Undergraduate Certificate in English Literature: Approaches to Literary Study

2024-2025

Course code: 2425CCR121

COURSE GUIDE
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Welcome to the Undergraduate Certificate in English Literature: Approaches to Literary Study, a University of Cambridge award offered by the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE). The Certificate is taught and awarded at Level 4 (i.e. first-year undergraduate/postgraduate level) and attracts 60 credits. The award is completed in one academic year. For further information about academic credit please see the relevant section in our Undergraduate Student Handbook.

The course offers three termly units and a syllabus and reading and resource list for each of these units are included in this course specification.

The programme will be taught remotely, through pre-recorded lectures which students can access at times convenient to them in addition to scheduled live sessions where tutor and students will gather for discussion. While attendance at the live sessions is encouraged, all sessions will be recorded and will be accessible via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Discussion forums and suggestions for additional reading and resources will also be found on the VLE. There will be an opportunity for one-to-one tutorials with the Course Director, Dr Jenny Bavidge, to discuss feedback on written work in Lent Term.

The programme aims to:

- introduce students to a broad range of writing in English from the 16th to the 21st centuries;
- enable students to gain an informed understanding of established and less well-known authors and texts in relation to their period and other writers;
- introduce students to different literary and cultural perspectives;
- provide opportunities for the study of individual authors and genres;
- provide opportunities for progression to further study in the area of literary studies.

Transferable skills for further study and employability

Subject specific skills and other attributes

Intellectual skills
- awareness and analysis of the literary tools used to enhance a text;
- critical skills in close reading;
- ability to articulate a response to a text;
- sensitivity to generic conventions;
- understanding of the different audiences for different forms of writing.

Transferable Skills
- ability to write regularly and to a deadline;
- more effective communication in person and on paper;
- building confidence in written and oral expression;
- command of a broad range of vocabulary;
- ability to work in groups of different sizes;
- development of independent learning, study, and time management skills;
- library and research.

In addition to academic skills and knowledge, students will gain a broad range of widely applicable skills. These include:
• The development of independent learning, study and time management skills;
• The capacity for independent thought and judgement;
• The deployment of skills in critical reasoning;
• The development of competence in using IT to support one’s work;
• The ability to work with others, productively and equitably;
• The qualities necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility and the demonstration of high levels of motivation and personal commitment through part-time study;
• The ability to reference sources of information to support one’s reasoning;
• An awareness of ethical issues and the ability to discuss these rationally;

### Study hours

The award of academic credit is a means of quantifying and recognising learning and within the UK, one credit notionally represents 10 hours of learning\(^1\). Each of the units in this course attracts 20 credits so students should expect to need to study for approximately 200 hours in total to complete each unit successfully. However, it is recognised that students study at different paces and use a variety of approaches, so this is a recommendation, rather than a hard-and-fast calculation.

\(^1\) **SEEC Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education**

### Teaching staff

**Academic Director: Dr Jenny Bavidge**

**Jenny Bavidge** is University Associate Professor and Academic Director for English at ICE. She is a member of the University of Cambridge English Faculty and a Fellow of Murray Edwards College, Cambridge. She is a Past President of the Literary London Society and a member of the English Faculty’s Contemporaries group. She was made a Fellow of the English Association in 2017. Jenny teaches within a wide range of areas, including 19th-20th-century American and British literature, close reading and critical theory.

**Tutors:** The course will be taught by a team of experienced tutors with teaching and research interests in diverse areas of critical and creative work. The most up-to-date lecture list for each unit including any guest lecturers will be published in the course’s Virtual Learning Environment.

Tutors on this course are likely to include:

**Dr Polly Paulusma**

Dr Polly Paulusma teaches Cambridge English undergraduates and Songwriting MA students at the Institute for Contemporary Music Performance in London. After reading English at Murray Edwards College, Cambridge, she became a signed, published singer-songwriter, and since 2003 she has toured internationally and released nearly a dozen critically acclaimed albums with Björk’s record label One Little Independent and via her own folk imprint. In 2014, she returned to postgraduate research with an interest in literature and song, completing her PhD at the University of East Anglia. Her monograph *Angela Carter and folk song: Invisible Music, Prose and the Art of Canorography* was published by Bloomsbury in December 2022 and her research has also appeared in academic journals and books.
Dr Andy Wimbush
Dr Andy Wimbush holds a BA and a PhD in English from the University of Cambridge. He is the author of *Still: Samuel Beckett’s Quietism* (Ibidem, 2020) and a contributor to the *Oxford Handbook of Samuel Beckett* and *The Journal of Beckett Studies*. He specialises in the study of twentieth-century and contemporary literature, particularly experimental fiction, the relationship between literature, religion, and philosophy. Andy has taught at the University of Cambridge since 2013 and is an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

