

BA ENGLISH LITERATURE

Your degree in a nutshell

Over the course of your degree you will benefit from:

- Small group teaching. There will be no more than fifteen people in your seminar groups.
- One-to-one essay tutorials. Tutors will be available to discuss your written work with you individually.
- Timely feedback on your work. Written assignments will be returned to you with feedback within fifteen days.

PART ONE

We have three 'core' modules (EN1GC; EN1PE; EN1RC) and most students take all three. We think that these modules allow you to explore the themes, topics and approaches that will inform your three-year study of English Literature.

Genre, Form and Context (EN1GC), offers an in-depth look at two formative pairings of historical moment and literary genre: the Renaissance stage and the Victorian novel. In the first term, students will study four Renaissance plays. We will focus on key aspects of the Renaissance stage, from playing spaces to the use of stage props. In the second term students will study four major Victorian novels, engaging with contextual issues of urbanisation, gender, sexuality and identity. Plays studied may include William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* and Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. Novels studied may include: Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*.

Assessment methods: Essays and Exam.

Poetry in English (EN1PE) helps students develop the skills of close reading that are foundational to the study of English while giving an overview of the history of poetry in English. This module covers major movements and ideas from the early Renaissance up to the present, and a range of genres including love poetry, political poetry, pastoral, satire, and the dramatic monologue. Poetry in English considers the English-speaking world more widely, including Ireland, the Caribbean and North America, and includes a diversity of voices from Thomas Wyatt and Ben Jonson, to William Butler Yeats, Philip Larkin, Derek Walcott and Thom Gunn.

Assessment methods: Essay and Exam

Research and Criticism (EN1RC), provides students with key skills in research and critical reflection that are foundational to the study of literature, and encourages them to reflect upon their value to career development. We will focus on three key concepts in the study of literature and the relationship(s) between them: 'Author', 'Text', and 'Reader'. Using practical exercises and readings in Critical Theory, students will learn how to conduct academic research and how to incorporate it in their essays. Over the course of both terms, students will receive guidance in career management, and in evaluating ways in which their skills might be used to develop career plans.

Assessment methods: Essay and Portfolio of Written Assignments

Optional modules

We have three optional modules (EN1CW; EN1TCL; EN1PW). How many you take depends on your programme of study. Single honours English Literature students may take up to 5 English Literature modules in all; most joint honours students will take three, or possibly four, English Literature modules: it will depend partly on how many modules you need to take for your other subject. You will receive further information on your module choices at 'Confirmation' (after the exam results in August) and during Welcome Week.

Introduction to Creative Writing (EN1CW) helps students to develop their skills in creative writing across a range of genres.

A series of weekly lectures introduces a range of issues relevant to particular creative forms. Seminar content is shaped around the assessment tasks that students will undertake. We experiment with formal and informal poetry, the short story, and dramatic dialogue. Students write their own examples of these forms, and these are worked on in subsequent classes. At the end of the module, students submit a portfolio consisting of four pieces of creative writing and an accompanying essay on a topic suggested in the lecture course.

Assessment methods: Essay and Portfolio of Creative Writing Exercises

Twentieth-Century American Literature (EN1TCL) presents students with a challenging range of work and spans a number of key modes and canons, from the retrospective pastoralism of Laura Ingalls Wilder to the alternative visions of the 'beats,' Ginsberg and Kerouac. The content is given added cohesion for being organised into two parts: the autumn-term lectures emphasise formalist considerations under the heading of 'The Experimental Nation,' while the spring term lectures open out more fully to social questions, under the heading, 'Conformism and Counter-Culture.'

Summative assessment methods: Essay and Exam

Persuasive Writing (EN1PW) develops students' ability to write in a range of non-fictional genres, such as letters, reports, reviews, newspaper and journal articles, political speeches and online material, all of which have in common their practical purpose. We will concentrate on the composition of short pieces of writing in these forms while introducing students to themes associated with the study of formal rhetoric. We will engage with the long-running debate about the role of language in persuasion, for good or ill.

