

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.

| Tutorial | Description |
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| Creative Writing | This is a practical course looking at how to write stories, from flash fiction to novel-length works. Students will experiment with story length and subject matter, explore how character, plot and setting are integrated, and develop their writing craft using exercises and tasks on subjects such as psychic distance and point of view. The class focuses on creative writing itself, with exercises and stories given detailed written feedback each week. Some previous students have arrived with a work-in-progress, others are trying out writing for the first time: as this is a one-to-one tutorial focussing on the student's personal interests, offering a unique experience to develop writing skills and encouraging the student's growth as a writer. By the end of term students will have built a portfolio of stories. The course concludes with an overview of publishing and submission options and a discussion of next steps for each student. |
| 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 Sterne, Tobias Smollett, Charlotte Lennox and Jane Austen. Students are strongly encouraged to read some of these texts in advance of their arrival. |

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| Victorian Literature | <p>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 couverte. 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.</p> |
| Virginia Woolf | <p>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.</p> |
| Women's Poetry of the 17th and 18th centuries | <p>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.</p> |