

Two Excellent Women: the Novels of Barbara Pym and Anita Brookner

Start date	8 June 2018	End date	10 June 2018
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Kim Eyre	Course code	1718NRX061

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings
For further information on this course, please contact Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237

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

Tutor biography

Kim Eyre took a first-class honours degree in Modern Languages at Trinity College, Cambridge and obtained a distinction in educational theory and practice in his PGCE course at King's College, London. For over thirty years he taught variously French, German and English language and literature in the secondary sector, has published three textbooks and has been engaged in research on Marcel Proust since 1989, as well as having a research interest in Oscar Wilde, the Gothic and the writers, Jocelyn Brooke, Denton Welch and Ronald Blythe. He has lectured and given presentations at national and international conferences, most recently at the Universities of Reims and of Palermo, at the Dulwich Literary Festival and at Oxford and Cambridge. He enjoys group discussion and analysis of texts and the pooling of literary and linguistic experience and expertise.

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	Lecture: The Lives and Times of Barbara Pym and Anita Brookner
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Early Pym
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Mid-Pym
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Late Pym
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Early Brookner
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Mid-Brookner
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Late Brookner
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

1. To explore themes and motifs of the two novelists, respecting their distinctive voices but noting any common preoccupations, where relevant.
2. To discuss particular passages, as appropriate, in greater detail, focusing on aspects of characterisation, form and language, mindful of contextual influences and critical interpretations.
3. To encourage and foster personal reactions to, and shared opinions of, concepts and concerns arising from our literary investigations.

Content:

In studying a wide range of texts by the two writers, we shall seek to span the literary careers of Barbara Pym and Anita Brookner respectively, treating them as individual authors in their own right, but noting any points of contact between their works of fiction as they may arise. We shall be concentrating on recurring themes and the approach to characterisation in their novels, whilst also considering stylistic and formal aspects of the texts, paying heed to both socio-historical and cultural contexts and critical responses and interpretations, where appropriate. The guiding principle of the course will be the pursuit of excellence, both comic and tragic, in the works of these two excellent women.

Presentation of the course:

Session 1 will incorporate a lecture on the lives and times of Barbara Pym and Anita Brookner, as well as material that is introductory to the course. Thereafter, the sessions will divide their respective *oeuvres* into three chronological periods, although these divisions should be seen as descriptive rather than prescriptive. The reading list indicates the books to which particular reference will be made, but this by no means precludes allusions to other texts. Similarly, the publication details merely reflect the tutor's own fondly thumbed editions; other published versions of the novels are perfectly acceptable. Note-taking will be encouraged and facilitated, and classes will be conducted on a whole group discussion basis, with ample opportunity for personal contributions. As the course description in the prospectus indicates, the dominant mood of the weekend is intended to be celebratory, so it is hoped that long-standing enthusiasms of devotees and newly discovered delights of novices will be aired and shared throughout.

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

1. Give evidence of having an overview of the major themes and concerns of the two novelists and their approach to characterisation.
2. Demonstrate the ability to focus on certain conceptual, linguistic, stylistic and structural features of some of the texts under study.
3. Show willingness and confidence in voicing responses to central ideas, critical interpretations and related contextual matters.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk * **NB Please see comment on editions in the section entitled 'Presentation of the Course'**.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Barbara Pym	Some Tame Gazelle	Granada, 1981
Barbara Pym	Excellent Women	Penguin, 1980
Barbara Pym	Jane and Prudence	Granada, 1981
Barbara Pym	A Glass of Blessings	Virago, 2009
Barbara Pym	No Fond Return of Love	Virago, 2009
Barbara Pym	An Unsuitable Attachment	Grafton, 1983
Barbara Pym	The Sweet Dove Died	Granada, 1980
Barbara Pym	Quartet in Autumn	Granada, 1980
Barbara Pym	A Few Green Leaves	Granada, 1981
Anita Brookner	A Start in Life	Penguin, 1991
Anita Brookner	Hotel du Lac	Granada, 1985
Anita Brookner	Latecomers	Grafton, 1989
Anita Brookner	Fraud	Jonathan Cape, 1992
Anita Brookner	Incidents in the Rue Laugier	Penguin, 1996
Anita Brookner	Visitors	Jonathan Cape, 1997
Anita Brookner	The Bay of Angels	Viking, 2001
Anita Brookner	Leaving Home	Viking, 2005
Anita Brookner	Strangers	Fig Tree, 2009

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: 24 April 2018