Assessment Methods: Portfolio of Writing Exercises

PART TWO

By the end of Part 1, you will have extended your knowledge of the different periods and genres that you will examine in more detail at Part 2.

In the second year, students choose modules (six for single-honours students; three for joint-honours students) from a range of options.

Most Part 2 modules are organised by historical period (the Renaissance, or Modernism) or by literary genre (poetry, or drama), or according to a unifying theme or subject (American Literature, or writing and gender).

Most of these modules are taught by lectures and seminars and are assessed by essay and exam.

Our Creative Writing modules ('Writing and Revising' and 'Writing, Genre and the Market') and our innovative 'Communications at Work' module are taught in workshop-based classes and are assessed by course-work.

We revise our modules regularly, in order to keep up with new debates and to make best use of our staff expertise.

The following module options were available in 2014: a slightly different choice may be on offer when you reach Part 2:

Critical Issues

Introduction to Old English

Lyric Voices

Renaissance Texts and Cultures

Chaucer and Medieval Narrative

Early Modern Theatre Practice

Restoration to Revolution

Victorian Literature

Contemporary Literature

Writing America

The Romantic Period

Modernism in Poetry and Fiction

Writing, Gender and Identity

Writing and Revising

Shakespeare

Communications at Work

Writing, Genre and the Market

PART THREE

Dissertation

You can further tailor your degree to meet your personal interests through your dissertation. This is an individually supervised research project in your third year enabling you to produce a work of significance and originality. It is a 'double-weighted module' and is taught by workshop and through one-to-one supervisions.

Research-led modules

In Part 3, students choose (four modules for single-honours students; two for joint-honours students) from up to 40 research-led modules.

Part 3 modules are taught in small seminar groups. We use a variety of different assessment methods: coursework essays, projects, learning journals and oral presentations, depending on the learning outcomes for each module.

As with Part 2, we revise our Part 3 modules regularly. The following module options were available in 2014:

American Poetry

Children's Literature

Contemporary
American Fiction

Contemporary Drama

Decadence and
Degeneration: The
Literature of the Fin de
Siècle

Editing the Renaissance

Family Romances:
Genealogy, Identity and
Imposture in the
Nineteenth-Century
Novel

Fiction and Ethnicity in
Post-War Britain and
America

Nigerian Prose
Literature

Holocaust Testimony:
Memory, Trauma and
Representation

James Joyce

John Donne and His
Contemporaries

Margaret Atwood

Modern American
Drama

Modern Scottish Fiction

19-century American
Fiction

John Milton: Poet of the
English Republic

Shakespeare on Film

'Eyes on the Prize':
Literature of the US Civil
Rights Movement

Wordsworth, Coleridge
and Their Circle

The Writer's Workshop:
Studying Manuscripts

Alfred Hitchcock

Science and Culture

Black British Fiction

Classical and
Renaissance Tragedy

Colonial Explorations

Dickens

The Eighteenth-
Century Novel: Sex and
Sensibility

Eighteenth-Century
Text, Culture and
Education

From Troy to Camelot:
Medieval Romance

Holocaust Fiction

Irish Poetry after Yeats

Literature and the
Railway

Lord Byron and His
Contemporaries

Modern Epic

Modernism and Politics

Packaging Literature

Psychoanalysis and Text

Renaissance Travel
Drama

Renaissance Women
Writing

Samuel Beckett

Shakespeare and
Gender

Victorian and Edwardian
Children's Fantasy

Victorian Literature and
the History of Medicine

Virginia Woolf and
Bloomsbury

Writing Global Justice

Writing the North
American Wilderness

Writing Women:
Nineteenth-Century
Poetry

FIND OUT MORE

For more information about studying English Literature at the University of Reading, visit our website: **www.reading.ac.uk/english-literature**, and follow the links to the 'Undergraduate' pages.

If you have any questions about our courses, or about applying to study with us, you can email us at: **english-literature@reading.ac.uk**