

## English Literature Tutorials Information

Below is a description of some of the more bespoke courses that we have offered to visiting students in recent years. Please note that these are examples and it may be necessary to adjust the course contents depending on the availability of suitable tutors and/or the specific interests of students. In addition to this, we can offer a wide variety of courses from the Oxford undergraduate English Literature degree course papers, as described in the [course descriptions appendix](#).

Tutorial	Description
20th-century American Poetry	This series of tutorials on 20th-century American poetry focuses on a different theme, genre or form: the dramatic monologue, the elegy, poetry and conflict, and ekphrasis. Authors read and discussed could include T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden, Gwendolyn Brooks, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Lucille Clifton, Elizabeth Bishop, Thom Gunn, Anthony Hecht, John Ashbery, James Merrill, A. R. Ammons and A. E. Stallings.
Early Modern Drama	Early modern drama: students will study revenge tragedy, histories, Stuart tragedies, and crime drama. Students usually submit a 2500-word essay based on at least two plays.
Early Modern Women's Writing	This course provides an overview of women's writing between 1550-1700. It covers early modern reading and writing practices and how these inform the work of Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney, and Aemilia Lanyer. After that, students could be asked to look at the political verse of Hester Pulter, Katherine Philips, and Lucy Hutchinson, examining poetic responses to the Civil War and Restoration. Further to this, students will explore world-making in travel writing and speculative fiction, particularly the work of Margaret Tyler, Lucy Hutchinson, Margaret Cavendish, and Aphra Behn. The course concludes by tracing female-authored drama from the early Jacobean closet to the Restoration professional stage, considering the dramas of Elizabeth Cary, Margaret Cavendish, and Aphra Behn. Students usually submit a 1000-word close-reading in the first week and a 2000-word essay in each of the subsequent weeks, which are used to structure discussion.
Gothic Feminism	This course explores the representation of gender, race, and sexuality in British gothic novels from the late-18th century to the present. Students will read and discuss novels ranging from Mary Wollstonecraft's 'Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman' to Evie Wyld's 'The Bass Rock.'

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Modernist Literature	This course offers a varied yet in-depth overview of modernist literature, structured around 4 main themes: 'The Modernist City', 'Portraits of the Artists', 'Queer Modernism - Sapphic Love', and 'Wars, The Absurd, The Unnamable'. The authors studied include major canonical modernists from across the Atlantic: Woolf, Joyce, Beckett, Kafka and Djuna Barnes.
Modernist Poetry	Each tutorial Modernist Poetry (broadly conceived) focuses on a different genre or form: dramatic, lyric and narrative poetry; ekphrasis. Authors read and discussed include T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden, Gwendolyn Brooks, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Derek Mahon, Elizabeth Bishop, Thom Gunn, Anthony Hecht, Louis MacNeice, John Ashbery, James Merrill, Philip Larkin and Seamus Heaney.
Postmodernism, Posthumanism	This course explores the movement of postmodernism across a range of literary forms. First exploring the relationship between modernism and postmodernism, it continues to examine the representation of history, society, and identity, and to consider the movement's intersection with postcolonialism.
Queer Writing	This course covers a selection of queer texts written in English, such as: Virginia Woolf's Orlando as an early work of trans literature; gay shame and nationhood in James Baldwin's Giovanni's Room; gender identity in Eileen Myles' Chelsea Girls; representations of black queer life and HIV/AIDS in the work of poets Adrian Stanford and Essex Hemphill; temporality and futurity in Tony Kushner's Angels in America; polyphony in Jackie Kay's Trumpet; domesticity in Alison Bechdel's Fun Home, and recent prose and poetry by Ocean Vuong.
The 18th century novel	This course encourages students to study a broad range of novels across the long eighteenth century. The course will show how the novel emerged as a 'new' genre in response to the consumerist and commercial drives of the eighteenth-century literary marketplace, and as an expression of the bourgeois emphasis on individual freedoms and responsibilities. The course will focus on the ways in which the novel itself 'consumed' older literary genres such as epic, travel writing, spiritual autobiography, criminal biography and conduct manuals. Authors studied will include Daniel Defoe, Eliza Haywood, Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, Laurence

