

The poetry of Thomas Hardy

Start date 19 October 2018**End date** 21 October 2018**Venue** Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge**Tutor** Jem Poster**Course code** 1819NRX005**Director of Academic Centres**

Dr Corinne Boz

**For further information on this
course, please contact**

Academic Centre Coordinator, Clare Kerr

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Tutor biography

Jem Poster worked as an archaeologist, surveying and excavating a range of sites on behalf of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, before taking up an administrative post with Cambridge University's Institute of Continuing Education in 1987. From 1993 to 2003 he was University Lecturer in Literature with Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education and a fellow of Kellogg College. From 2003 to 2012 he was Professor of Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University, and is now Emeritus Professor. He is the author of two novels, *Courting Shadows* (Sceptre, 2002) and *Rifling Paradise* (Sceptre, 2006), as well as a collection of poetry, *Brought to Light* (Bloodaxe, 2001), and editor of a volume in the six-volume Oxford University Press *Edward Thomas: Prose Writings* (OUP, 2018). He has won prizes in major poetry competitions including first prize in both the Cardiff International Poetry Competition in 1995 and the Peterloo Poets Open Poetry Competition in 2001. He has been Chair of the editorial board of Wales's leading literary journal, *New Welsh Review*, and Programme Advisor to the Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education's MSt in Creative Writing; he is currently Director of its International Summer Programme in Creative Writing, and is an Affiliated Lecturer of the Institute. He is also Director of Academic Programmes for the Financial Times Oxford Literary Festival.

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	Session 1: Introduction; <i>Wessex Poems</i>
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 2: <i>Poems of the Past and the Present</i>
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 3: <i>Time's Laughingstocks</i>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Session 4: <i>Satires of Circumstance</i>
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 5: <i>Moments of Vision</i>
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 6: <i>Late Lyrics and Earlier; Human Shows, Far Phantasies</i>
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 7: <i>Winter Words</i> ; conclusion
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

- to explore the relationship between Hardy's work and its wider context;
- to analyse the poems under review;
- to gain a clearer sense of the writer's achievement.

Content:

By 1900 Thomas Hardy was widely regarded as one of the most significant novelists of the nineteenth century, but by that time he had already begun to write the poems that would mark him out as one of the most significant poets of the twentieth. Many of the concerns of his novels persist in his poetry: the beauty of a natural world that cares little for humankind; the fleeting joys and deeper sorrows of human love; the coincidences and ironies that inform human existence. If the poems are often dark, they are also illuminating, and Hardy's mastery of his craft ensures that they repay the close attention that will be given to them during this course. We shall be examining the following poems in detail, setting them in the wider context of Hardy's life and times:

Neutral Tones; The Ivy-Wife; I Look into My Glass; A Broken Appointment; The Darkling Thrush; In Tenebris II; On the Departure Platform; The Minute Before Meeting; A Wet Night; The Convergence of the Twain; When I Set Out for Lyonesse; A Thunderstorm in Town; Lament; The Voice; Regret Not Me; In the Moonlight; We Sat at the Window; Life Laughs Onward; He Prefers Her Earthly; The Pity of It; In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'; Weathers; Snow in the Suburbs; The Frozen Greenhouse; Nobody Comes; He Never Expected Much; We Are Getting to the End; He Resolves to Say No More

Please bring to the course an edition containing all the listed poems. If you don't already have a 'complete' or 'collected' edition of the poems, the Wordsworth *Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy* is inexpensive and easily obtained.

Presentation of the course:

The course will take the form of a series of seminars, in which group discussion will be actively encouraged; the majority of these discussions will focus on the texts themselves, which will be analysed in detail.

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

- place the writer in his wider context and understand more clearly the implications and meaning of his work;
- gain greater confidence in their approach to the analysis of literary texts in general.

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 *

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Claire Tomalin	<i>Thomas Hardy: The Time-Torn Man</i>	Penguin, 2012

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: 27 September 2018