

‘Spilt Religion’: Poetry and Theology in the Long Nineteenth Century.

Start date 23rd February 2018

End date 25th February 2018

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Laura McCormick Kilbride

Course code 1718NRX072

Director of Programmes

Emma Jennings

For further information on this course, please contact

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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Laura McCormick Kilbride’s first book, *Swinburne’s Style*, aims to establish the relevance of the poet A.C. Swinburne to the study of nineteenth-century poetry and the study of poetics today. In October 2015 she was elected Junior Research Fellow at Peterhouse, Cambridge where she is writing a second book which considers the relationship between theology and poetry in the long nineteenth century. In the past she has enjoyed teaching a weekend-long residential course on literary Pre-Raphaelitism.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 **Introductory Lecture: ‘Spilt Religion’: Poetry and Theology in the Long Nineteenth Century.** This 45 minute lecture will introduce you to some of the key questions involved in the debate surrounding poetry and secularisation, leaving plenty of time for questions.

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:00 **Led Practical Criticism, considering part of Tennyson’s _In Memoriam_ with an introduction to some relevant literary-critical terminology.**

10:30 - 12:30 **Guided Trip to the Trinity College Library**

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Free

16:00 Tea

16:30 – 18:00 **The Established Church: Rossetti and Keble.**

18:00 – 18:30 Free

18:30 Dinner

20:00 – 21:30 **Poetry as a separate ecclesia: A.C. Swinburne and Matthew Arnold.**

21:30 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 **The disestablished Church: G. M. Hopkins**

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 **Open Discussion and Responses: Is there a sacred or a secular poetic style?**

12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

- to introduce students to the debate surrounding secularisation in the nineteenth century and the place of art in that process in the historical and social context of late nineteenth century Britain.
- to give readers several modes of approaching these literary artworks—including key ideas and critical vocabulary—allowing them to deepen their reading and appreciation of poetry.
- to think creatively and critically about the links between poetic style and theological questions, such as life after death, the incarnation, and the social order.

Content:

Was the nineteenth century an age of doubt? Why did some thinkers in England look to art—and especially poetry—as a replacement for religion? This course invites you to consider whether nineteenth-century English poetry witnesses the ‘disappearance of God’ or not, with a special focus on poetic technique. We will consider poets as far apart in denomination and time as William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Christina Rossetti, A.C. Swinburne, T.E. Hulme and others.

Presentation of the course:

This Course consists of a combination of an individual lecture, led seminars and discussion, and includes a trip to a college archive or the Fitzwilliam Museum to consider some of the literary manuscripts on hold in Cambridge and in the archives.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- connect nineteenth-century sacred and secular poetry with the social and historical context in which these poems were produced.
- approach poetry with confidence, making use of technical vocabulary learnt through close reading.
- think critically about whether the nineteenth century was, in fact, an age of doubt or not.
- think critically about the place of poetry in nineteenth-century culture and, consequently, our own.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Christopher Ricks, ed.	<i>The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse</i>	(Oxford, 2008)
Kirstie Blair,	<i>Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry</i>	(Oxford, 2012)
Owen Chadwick,	<i>The Victorian Church</i>	(London, 1972)

Students are strongly recommended to have read Tennyson's *Ulysses* and, wherever possible, his long poem *In Memoriam*.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 26 October 2017