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	Sterne, Tobias Smollett, Charlotte Lennox and Jane Austen. Students are strongly encouraged to read some of these texts in advance of their arrival.
Victorian Literature	The Victorian period was one of immense cultural change, and in this course, students will look at how writers influenced and were influenced by pervading commentaries about urbanisation, the rise of evolutionary theories, class conflicts, imperial expansion, medical advancement, and more. Given these changes to social and cultural norms, tutorial discussions will focus on how Victorian authors amplified, confronted, and even, sometimes, subverted what we take as traditional conceptions of identity and relationships with figures such as the New Woman, the criminal, the prostitute, the working-class labourer, and the femme covert. Indeed, all the works under discussion offer innovative and engaging narratives about social concerns that become illuminated by the relationship between plot and character. Students are encouraged to think about how these works constructed and contested cultural, political, economic, and aesthetic concerns, especially around the categories of class, sexuality, gender, race, and species.
Virginia Woolf	For this course, students will consider the work of Virginia Woolf in the light of her times, her revolutionary style and her contribution to the novel and biographical form. Drawing on a range of her novels, manuscripts, diaries and letters, students will examine a variety of themes including: character; technique; gender; biography; illness; the visual arts; politics; afterlives. Texts studied will include Mrs Dalloway, To the Lighthouse; Between the Acts and Orlando. Students may also draw on extracts from Joyce, Auden, Mansfield, and Beckett. The course generally involves eight essays and tutorials, but the writing component will be flexible according to the interests of the student – two or three shorter essays can be substituted for a longer piece of coursework. The precise texts covered are also open to discussion and will be clarified in an initial email consultation.
Women's Poetry of the 17th and 18th centuries	For this course on women's poetry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, students produce essays on "The Rights and Wrongs of Women", political elegies, dressing room poetry, and the construction of race.

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### Appendix – Oxford undergraduate degree course descriptions

#### Part 1: Prelims (first year) Courses

##### **Paper 1: Introduction to English Language and Literature**

This paper is intended to introduce you to English language and literature as a discipline, and to a variety of approaches to reading texts. It will introduce you to formal study of the English language, with particular reference to its historical development, its use as a literary medium, and the role of cultural and social factors on its development and use. The paper will also acquaint you with a wide range of theoretical issues and reading skills, but in doing so seeks to encourage you to think for yourself and to exercise critical scrutiny.

The English Faculty Library's Guide to Prelims 1: <http://ox.libguides.com/english-prelims-paper-1> contains direct links to an invaluable range of online and bibliographic resources. Many of these are essential for work on the language section of the paper.

There is a course of 16 core lectures which run weekly through Michaelmas and Hilary terms. The lectures in Michaelmas Term will cover topics relating to literature, and those in Hilary Term will cover language.

##### **Paper 2: Early Medieval Literature, c. 650 - 1350**

This paper introduces literatures characterized by astonishing invention and innovation. In 650 Britain and Ireland comprised numerous competing kingdoms. Christianity, introduced to England in the late sixth century by missionaries from the Roman and Celtic Churches, was assuming a dominant religious and cultural influence. Languages and cultures mingled and clashed, including early English dialects, Irish, Welsh, Pictish, Old Norse, Byzantine, and varieties of Latin. This is the time of the earliest extant English poem ascribed to a named author, Cædmon, yet the seventh century also produced, in Bede, the finest scholar in Europe at the time; in Aldhelm one of the most talented of poets (he wrote in Latin); and at Canterbury the best school in northern Europe, run by an abbot born in North Africa and an archbishop from Tarsus (in what is now south-east Turkey).

By 1350 England was a powerful nation with imperial ambitions, embroiled in wars with Scotland and France, but also ravaged by the Black Death of 1348. King Edward III and his court chroniclers and poets drew upon an extensive cultural and literary heritage, in which history and fiction blended, consciously emulating the

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legendary King Arthur, holding tournaments and festivals in celebration of court, knighthood and chivalry. And around the middle of the whole period comes the Norman Conquest of 1066 and the subsequent colonization of England and, in time, Wales and parts of Ireland. The Norman castles and cathedrals still prominent in many towns are only one kind of material legacy from 650–1350, in which the development of literacy, manuscript production, the legal system, schools and universities including Oxford gave huge scope for artistic and literary creativity.