**Administrative staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Literature Enquiries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e. <a href="mailto:literature@ice.cam.ac.uk">literature@ice.cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t. 01223 746212/746236/746223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Hitch/Clare Barker/Julie Johnson/Lorraine Silk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Institute of Continuing Education**

The Institute of Continuing Education’s administrative headquarters are at Madingley Hall, an elegant country house built in the 16th century and set in gardens of about seven acres, designed in the 18th century by Capability Brown. Please visit [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) and [www.madingleyhall.co.uk](http://www.madingleyhall.co.uk) for further information.

**Contact details of ICE**

Institute of Continuing Education  
University of Cambridge  
Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge  
CB23 8AQ  
T: 01223 746222  
[www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk)  
literature@ice.cam.ac.uk

*Please also refer to the ‘information for students’ section on ICE’s website [www.ice.cam.ac.uk/studying-with-us/information-for-students](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/studying-with-us/information-for-students) and the 2024-25 Student Handbook for award-bearing courses for further information and guidance relating to all aspects of the course including study skills, assignments, assessment and moderation. The Course Information and Help and Guidance section of the ICE VLE will also contain valuable information specific to your course.*

*Information correct as at 19 June 2024*
Syllabus for Unit One

Michaelmas term 2024

Reading and interpretation

Start date 23 October 2024  End date 11 December 2024

Tutor(s) Dr Jenny Bavidge and Dr Polly Paulusma  No of meetings Introduction and 6 live teaching/open sessions plus pre-recorded lectures

Aims

• To develop students’ powers of criticism and close reading.
• To introduce students to a wide range of texts and ideas.
• To develop students’ own critical reading.

Content

This unit will introduce students to critical terms which will broaden their understanding of literature and engage them in the task of close analysis. Students will be introduced to key terms in literary criticism such as tragedy, narrative, satire, genre, irony and intertextuality, as they read texts from a range of periods and forms, all with a connection to the theme of ‘investigation’. We will begin with a study of Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex, described by one critic as ‘the first detective story in Western Literature’ and further develop our thinking about themes of tragedy and irony in Shakespeare’s Hamlet. The second block is devoted to unlocking poetry, looking in particular at ways of reading and interpreting poetic style and form. The final two sessions turn to prose and we will pair texts from different periods in order to examine the narrative strategies through which authors challenge our expectations of readerly interpretation and making meaning.

Presentation of the unit

The unit will be taught in a series of pre-recorded lectures and ‘live’ teaching sessions via Zoom. Live teaching will involve directed discussion and reading, with short talks from tutors and small-group work in breakout rooms. There will be comfort breaks during each session and opportunities for general Q&A with the tutor.

Please also look at the VLE for each block’s dedicated discussions and forum activities which are designed to guide your reading and to introduce you to relevant contextual and critical resources.
### Teaching Sessions/Lectures list

For each block pre-recorded lectures will be available a week before the live teaching session. Live teaching sessions will be on **Saturdays between 13.00-15.00 and 16.00-18.00 pm GMT**. Please watch each lecture before the live sessions and follow the discussion forums on the VLE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
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</table>
| **Introduction** | Wednesday 23 October 2024, 19.00-20.00 | Hello and welcome…  
A chance to meet your classmates and tutor and to become familiar with the online classroom environment. |
| **Block One**  | Saturday 26 October 2024 | **Structure and Tragedy**  
Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*  
Shakespeare, *Hamlet*  
An introduction to two mighty works begins our thinking about structure and interpretation. |
| **Block Two**  | Saturday 9 November 2024  | **Unlocking Poetry**  
Poems will be supplied from various genres, and the session will focus on examining different methods and techniques poets deploy and the effects they create. |
| **Open Session** | Wednesday 13 November 2024, 19.00-20.00 | An open session for informal discussion, chat and questions about coursework |
| **Block Three** | Saturday 23 November 2024  | **Monstrous Narrators: narrative voice and unreliable narrators**  
Mary Shelley *Frankenstein* (1818)  
| **Block Four**  | Saturday 7 December 2024  | **Modern Mysteries: readers and writers**  
Henry James, ‘The Aspern Papers’ (1888)  
| **Open Session** | Wednesday 11 December 2024, 19.00-20.00 | An open session for informal discussion, chat and questions about coursework |
Learning outcomes

As a result of the unit, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to show they can:

• demonstrate in written form an understanding of the texts they have read and the wider contextual and critical connections between them;
• discuss the texts and ideas they have encountered on the course with confidence and be able to forge links between texts of different periods and genres;
• show an understanding of the main techniques of close reading and critical evaluation.

