



One Day, One Novel: Samuel Beckett's *Murphy*

Start date	21 April 2018	End date	21 April 2018
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Dr Andy Wimbush	Course code	1718NDX043

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Andy Wimbush holds a BA and a PhD in English from the University of Cambridge. He specialises in the study of twentieth-century and contemporary literature, particularly experimental fiction, the relationship between literature, religion, and philosophy, and the work of Samuel Beckett and B.S. Johnson. His research has been published in *The Journal of Beckett Studies*, *Literature and Theology*, and various academic books. Andy has taught at the University of Cambridge since 2013 and is an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Course programme

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	Samuel Beckett in the 1930s
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	Murphy's mind, madness and quietism
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Murphy's literary ancestors
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	<i>Murphy</i> as veiled autobiography
16:45	Day-school ends

Course syllabus

Aims:

- To introduce students to the early life and work of Samuel Beckett;
- To explore how Beckett's novel *Murphy* can be illuminated by study of archival materials relating to the novel, such as letters, diaries, and notebooks.
- To help students understand allusions in the text by exploring literary and philosophical influences on *Murphy*;
- To support students to approach the text through close reading and personal reflection.

Content:

Samuel Beckett's first published novel, *Murphy*, is a comic romp around 1930s London and through the 'little world' of the human mind. Beckett weaves together reflections on madness, spirituality, and ginger biscuits with a Swiftian satirical fervour. This one-day course will invite students to explore how Beckett's own life experiences and interests shaped the text by studying his letters, diaries and notebooks alongside the novel itself. We will examine how Beckett's own tussles with anxiety, melancholy, and solitude are translated, with comic exuberance, into Murphy's story.

Students will also learn about the important literary influences on the novel, from writers such as Joyce and Dostoevsky, and will discover the psychological and philosophical ideas behind Murphy's search for a 'quiet mind'. There will be plenty of scope during the day for students to bring their own interests and reflections to our exploration of the novel, as well as opportunities to examine sections of the novel in close detail.

Presentation of the course:

The course will be presented through a mixture of presentations, group discussions, and reading exercises.

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

- To discuss the core themes and literary-historical context of *Murphy* in an informed and reflective manner.
- To use archival and biographical material to illuminate the study of a literary work.
- To analyse literary texts in close detail, with reference to language and structure.

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
James Knowlson	<i>Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett</i>	Bloomsbury, 1997
C.J. Ackerley	<i>Demented Particulars: The Annotated Murphy</i>	Edinburgh University Press, 2010
C.J. Ackerley	'Samuel Beckett and Thomas à Kempis: The Roots of Quietism' in <i>Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui</i> , 9, pp. 81-92	Rodopi, 2000

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

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: 12 April 2018