The Norman Conquest changed English language and literature profoundly, and helps mark a shift between what we call Old English (to c.1100) and Early Middle English (c.1100 to c.1300 or so). However, it was one of numerous moments of political and demographic change, starting with Germanic migration before this period begins, and including Viking and Danish raiders, settlers and rulers, religious and mercantile travellers, and a significant community of Jews, who became subject to persecution and were eventually expelled in the late thirteenth century. At the same time, successive attempts to capture and control contested holy sites such as Jerusalem fed the development of religious and racial, including racist, ideologies. Throughout this period, questions of identity and belonging are probed across a vast range of literary forms: lyric and epic; debate and dialogue; riddles; secular and saintly biographies; fable and vision; sermons and sagas; history and romance.

### **Paper 3: Literature in English 1830 – 1910**

This paper examines literature in English from roughly 1830 to 1910, though you are permitted to look at material earlier and later than these boundaries in order to make sense of any particular writer's development. The essay questions in the examination tend to be based on topics, rather than authors. This gives you the opportunity to write across a range of authors, focusing on some of the major preoccupations, both thematic and stylistic, of the period. Alternatively, you may choose to focus each of your examination answers on the work of only one or two authors. Issues that you might choose to cover could include (for example) the development of realism, responses to industrialism, women's writing, concepts of identity and selfhood, guilt and transgression, memory and uses of the past, verbal and metrical experimentation, attitudes towards nation, race and Empire, decadence, the roots of modernism, symbolism, science, religion, class, domesticity, writing for children and the treatment of childhood, romance, popular fiction, melodrama, the social problem play, drama and identity, theatre and performance issues, the relationship between literature and art. These are only some of the possible topics that might legitimately be studied for this paper; there is no set list of texts or topics you are expected to cover.

Among the authors you might consider studying are the following: Arnold, Braddon, the Brontës, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Carlyle, Carroll, Clough, Wilkie Collins, Conrad, Dickens, Emily Dickinson, Frederick Douglass, George Eliot, Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Gissing, Hardy, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hopkins, Harriet Jacobs, Henry James, Melville, Meredith, John Stuart Mill, Newman, Pater, Patmore, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Poe, Christina Rossetti, Ruskin, Olive Schreiner, Shaw, R. L. Stevenson, Swinburne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Tennyson, Thackeray, Thoreau, Twain, H. G. Wells, Wharton, Whitman, and Oscar Wilde. However, you may also choose to study groups of writers or particular genres, such as spasmodic poetry, Gothic, the dramatic monologue, elegy, and so on.

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Candidates are encouraged to read widely within the period. You may discuss any literature written in the English language: there are no exclusions based on the author's citizenship, country of origin, or residence.

### **Paper 4: Literature in English 1910 – present day**

This paper examines 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century literature. The essay questions in the examination tend to be based on topics, rather than authors. This gives you the opportunity to write across a range of authors, focusing on some of the major thematic and stylistic preoccupations of the period. Alternatively you may choose to focus each of your examination answers on the work of only one or two authors.

Issues that you might choose to cover would include (for example) modernism, post-modernism, ideas of literary language, postcolonialism, literary experimentalism, primitivism, national (and other) identities, popular culture, concepts of literary value, journalism, gender, intertextuality, literature and other art forms, technology, innovations in modern theatre, war literature, and representations of the city.