Student assessment and Essay titles

Students will be expected to read all the set texts in full. Some of the novels are quite long, so do allow yourself enough time to get through them.

Assessment is by two pieces of written work:

A piece of close-analysis of between 700-1000 words on a short extract or poem. (Weighting of 25% of unit grade)

An essay on one of the questions below of 2500-3000 words. (Weighting of 75% of unit grade)

Essay titles

If students wish to create their own titles this must be agreed in writing with the tutor first to ensure it meets the learning outcome of the unit.

1. John Scaggs claims that Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex ‘has all of the central characteristics and formal elements of the detective story.’ Discuss how the narrative arcs of tragedy and detection come together in this play.

2. “This is I, / Hamlet the Dane.” Discuss the play of self-knowledge, pretence and deception in Hamlet.

3. Angela Carter notes that Gothic writing “retains a singular moral function: that of provoking unease.” How do Shelley and Carter provoke unease in their writing, and to what end?

4. Compare ways in which Shelley and Carter use the epistolary form, in particular the use of letters and interviews in Frankenstein and Nights at the Circus, to narrative effect.

5. Robert Frost claims the poet ‘must learn to get cadences by skilfully breaking the sounds of sense with all their irregularity of accent across the regular beat of the meter.’ Discuss how two poets of your choice explore the ‘sound of sense’ in their poetry.

6. T. S. Eliot declares, ‘No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists.’ Discuss how two poets you have studied present a dialogue between the past and the present in their works.

7. Discuss the representation of literary biography in ‘The Aspern Papers’ and / or The Stranger’s Child.

8. What argument is The Stranger’s Child making about the relationship between authors and readers?
**Closing date for the submission of assignments:**

Close Analysis: **Wednesday 20 November 2024** by 12.00 noon GMT*

Essay: **Wednesday 8 January 2025** by 12.00 noon GMT*

*Greenwich Mean Time

**Reading and resource list**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carter, Angela</td>
<td><em>Nights at the Circus</em></td>
<td>Vintage, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James, Henry</td>
<td>’The Aspern Papers’ (1988)</td>
<td><strong>Available free online via University Library</strong></td>
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<td>For a paper copy suggested edition is:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oxford World’s Classics OR Penguin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hollinghurst, Alan</td>
<td><em>The Stranger’s Child</em></td>
<td>Picador, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare, William</td>
<td><em>Hamlet (1599)</em></td>
<td><strong>Available free online via University Library</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For a paper copy suggested edition is:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suggested edition: Arden, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelley, Mary</td>
<td><em>Frankenstein (1818 Text)</em></td>
<td><strong>Available free online via University Library</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For a paper copy suggested edition is:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suggested edition: Oxford World’s Classic, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophocles; ed. by Edith Hall</td>
<td><em>Oedipus Rex</em></td>
<td><strong>Available free online via University Library</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>For a paper copy suggested edition is:</td>
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**Suggested secondary reading:** the following texts are good introductions to literary studies and are all available to read online via the University Library.
Mario Klarer, *An Introduction to Literary Studies* (Routledge, 2013)


Also recommended but not available via the University Library: Robert Eaglestone, *Doing English* 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2008)
Syllabus for Unit Two

Lent term 2025

Samuel Beckett and Modern Theatre

Start date: 11 January 2025
End date: 26 February 2025
Tutor(s): Dr Andy Wimbush
No of meetings: 6 live teaching/open sessions plus pre-recorded lectures

Aims

- To introduce students to Beckett’s most important plays from the breadth of his writing career.
- To help students situate Beckett alongside other important playwrights and explore the critical categories that have been applied to these writers.
- To enrich students’ appreciation of the theatre and dramatic techniques.

