing** you must take 60 credits from this list:

CW2010 Playwriting (30 credits)

CW2020 Fiction (30 credits)

CW2030 Poetry (30 credits)

For **American Literature**, you choose options equal to the value of 30 credits from a list of Stage two modules offered by the Department. You will be encouraged to take a 15 credit module in another department in years 2 and/or 3 of your degree (e.g. American History, American Film).

Stage three:

In **Creative Writing** you must take 30 credits from the following:

CW3010 Playwriting 2 (30 credits)

CW3020 Fiction 2 (30 credits)

CW3030 Poetry 2 (30 credits)

(Each has a corresponding prerequisite in the second year, so if, say, you are taking Fiction 2, you must have studied Fiction in Year 2.)

Plus 30 credits from the following:

CW3108 Creative Writing Special Focus: Writing about Music (15 credits)

CW3107 Creative Writing Special Focus: Vernacular Literature (15 credits)

CW3110 Creative Writing Special Focus: Writing Queerness (15 credits)

CW3105 Creative Writing Special Focus: Short Story (15 credits)

CW3106 Creative Writing Special Focus: Screenwriting (15 credits)

CW3109 Creative Writing Special Focus: Writing Men (15 credits)

For **American Literature**, you take 60 credits, or 30 credits as well as a dissertation in American Literature. You will be encouraged to take a 15 credit module in another department in years 2 and/or 3 of your degree (e.g. American History, American Film) and therefore may substitute 15 credits of American Literature options with an elective outside of the English Department.

Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree course

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's [Academic Regulations](#).

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. Please note that if you hold a Student Visa and you choose to leave (or are required to leave because of non-progression) or complete early (before the course end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

All first year students on single, joint or combined honours courses offered all or in part by the School of Humanities, School of Performing and Digital Arts, or department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%. Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [Academic Taught Regulations](#) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study.

International Year

You may also apply to transfer to the degree 'With an International Year' The international year would be taken between years 2 and 3 of the degree. You must take modules at an overseas university nominated through the Student Exchange Programmes. On your year abroad, you will predominantly follow your chosen areas of study, i.e. a full academic load overseas. The module choices will need to be agreed with the Department of English. The grades from this third year of study will be aggregated into a thirteenth degree module (EN3600 Study Abroad). This module is considered part of your final year grades, which are therefore combined on the ratio of a 20% weighting to the third year (overseas) and an 80% weighting for the fourth year, which is spent at Royal Holloway. This combined 'final year' grade then contributes to the usual '0:1:2' degree weighting, as per University regulations.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this programme are:

- to provide a rigorous academic environment in which you can develop your critical and creative engagement with literary and performance writing;
- to complement and support theoretical discussion and textual analysis with practical exploration;
- to engage you with a historically broad range of different creative forms and familiarise with them with significant debates that they have generated;
- to foster an appreciation of a wide range of creative writing forms from the perspectives of critic and practitioner;
- to encourage the development of critical and creative vocabularies with which to handle new creative work, including your own;
- to further your ability to engage in a range of cultural and theoretical debates about the processes of cultural production, the nature and value of artistic achievement, the appropriate forms and levels of support;
- to encourage you to take progressive responsibility for your own study through negotiating subject areas of specialism with other students in seminars and workshops, through the informed choice of options, and through an extended piece of writing in the final year.
- to equip you with subject-specific transferable skills and a practical level of critical awareness about the 'real-world' industrial conditions for the contemporary creative writer.

Section 6 - Course learning outcomes			
In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (<i>Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*)</i>)			
Course learning outcome	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
ENGLISH: Subject Knowledge K1	Explore a range of literary texts, across the full range of traditions, genres, and historical periods, including pre-1500, 1500-1850, the long 19 th century, the 20 th century, and contemporary.	Discuss and compare literature from a range of literary traditions, genres, and periods, including pre-1500, 1500-1850, the long 19 th century, and the early 20 th century.	Develop specialist knowledge in focused areas of interest, such as specific periods or genres.
ENGLISH: Reading Skills S6	Read literary, critical, and creative works closely and accurately.	Analyse literary, critical, and creative works in a critical and contextually informed way.	Develop independent and imaginative interpretations of literary, critical, and creative works.
ENGLISH: Writing Skills S7	Write clearly, accurately, and effectively about literary texts.	Articulate a critical understanding of complex texts and ideas, demonstrating awareness of different registers and different genres of critical prose (e.g. Essay, blog post, review, etc).	Demonstrate a strong command of written English, expressing sophisticated ideas about literary, critical, and creative works in clear, fluent, and stylish prose appropriate to formal and a wide range of other registers.
ENGLISH: Research Skills S8	Recognise and present primary and secondary texts	Find and evaluate previous scholarship.	Apply scholarly bibliographic skills appropriate to focused areas of interest in an independent research project.
ENGLISH: Critical Terminology and Theoretical Approaches to Literature K2	Recognise core technical, critical, and theoretical terms and ideas characteristic of literary study.	Engage with technical, critical, and theoretical terms and ideas in the discussion of literature.	Articulate specialist knowledge and a critical understanding of technical, critical, and theoretical terms and ideas in focused areas of interest.
Independent and substantial production of work in a particular form K1	Encounter different genres across poetry, playwriting, and fiction. Write portfolios in each genre, exploring different forms and styles.	Focus on two genres through seminar-led modules.	Independently develop work in one genre, producing a substantial piece of writing towards future publication. This piece is cohesive and coherent, with a specific style and creative aims.