Among the authors you might consider studying are Achebe, Atwood, Auden, James Baldwin, Djuna Barnes, Beckett, Bishop, Bowen, Kamau Brathwaite, Caryl Churchill, Coetzee, Conrad, DeLillo, Duffy, T. S. Eliot, William Faulkner, Forster, Friel, Greene, Heaney, Hemingway, Hill, Langston Hughes, Ted Hughes, Joyce, Larkin, Lawrence, Lessing, Mamet, Mansfield, Miller, Toni Morrison, Muldoon, Nabokov, Naipaul, Ondaatje, Orwell, Osborne, Pinter, Plath, the poets of the two World Wars, Pound, Roth, Rushdie, Shaw, Soyinka, Stein, Stoppard, Dylan Thomas, Walcott, Waugh, Tennessee Williams, Woolf, and Yeats.

Candidates are encouraged to read widely within the period. You may discuss any literature written in the English language: there are no exclusions based on the author's citizenship, country of origin, or residence.

## **Part 2: Final Honour School (year 2 and 3) Courses**

### **Course I papers**

#### **Paper 1: Shakespeare**

The Shakespeare paper provides an opportunity to get to grips with an entire canon and its contexts. Although you can study Shakespeare chronologically or generically (tracing his development from the early plays and poems or through a genre), the exam portfolio (like your tutorials from which the portfolio develops) provides opportunities to mix and match. Thinking thematically, you can place early comedies with later histories (identity in *Comedy of Errors* and *Henry V* for example); thinking generically you can consider sonnets and poems alongside poetry within the plays for instance. This is also a paper in which you

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can make full use of your reading for Papers 3, 4 and 5 (as well as your knowledge from your Prelims papers) to research an area such as Shakespeare and performance, political receptions, colonial and postcolonial appropriations, cultural attitudes and uses, editorial history, the history of specific actors and actresses, adaptations (in forms from film to novels), or literary theory. Your teaching will cover a representative range of the canon, and you are also expected to have an in-depth knowledge of a number of plays. There is opportunity to investigate genres and periods ('farce'; 'Senecan tragedy'; 'late style') as well as to pursue a topic-based approach. Two of your three portfolio examination answers will require you to address more than one work by Shakespeare.

### Paper 2: Literature in English 1350–1550

At the beginning of this period, Europe was entering into a period of social change in the wake of the pandemic known as the Black Death. People in Britain and Ireland spoke and wrote in several languages (including dialects of English and Scots; Welsh; Cornish; Irish; French; Latin), and cultural exchange was facilitated by extensive global trade networks stretching well beyond the Mediterranean. In the fifteenth century, the advent of printing, and European encounters with the so-called New World of the Americas are powerful historical markers of change, along with repeated bloody conflict including the Wars of the Roses, and the ongoing Hundred Years' War. By 1550, religious reform, Tudor court politics and humanist scholarship helped change both literary forms and their engagement with larger literate audiences. The literature produced across these two hundred years can be profoundly European, often rooted in classical, Italian and French sources, existing in multilingual manuscripts, and explicitly engaging with international political, religious, and cultural concerns. Much of it also engages colonial and postcolonial concerns in its entanglement with the Crusades and their imaginative aftermath (particularly in romance), with European expansionism and encounters with different cultures (for instance in More's *Utopia*), and in its fantasies of travel (for instance *Mandeville's Travels*). Equally, much of it serves local and personal interests and was circulated amongst small groups of listeners and readers. As you study this paper, you will be encouraged to think about how literature in different varieties of English is embedded within other literatures, and to interrogate the periodization of 'late medieval' and 'renaissance' or early modern'.

This paper covers the work of Chaucer and other major fourteenth-century writers (such as Langland, the *Gawain*-poet and Gower), as well as that of less widely known names, and many anonymous texts. Women such as Margery Kempe, who travelled to Jerusalem and Rome and wrote an early 'autobiography,' and Julian of Norwich, an important mystic and theologian, are key literary figures in this period. The paper also covers fifteenth-century writers (such as Hoccleve, Malory and the Older Scots poets), and writers of the early Tudor period (such as Skelton, Wyatt, Surrey and More). Much of the time you might group your reading not by author, but by genre or manuscript collection. One of the most important genres across the period is drama: from the religious cycle plays, performed in the streets of cities, to morality plays acted in the round, to household drama (such as Medwall's plays) acted in great halls. However, the paper includes a great variety of written forms, from love lyrics to chronicles, dream visions to advice books, and from animal fables to Arthurian romances.