Content

This unit will explore how Samuel Beckett, a novelist and poet, found his fame through a medium he adopted relatively late in his career: stage drama. We will begin by examining how Beckett moved into writing for the stage, and look at the playwrights who influenced him, including J.M. Synge, W.B. Yeats, Racine, Ibsen, and Shakespeare. The bulk of the course will focus on Beckett’s most important plays, including *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, and *Krapp’s Last Tape*. We will examine how Beckett’s stage work borrows visual motifs from the paintings of Caravaggio and Caspar David Friedrich, and reworks the comedy of the music hall and the silent films of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. The final part of the course will show how Beckett’s reimagining of the theatre influenced the work of Harold Pinter, Will Eno and Marina Carr. Throughout the course there will be an emphasis on performance and dramatic technique: we will read parts of the plays aloud, consider film adaptations of the works, and films of stage productions. Students will also be encouraged to explore themes and ideas through Beckett’s writing, including, but not limited to, questions of exile, aging, death, religious belief, and madness.

Presentation of the unit

The unit will be taught in a series of pre-recorded lectures and ‘live’ teaching sessions via Zoom. Live teaching will involve directed discussion and reading, with short talks from tutors and small-group work in breakout rooms. There will be comfort breaks during each session and opportunities for general Q&As.

Please also look at the VLE for each block’s dedicated discussions and forum activities which are designed to guide your reading and to introduce you to relevant contextual and critical resources.
Teaching Sessions/ Lectures list

For each block pre-recorded lectures will be available a week before the live teaching session. Live teaching sessions will be on Saturdays 13.00-15.00 and 16.00-18.00 pm GMT.

Please watch each lecture before the live sessions and follow the discussion forums on the VLE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Block One      | Saturday 11 January 2025 | **Beginnings**
An introduction to Beckett’s early life and literary career, his transition from poet and novelist to dramatist, and an exploration of his first dramatic work *Waiting for Godot*. |
| Block Two      | Saturday 25 January 2025 | **Longer plays**
A study of *Endgame*, *Krapp’s Last Tape*, and *Happy Days*. |
| Open Session   | Wednesday 29 January 2025
19.00-20.00        | **An open session for informal discussion, chat and questions about coursework** |
| Block Three    | Saturday 08 February 2025 | **The Dramaticules**
An exploration of Beckett’s shorter works, including *Not I*, *Play*, and *Footfalls*. |
| Block Four     | Saturday 22 February 2025 | **Legacy**
A look at three plays by playwrights who were influenced by Beckett: *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter; *Title and Deed* by Will Eno; and *Woman and Scarecrow* by Marina Carr. |
| Open Session   | Wednesday 26 February 2025
19.00-20.00        | **An open session for informal discussion, chat and questions about coursework** |

Learning outcomes

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

- an understanding of dramatic techniques and an appreciation of how a play text might be read with an eye to performance;
- a sense of the thematic concerns motivating Beckett’s work;
- an appreciation of how a writer draws on the work of other artists to create new work.
Student assessment and Essay titles

Students will be expected to read the texts assigned for every session of the course, ensuring that they are familiar with the plays mentioned in the lecture outline and prepared to discuss them in close detail with other members of the group.

Assessment

Assessment is by two pieces of written work:

**Literature review:** Identify, summarise and briefly evaluate three academic articles related to Beckett’s work / modern theatre (750-1000 words) (Weighting of 25% of unit grade)

**Essay:** An essay on one of the questions below (2500-3000 words). (Weighting of 75% of unit grade)

**Essay titles**

1. ‘I can't live either without you or with you’ – Ovid (a line quoted by Beckett when describing Hamm and Clov). In light of this quotation, explore the presentation of relationships and/or interdependence in any of Beckett’s dramatic works.

2. ‘Let’s get as many laughs as we can out of this horrible mess!’ – Beckett, directing *Endgame* in 1964. Why might ‘mess’ necessitate laughter?

3. ‘The God of tragedy is a God who is always present and always absent.’ – Lucien Goldmann. Does this ring true of Beckett’s writing for the stage?

4. ‘Godot is my neighbour in the cell next to mine. Let us do something to help him then, change the shoes that are hurting him.’ – Karl-Franz Lembke, writing to Beckett. Discuss the role of compassion and/or suffering in any of Beckett’s dramatic works.

5. ‘Beckett showed that he was aware as any painter or sculptor of the many different visual elements involved in the staging […] of his plays’ – James Knowlson. Discuss.