		Produce of substantial pieces of work in chosen genres, often with overarching coherence and a clearly emergent style.	Extend genre knowledge into new fields, exploring particular themes and approaches in depth.
Understanding of contemporary and historical contexts K2	Encounter a range of literary texts, across a range of historical periods and genres, with a particular emphasis on contemporary writing. Engage with the philosophy of creative writing and how writers articulate the significance of their own practice.	Address and analyse historical and contemporary texts in relation to creative writing. Embed the philosophy of writing in creative practices and processes.	Demonstrate specialist knowledge that situates work confidently and clearly within the contemporary literary context, whilst demonstrating an understanding of and engagement with historical forms and ways of writing. Develop their own philosophy of writing, suited to their methods and practice.
Collaboration and responding to feedback S6	Engage with workshops and giving small group feedback. Recognise and identify strengths and weaknesses in peers' writing.	Participate in whole class workshops with incisive and directed feedback. Respond to feedback through synthesising comments and implementing changes in writing.	Establish clear collaborative relationship with peers and then organise around these collaborations. Offer and implement in-depth feedback to peers, informed by subject knowledge and developed understanding of genre.
Use of language S7	Consider and explore the relationship between language choice and style. Make use of specific vocabularies across critical and creative writing to facilitate clear communication.	Develop individual writing styles across two different genres. Use appropriate and informed language, with an ability to write cogently and clearly.	Display a distinctive personal style, handled with confidence and control. Use language in ways that are precise, sophisticated and imaginatively rich. Display a strong command of written English, and an ability to express ideas clearly and stylishly.
Originality, Creativity and Experiment K3	Explore original ideas within the constraints of three genres.	Experiment with the possibilities of form and genre, developing original ideas and concepts through writing.	Innovate within chosen genre, using both form and content to move beyond received ideas and familiar representations. Challenge conventions where it is appropriate to do so.

			Demonstrate a richness of ideas and creative ambition for the work
Engaged Humanities (SH) K6 display a breadth and depth of subject knowledge, and engage with developing subject conversations and their currency in cultural discourse now.	Recall foundational knowledge of the subject area, and use core subject skills.	Recognise and classify focussed sub-fields within the subject area, and identify and respond to relevant critical materials and contexts.	Select and apply specific debates/theories/conceptual frameworks within specialist areas of the subject field and critically identify the potential for new ideas and subject directions.
Applied Humanities S1 understand the relevance of subject skills to professional and applied contexts, and how to apply that knowledge in the future.	Recognise and identify subject skills as transferable to work-based situations and competencies.	Generate outputs in a variety of formats which have application to work-based uses and/or particular audiences and/or functions.	Plan and manage an extended project/essay, using adaptive skills, initiative and self-management to ensure successful task completion.
Global Humanities S2 understand and enact intercultural awareness and competencies.	Identify and respond to diverse cultural contexts and viewpoints.	Understand and differentiate the circumstances and contexts that give rise to diverse viewpoints and world views.	Reflect on bias including one's own: operate within, appreciate and evaluate different cultural context.
Critical S3	FOCUS in detail to FILTER, summarise and classify a range of information (issues, texts, contexts.)	Objectively evaluate information (issues, texts, contexts) demonstrating INTEGRITY and evidence-based reasoning.	Synthesise and evaluate information from disparate and potentially conflicting sources to reach INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT with the capacity to deconstruct the conditions pertaining to the construction of knowledge.
Collaborative S4	Reflect on current experience and identify the potential to ADAPT and modify in response to that experience.	Carry out collaborative activity with RESILIENCE and provide an individual contribution to a collective goal/task.	Co-work and/or co-create in partnership with others in achievement of collective goals and recognise acknowledge the

			importance of collaborative practice in knowledge production.
Communicative S5	Recall basic subject vocabulary and present information with FOCUS and ACCURACY.	Structure and organise the presentation of information in a variety of communicative modes with RELEVANCE, LOGIC and COHERENCE.	Design a presentation of information that can argue, influence or persuade, and/or can deploy a specialised vocabulary or creative/compositional technique.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning on your course is closely informed by the active research of staff, particularly in the areas of American Literature and Creative Writing. In general terms, the course provides an opportunity for you to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes detailed herein.

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures, seminars, workshops, consultations on written work, oral presentations and guided independent study. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by formal examinations, coursework, examined essays, oral presentations and the creative writing portfolio.

Contact hours come in various forms and may take the form of time spent with a member of staff in a lecture or seminar with other students. Contact hours may also be laboratory or studio-based sessions, project supervision with a member of staff, or discussion through a virtual learning environment (VLE). These contact hours may be with a lecturer or teaching assistant, but they may also be with a technician, or specialist support staff.

The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary. Assessments designated as 'summative' will receive a mark which will count towards your overall mark for the module, and potentially your degree classification, depending on your year of study. On successful completion of the module you will gain the credits listed.

More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online [Module Catalogue](#). The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university, and may also be checked routinely by external agencies.

Section 8 – Additional costs

There are no single associated costs greater than £50 per item on this degree course.

These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree course at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our website.

Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards	
QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	4-6
Your course is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent courses of study.	
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s)	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.	

Section 10– Intermediate exit awards (where available)		
You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the course as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory modules, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.		
Award	Criteria	Awarding body
Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE)	Pass in 210 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4 and at least 120 of which must be at or above FHEQ Level 5	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE)	Pass in 120 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College