Areas for investigation include: authorship and authority; translation; vernacularity; manuscript culture; early print culture; medieval literary theory; the performance of gender; travel writing; autobiography; heresy and orthodoxy; chivalry; race and ethnicity; subjectivity; genre theory; literature and kingship;

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literature and the marketplace. As much recent scholarship has demonstrated, a wide range of theoretical and formalist approaches can be taken to the literature of this period.

### **Paper 3: Literature in English 1550–1660, excluding the works of Shakespeare**

This paper encompasses the reigns of Edward VI (1547-1553), Mary (1553-1558), Elizabeth I (1558-1603), James VI and I (1603-1625), Charles I (1625-1649) and the Interregnum (1649-1660). Paper 3 offers a period rich in formal experimentation, in the importation of classical and continental forms, in translation, in literary theory, in religious writing and in historical chronicle. You will find household names throughout Paper 3: the drama of Marlowe, Jonson, Middleton; the epic poetry and pastoral of Edmund Spenser; sonnets by Sidney and Drayton; the metaphysical and religious poetry of Donne, Vaughan, Herbert, Marvell; the Cavalier poetry of Lovelace, Herrick, Cowley, Suckling, Waller, Carew. The prose of the period also offers a rich field. Nonfictional prose was dominant in many forms: sermons, martyrologies, diaries, letters, autobiographies, scientific writing (Bacon), ecclesiastical prose (Richard Hooker), speeches (Queen Elizabeth), travel writing, medical works (Burton). In fiction romance novellas, many of which were used as sources of plays by writers such as Shakespeare, paved the way for what would later become the novel.

This period also provides a wide variety of less well-known but increasingly (or incipiently) canonical authors, including; Anne Lok (or Lock), Mary Sidney, Lady Mary Wroth, Elizabeth Carey and Jane Lumley. This period responds particularly well to thematic approaches. Topics which are prominent in current academic books (and recent exam papers) include: myth, classical revision and appropriation, Catholicism, Italy, nationhood, London, historiography, grief, the history of the emotions, subjectivity, self-fashioning, magic and the supernatural, death, travel and discovery, service, reputation, myth, law, place, regional or national identity, wantonness in poetry and/or behaviour.

Equally, the period's interest in experimentation and development means that approaches via form, genre, and style are very rewarding: epyllion, elegy, allegory, parody, epithalamion, blazon, epigram, the essay, rogue literature, the masque, romance, sacred texts, satire, pastoral, history, tragedy and comedy and their subsets (revenge tragedy, domestic tragedy, tragicomedy, citizen comedy, humours comedy). And the development of the English language in this period, to say nothing of rhetorical training at school and university, means that linguistic excess, plainness, neologism, commonplacing, 'inkhorn' and 'honeyed' terms, and all aspects of form (visual shape, stanzaic form, metre, rhyme etc) deserve close attention.

### **Paper 4: Literature in English 1660-1760**

This is an exciting period of literature which sees the flourishing of new genres (the novel, the periodical, mock-epic), the growth of print and readership, re-energising of older forms to speak to the moment (satire, epic, the emergence of literary criticism). You can in this paper chart the rise of the novel from Aphra Behn through to Laurence Sterne, and explore the subtle poetry of mind and sentiment of Thomson, Akenside, Gray, Collins. Teaching aims to provide a sense of the intellectual history of the period (the history of ideas and thinkers) and the impact on literary modes of expression of important political and social contexts:



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the Restoration of Charles II, the Wars of the Spanish Succession and the Seven Years War, the growth of party politics and contractual theories of government, the expansion of English empire and with it the beginnings of anti-imperial critique and abolitionist sentiment, and the entry of women into print in significant numbers along with the birth of feminism.