6. ‘Not a stereotype, she is the result of stereotypic views of women.’ – Linda Ben-Zvi on Winnie in *Happy Days*. Discuss the depiction of women in the plays of Beckett, Pinter and/or Carr.

7. One must create a private world for oneself, in order to satisfy one’s need for order. That for me is the value of theatre. One can set up a small world with its own rules.’ - Samuel Beckett. Discuss in relation to any of the dramatists we have studied.

8. ‘The mere fact of audience and actors sharing that specific moment in time, the intensity of the life that passes between the stage and the auditorium, means there’s nothing quite like it.’ – Harold Pinter. Discuss the role of the audience in at least two of the plays we have studied.

9. ‘*Waiting for Godot* forced me to re-examine the rules which have hitherto governed drama; and, having done so, to pronounce them not elastic enough’ – Kenneth Tynan. How does *Waiting for Godot*, or any other play we have studied, break the rules of drama?

10. ‘All that is ordinary, commonplace, belonging to everyday life, and recognized by all suddenly becomes meaningless, dubious and hostile. Our own world becomes an alien world. Something frightening is revealed in that which was habitual and secure.’ – Mikhail Bakhtin. How does the habitual and secure become frightening in the work of the dramatists we have studied?
11. ‘[Eno] is also quick to acknowledge Beckett’s influence, less for the writer’s formal inventiveness than for his “simple human stuff”’ – The Economist. How might ‘simple human stuff’ be understood in Beckett’s plays, and those of the writers he influenced?

If students wish to create their own titles, this must be agreed in writing with the tutor first to ensure it meets the learning outcome of the unit.

Closing date for the submission of assignments:

Literature Review: Wednesday 12 February 2025 by 12.00 noon GMT*

Essay: Wednesday 26 March 2025 by 12.00 noon GMT*

*Greenwich Mean Time

Reading and resource list

Reading and resource list

Primary texts
Please either acquire a copy of the following primary texts or find them online, and make sure that you have read the plays mentioned in the lecture list before each class:

- Samuel Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* (Faber) (available to read online via the University Library)
- Pinter, Harold, *The Birthday Party*
- Eno, Will, *Title and Deed*
- Carr, Marina, *Woman and Scarecrow*

*The Birthday Party, Woman and Scarecrow* and many of Beckett’s plays are available to read in full on Drama Online which you can access using the institutional login and your Raven password: https://www-dramaonlinelibrary-com

Introductory texts
If you are unfamiliar with studying dramatic texts, these introductory works might be helpful for learning the basic terminology and history and are available to read in full online via the University Library:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balme, Christopher</td>
<td><em>The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies</em> (especially chapters 1, 2, 3 and 7)</td>
<td>Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A useful glossary of critical terms relevant to studying dramatic texts can be found here: http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nadrama/content/review/glossary/welcome.aspx
Secondary material
You might also find the following secondary texts helpful, especially when writing your essays, but there is no need to buy them. Books in bold can be read in full online via the University Library and extracts will be circulated during the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cavell, Stanley</td>
<td>‘Ending the Waiting Game: A reading of Beckett’s <em>Endgame</em>’ in <em>Must We Mean What We Say?: A Book of Essays</em> (pp.115-162)</td>
<td>Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kott, Jan</td>
<td>‘King Lear or Endgame’ in <em>Shakespeare Our Contemporary</em> (pp. 100-133)</td>
<td>New York: Methuan, 1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockhurst, Mary (ed)</td>
<td><em>A Companion to Modern British and Irish Drama, 1880-2005</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
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Syllabus for Unit Three

Easter term 2025

The Nineteenth Century Novel

Start date 29 March 2025  
End date 14 May 2025

Tutor(s) Dr Jenny Bavidge  
No of meetings 6 live teaching/open sessions plus pre-recorded lectures

Aims

- Enhance students’ understanding and analysis of major literary works of the nineteenth century.
- Provide a grounding in the literary, critical and historical contexts of the nineteenth century novel.
- Develop students’ close-reading of narrative form and style.

Content

The British nineteenth century novel charted enormous changes in culture and society from one end of the century to the other and offered the nation a means of understanding itself. It introduced characters who still make sense to twenty-first century readers, knitting together moral and philosophical discussion, gripping plotlines and expansive canvases depicting complex social worlds. This unit will continue to employ the close-reading skills and understanding of contextual study you have developed in the previous term as we analyse some of the great works of nineteenth century fiction, whilst introducing you to some lesser known works. We will investigate the development and varieties of nineteenth century realism and discuss the wide political and national themes of imperial identity and the effects of industrialisation, as well the more personal politics of the family, sexuality and the nature of Victorian subjectivity.

Presentation of the unit

The unit will be taught in a series of pre-recorded lectures and ‘live’ teaching sessions via Zoom. Live teaching will involve directed discussion and reading, with short talks from tutors and small-group work in breakout rooms. There will be comfort breaks during each session and opportunities for general Q&As.

Please also look at the VLE for each block’s dedicated discussions and forum activities which are designed to guide your reading and to introduce you to relevant contextual and critical resources.

Teaching Sessions/ Lectures list

For each block pre-recorded lectures will be available two weeks before the live teaching session. Live teaching sessions will be on Saturdays 13.00-15.00 and 16.00-18.00 pm BST*.

*British Summer Time
Please watch each lecture before the live sessions and follow the discussion forums on the VLE.

Provisional lecture list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Block One</td>
<td>Saturday 29 March 2025</td>
<td>The rise of the novel</td>
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<td>In this first session we will discuss the status and nature of the</td>
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<td>nineteenth century novel. We will begin with Jane Austen’s</td>
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<td><em>Northanger Abbey</em> (1817) and move onto Charlotte Brontë’s</td>
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<td><em>Jane Eyre</em></td>
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<td>Block Two</td>
<td>Saturday 12 April 2025</td>
<td>The ‘Condition of England’ Novel</td>
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<td>The nineteenth century novel often sought to engage with political and</td>
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<td>social realities of the times. We will examine two works in the genre</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of novels referred to as ‘industrial novels’ or ‘condition of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>England’ fiction’: Dickens’ <em>Hard Times</em> (1854) and Elizabeth Gaskell’s</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mary Barton</em> (1848).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Session</td>
<td>Wednesday 16 April 2025</td>
<td>An open session for informal discussion, chat and questions about</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.00-20.00</td>
<td>coursework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Block Three</td>
<td>Saturday 26 April 2025</td>
<td>Realism and romance</td>
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<td>We devote this week to George Eliot and her great realist novel</td>
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<td><em>Middlemarch</em> (1872) in the light of contemporary arguments for the</td>
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<td>importance of realism in literature.</td>
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<td>Block Four</td>
<td>Saturday 10 May 2025</td>
<td>Inner Lives: science and observation</td>
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<td>We turn to Thomas Hardy’s <em>Jude the Obscure</em> (1895), a work which</td>
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<td>touches on themes of morality and social change, the struggle of</td>
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<td>women for self-determination, and philosophical questions of</td>
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<td>selfhood. We will also read Bram Stoker’s <em>Dracula</em> (1899), which</td>
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<td>explores, in lurid form, the anxieties and concerns prevalent at the</td>
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<td>end of the century.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Session</td>
<td>Wednesday 14 May 2025</td>
<td>An open session for informal discussion, chat and questions about</td>
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<td>19.00-20.00</td>
<td>coursework</td>
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Learning Outcomes

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

- show good knowledge of the texts, authors and period studied;
- are familiar with contemporary reviews and subsequent critical debates about the texts;
- understand some of the aspects of the development of literary realism with reference to critical writing as well as the novels studied;
- have developed their skills of close reading and critical interpretation.
Assessment

Assessment for this Unit is by two assignments:

Assignment One: Choose a historical source / material object / 19th century artwork from the list supplied on the VLE, or choose your own source/object (please check with Dr Bavidge first if you are choosing your own). Think about how it supplies a context for the study of the literature of the period and either record a 5-10 minute oral presentation of your analysis OR write no more than 1000 words describing and analysing your source and its connection to one or more of the course texts. (Weighting of 25% of unit grade)

Assignment Two: An essay of 3000 words: Example essay questions are supplied below but students are encouraged to create their own research topic and essay question if they wish to. (Weighting of 75% of unit grade)

Essays should focus on one or two of the course texts, although you may wish to bring in other novels or other literary or contextual material where relevant (e.g. poetry, non-fiction essays etc). The most important task of the essay is to produce your own argument and reading of the primary texts and then to include some reference to critical works with which to compare and contrast your own arguments.