Topics or genres for study include: libertinism; the Restoration and eighteenth-century stage and the impact of the stage licensing act in 1737; the new philosophy and literature; party and partisan writing; the literature of science and the Royal Society; the representation of women; women as authors and women as readers; politics and genre; life writing; the familiar letter; ideas of nationhood; trade and empire and the city; the oriental tale; labouring class poetry, pastoral and Georgic; epic and mock-epic; satire and theories of satire; travel writing; early landscape writing; representation of racial difference; literature and the visual arts; early American writing; religious writing, prophecy and allegory; the Ancients and Moderns debate; Grub Street and print culture and the relationship between manuscript and print; the literary coterie and court culture; literature and the rise of finance (capital satires).

Paper 4 encompasses a very wide range of authors, both male and female: including Milton (the later poems such as *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*); Aphra Behn; Katherine Phillips; Anne Finch; Ann Bradshaw; John Bunyan; John Dryden; Andrew Marvell (who can also be studied as part of Paper 3); John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester; Margaret Cavendish; Jonathan Swift; Alexander Pope; John Gay; Bernard Mandeville; Mary Leapor; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; Samuel Johnson; James Thomson; Thomas Gray; William Collins; Daniel Defoe..

### Paper 5: Literature in English 1760–1830

In this paper you may study texts from the period 1760 to 1830 by author, theme, genre, or historical context. Teaching is designed to give you a sense of the major literary and cultural developments, as well as an opportunity to explore both well-known and less well-known materials in a very diverse period.

The period covers poets such as Anna Letitia Barbauld, William Blake, Robert Burns, George Gordon Lord Byron, John Clare, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Cowper, George Crabbe, Felicia Hemans, John Keats, James Macpherson, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Christopher Smart, Charlotte Smith, Phyllis Wheatley, William Wordsworth, Anne Yearsley; novelists such as Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Thomas Love Peacock, Anne Radcliffe, Mary Shelley, Walter Scott, Laurence Sterne; dramatists such as Joanna Baillie, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Oliver Goldsmith; and non-fiction prose writers such as James Boswell, Edmund Burke, Olaudah Equiano, William Godwin, William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft.

Some of the many topics and lines of enquiry you may wish to pursue in this paper include: genres and modes such as lyric, satire, ballads, pastoral, epic, fragments, the Gothic novel, the fiction of sensibility, closet drama, epistolary fiction, regional novels, life writing, historical fiction, travel writing, literary criticism; aesthetic ideas such as the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque; poetry and its relation to the 'sister arts'; the figure of the poet and the defence of poetry; literary language and style; literary influence and reception; the review culture; radical circles and literary coteries; working-class literature; dialect

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poetry; Orientalism; the Scottish Enlightenment; questions of personal identity, madness, gender, childhood, sexuality, addiction. Also of interest in this paper are issues hotly debated in the literature of the period: national identity, religion, the sense of the past; slavery and the abolition movement; the rights of women; the city; developments in science and philosophy; the French Revolution and the founding of the American republic; Napoleon and war; the union between Britain and Ireland.

### Course II papers

#### Introduction

Course II has a more focused timespan than Course I, but involves a wider range of approaches and methodologies, including the study of manuscripts and editing, the history of the English Language, and the comparative study of English with other European literatures, which may be read in translation.

Building on students' Prelims work in Old and Early Middle English literature, Course II develops detailed knowledge of literature from the Anglo-Saxon to the Early Modern period, and alongside this hones skills in linguistic analysis; in understanding how texts were circulated orally, in manuscript and in print; and in contextualizing literary texts through studying the broader culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

#### Paper 1: Literature in English, 650 – 1100

Anglo-Saxon England was a melting pot of Germanic, Celtic and Mediterranean cultural influences and home to the richest European vernacular literature of the early middle ages. This period saw the emergence of new and sophisticated literary styles and genres, both in verse and prose, influenced by Christian-Latin learning, as well as the preservation of the ancient oral traditions of the continent. Whether or not you have studied Old English for Prelims, Course II Paper 1 allows you to explore in detail the remarkable variety of Old English literature. As well as encountering major literary figures such as Cynewulf, King Alfred, Ælfric and Wulfstan, areas of study could include heroic and epic narratives such as *Beowulf*; lyric and elegiac poetry; riddles, charms and prayers; biblical stories and saints' lives; wisdom literature; travel narrative and romance; chronicles and histories; homilies and sermons; scientific, theological and philosophical writing; manuscripts and material culture You may place the Old English literature you read in a broad range of historical, cultural, linguistic, theoretical and critical contexts.