Essay Questions:

1. Discuss the uses made of the gothic mode in any one or more of the course texts.

2. ‘Art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot.’ (George Eliot) What narrative strategies does the nineteenth century novel employ both to ‘amplify’ and ‘extend contact’ with life?

3. Discuss the depiction of labour in any one or more of the course texts.

4. ‘We talk, I believe, all day long: to talk to each other is but a more animated and an audible thinking.’ (Jane Eyre) Analyse the use of silence and/or the theme of repression in one or more of the course texts.

5. ‘Realism involved the scrupulous attention to detail of actual life, it resisted idealism, and appeared to have faith in the human capacity to know the material world as daily experienced.’ (Frances O’Gorman). Explore this definition of realism with reference to one or more of the critical discussions of realism we have covered (eg. George Eliot’s ‘The Natural History of the German Life’ or Hardy’s ‘The Science of Fiction’).

6. ‘Were we required to characterise this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical, or Moral Age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age.’ (Thomas Carlyle ‘The Mechanical Age’). Discuss the depiction of industrialisation in any one or more of the course texts.

7. ‘The flowers in the bride’s hand are sadly like the garland which decked the heifers for sacrifice in old times’ (Jude the Obscure, Part Fifth, Ch. 4). Discuss the representation of marriage and relationships between men and women in any of the course texts, in the light of Sue Bridehead’s argument.

8. ‘Middlemarch is the first novel in which science is treated as an explicit theme.’ (Sally Shuttleworth). What kinds of scientific knowledge are investigated in any one or more of the course texts?

9. ‘Teach me to die…’ (Jude’s childhood prayer, Chapter One). What lessons does Jude the Obscure teach its readers?

10. Discuss Dracula’s dramatization of fin-de-siècle anxieties and fears.
If students wish to create their own titles, this must be agreed in writing with the tutor first to ensure it meets the learning outcome of the unit.

Closing date for the submission of assignments: Friday 13 June 2025 by 12.00 (noon) BST*

*British Summer Time

Reading and resource list

The novels should be read in full before each class. We do not insist on particular editions and all the novels are available to read online via the University Library. If you want to work from a ‘paper’ book, then a good scholarly edition will provide you with notes and other helpful material. Oxford World's Classics or Norton editions are recommended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher and date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardy, Thomas (ed. Patricia Ingham)</td>
<td>Jude the Obscure</td>
<td>Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 2008 (1895)</td>
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Secondary criticism: overviews of the period

The following works are suggested starting points for secondary reading and all are available to read in full online via the University Library.

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<td>Author(s)</td>
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Preparing for the course
The most important thing to do in preparation for the course is to read the primary texts and get to know them well. Have a look ahead in the Units and see where the reading needs to be done by. You will get the most out of the lectures and live seminar discussion if you have read the texts in advance.

Progression routes
After completing this Certificate you can progress to the Certificate in English Literature: Literature Past and Present or if you would like to step up to the next level of study you could apply for the Diploma in English Literature.
# Full Timetable

## Michaelmas 2024 – Unit 1  
**Reading and interpretation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction Session</td>
<td>Wednesday 23 October 2024</td>
<td>19.00-20.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Block One</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 26 October 2024</td>
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<td>Block Two</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 9 November 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Session</td>
<td>Wednesday 13 November 2024 19.00-20.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Block Three</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 23 November 2024</td>
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<td>Block Four</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 07 December 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Session</td>
<td>Wednesday 11 December 2024 19.00-20.00</td>
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## Lent 2025 – Unit 2  
**Samuel Beckett and Modern Theatre**

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<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>Block One</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 11 January 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Block Two</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 25 January 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Session</td>
<td>Wednesday 29 January 2025 19.00-20.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Block Three</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 08 February 2025</td>
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<td>Block Four</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 22 February 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Session</td>
<td>Wednesday 26 February 2025 19.00-20.00</td>
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## Easter 2025 – Unit 3  
**Nineteenth Century Novel**

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<tr>
<td>Block One</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 29 March 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Block Two</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 12 April 2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Session</td>
<td>Wednesday 16 April 2025 19.00-20.00</td>
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<td>Block Three</td>
<td>Live session Saturday 26 April 2025</td>
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<td>Block Four</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Wednesday 14 May 2025 19.00-20.00</td>
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*Whilst every effort is made to avoid changes to this course, changes to course-content and structure and timings may be made. Students will be consulted on any changes.*