#### Paper 2: Medieval English and Related Literatures, 1066–1550

This paper encourages candidates to work across the entire later medieval period 1000-1550 (i.e. including relevant literature from the first half of the eleventh century), and to do comparative work with medieval literature in insular or European languages other than English, which are expected to have been studied in translation. It is a paper on a specified genre or theme, subject to periodic review. The specified genre is currently **Lyric**.

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The lyric mode is one of the earliest and most lasting forms of literature. Standing alongside, in dialogue with, and often embedded within, narrative genres, it is a distinctive form of representation, mediated through a voice with no stable identity. It is understood that definitions of 'lyric' in this period will be necessarily flexible, and that the genre may be taken to include a wide variety of short poems, including ballades, rondeaux, virelais, chansons, songs and carols. It may include individual short poems or sequences of such poems, and it may also include lyrics embedded in other genres, such as plays or sermons. The ubiquity of these kinds of writing throughout Europe in the medieval period, in both vernaculars and varieties of Latin, makes them particularly engaging for comparative or contrastive study. Candidates are encouraged to develop particular, focused interests that they may trace comparatively across different languages and through time. The rubric specifies that candidates must show knowledge both of earlier literature (1000-1350) and of literature in other languages. The paper requires only that such knowledge be shown at some point in the paper, but a candidate who so wishes may concentrate exclusively, or mostly, on such material. The other insular languages that may be studied in translation include the French of England, Latin, Old Norse, Welsh and Irish. Other European literatures studied in translation include continental French, Occitan, Spanish, German, Italian and the Arabic and Hebrew of Spain, as well as continental Latin writings of the period. You may wish to explore the material contexts in which such texts were disseminated, perhaps taking into account their relationships with other arts, such as music and manuscript illumination. Equally, you may wish to explore relevant critical and theoretical perspectives and topics, such as voice, or the particular social, gendered and institutional contexts that gave rise to these kinds of writing.

### **Paper 3: Literature in English, 1350–1550 (shared with Course I, Paper 2)**

At the beginning of this period, Europe was entering into a period of social change in the wake of the Black Death. The poetry of the British Isles was multilingual, and cultural exchange was facilitated by extensive global trade networks. In the fifteenth century, the advent of print, and European encounters with the so-called New World of the Americas are powerful historical markers of change. By 1550, the Henrician reformation and the development of elaborate court poetry set the scene for Shakespeare's literary world. The literature produced across these two hundred years is profoundly European, often rooted in Italian and French sources in particular, existing in multilingual manuscripts, and explicitly engaging with international political, religious, and cultural concerns. The literature of this period also engages with colonial and postcolonial concerns in its engagement with the crusades (particularly in romance), with European expansionism and encounters with different cultures (for instance in More's *Utopia*), and in its fantasies of travel (for instance in writings by Mandeville). As you study this paper, you will be encouraged to think about how literature in English is embedded within other literatures, and to interrogate the periodization of 'medieval' and 'renaissance' or early modern'.

This paper covers the work of Chaucer and other major fourteenth-century writers (such as Langland, the *Gawain*-poet and Gower), as well as that of less widely-known names. Female writers such as Margery Kempe, who travelled to Jerusalem and Rome and wrote an early 'autobiography,' and Julian of Norwich, an important mystic, are key literary figures in this period. The paper also covers fifteenth-century writers (such as Hoccleve, Malory and the Older Scots poets), and writers of the early Tudor period (such as Skelton, Wyatt, Surrey and More). One of the most important genres across the period is drama: from the religious cycle plays, performed in the streets of cities, to morality plays acted in the round, to household drama (such as Medwall's plays) acted in great halls.

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Areas for investigation include: authorship and authority; translation; vernacularity; manuscript culture; early print culture; medieval literary theory; the performance of gender; travel writing; autobiography; heresy and orthodoxy; chivalry; race and ethnicity; subjectivity; genre theory; literature and kingship; literature and the marketplace. As much recent scholarship has demonstrated, a wide range of theoretical and formalist approaches can be taken to the literature of this period.

### **Paper 4: The History of the English Language to c.1800**

This paper allows students to engage with language use and aspects of language change from the earliest stages of spoken and written English to the emergence of Late Modern English. It introduces a range of key topics (e.g. in relation to orthography, phonology, morphology, vocabulary, semantics, syntax) in the development of standard British English but also encourages students to examine regional and social varieties across the history of English, as well as the wider issues which underpin topics such as linguistic codification and control, the documentation of variation and change, or the consequences of language contact, whether in varieties of British English or in English abroad. It also allows students to build on some of the topics studied in Prelims Paper 1 (e.g. advertising, news discourse, letters) within appropriate historical and linguistic perspectives. Comparative work between periods/ types of writing/ text is encouraged. Students must make sure that they demonstrate knowledge of language from a range of periods in their submitted work.

### **Optional Papers (normally studied in year 3)**

#### **Paper 5: The Material Text OR Shakespeare**

##### **Paper 5(a): The Material Text**

This paper will allow you to study the physical and visual forms of Old English and Middle English texts in manuscripts and other media from the Middle Ages to the present. It combines the history of literature and language with the study of material artefacts and of their mediation in modern printed and digital media. What – if anything – does the physical and visual form of a text add to its content? How does it shape the text's reception? How are texts affected by their survival in manuscript, or their transfer to modern media? How do different media shape writing and reading?

Half of the course involves a detailed study of two manuscripts, their texts and those texts' modern transmission: the so-called 'Nowell Codex' (British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius A. xv), dating from around 1000 and containing *Beowulf* and images of marvels; and the so-called 'Vernon Manuscript' (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a. 1), one of the largest medieval English books, dating from the late 1300s, and containing poetry and prose, including lyrics. Both are available in high-quality facsimiles, which you will learn to read and analyse (the Nowell Codex online, the Vernon manuscript in print and on DVD-Rom). Study of these books leads to a commentary of 2,000-2,500 words on pages from your choice of one of the two, reproduced in facsimile with or without a modern edition for comparison.

## English Literature Tutorials Information

The other half of the course involves a study of medieval media in general – mostly manuscripts, but also inscriptions and early printed books – and the modern processes of editing them in print and digital form. Some classes will take place in the Bodleian Library with medieval manuscripts on hand. You will write an essay of 2,000-2,500 words on a topic of your choice related to the course of study, to allow you to focus on the two manuscripts for detailed study and/or on other material texts of interest to you, in Old English, Middle English and/or related languages. The materials will raise issues in topics such as, but not limited to, codicology (the physical form of manuscripts), palaeography (the history of writing practices), medieval graphic design, the history of reading, epigraphy (inscriptions on objects), modern editing of medieval texts, and digital versions of medieval texts.

### **Paper 5(b): Shakespeare (Course I, Paper 1)**

The Shakespeare paper provides an opportunity to get to grips with an entire canon and its contexts. Although you can study Shakespeare chronologically or generically (tracing his development from the early plays and poems or through a genre), the exam portfolio (like your tutorials from which the portfolio develops) provides opportunities to mix and match. Thinking thematically, you can place early comedies with later histories (identity in *Comedy of Errors* and *Henry V* for example); thinking generically you can consider sonnets and poems alongside poetry within the plays for instance. This is also a paper in which you can make full use of your reading for Papers 3, 4 and 5 (as well as your knowledge of Victorians and the twentieth/twenty-first centuries) to research an area such as Shakespeare and performance, political receptions, colonial and postcolonial appropriations, cultural attitudes and uses, editorial history, the history of specific actors and actresses, adaptations (in forms from film to novels), or literary theory. Your teaching will cover a representative range of the canon, and you are also expected to have an in-depth knowledge of a number of plays. There is opportunity to investigate genres and periods ('farce'; 'Senecan tragedy'; 'late style') as well as to pursue a topic-based approach.