

# Department of English

## About the department

The Department of English at Royal Holloway is one of the leading schools of English in the world, in the top 150 internationally according to the QS University Rankings 2017/18.

Our modules cover the span of English literature. Your journey could take you from Old English riddles, Middle English romances, and the rich poetry and theatre of the Renaissance to the wit and politics of the eighteenth century; from Romantic verse to the radical novels of the Victorians; from the complexities of modernism to world literatures, American literature, and the latest contemporary writing.

## Entry requirements

The modules listed below are open to all Study Abroad, International and Erasmus students, subject to any required previous knowledge or qualifications, as stated in the module outlines below.

Each module is either 15 or 30 UK credits (0.5 or 1 unit) and starts in either the Autumn Term (September) or the Spring Term (January).

*The information contained in the module outlines on the following pages is correct at the time of publication but may be subject to change as part of our policy of continuous improvement and development.*



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## Module options for visiting students

Module code	Module name	15 or 30 UK credits	Start date	Module description/pre-requisites
EN1106	Shakespeare	15 UK credits	September 2020	<i>This innovative lecture-led module opens with the Elizabethan Shakespeare of the comedies and histories. The latter half of term is then devoted to the tragedies and late plays of the Jacobean Shakespeare. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></i>
EN1107	Reorienting the Novel	15 or 30 UK credits	September 2020 for a full year, or 1 term only, starting September, or January 2021	<i>The aim of this module is introduce students to the history and theory of the novel and to ways of reading this popular genre critically as well as for pleasure. The course combines: i. close critical reading of key texts, with ii. Thematic study, iii. Historical analysis of the origins and development of the novel, and iv. Introductory study of key terms and concepts in narrative theory and criticism. PLEASE NOTE THIS COURSE IS AVAILABLE EITHER AS A FULL UNIT, SPANNING BOTH TERMS, OR AS A HALF UNIT IN EITHER AUTUMN OR SPRING. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></i>
EN1011	Thinking as a Critic	15 UK credits	September 2020	<i>The aim of this module is to help you make the transition into university level work by introducing you to reading, writing and thinking as a critic. The module will focus on developing the abilities and skills of the literary criticism and introducing the concepts, ideas and histories that are central to the 'disciplinary consciousness' of English. The skills include close reading, using criticism, coming to judgements about interpretations, writing essays and using resources. The concepts include questions about interpretation, periodization, form, genre, canon, value, intention, narrative, voice, framing and identity. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></i>
EN1112	Introduction to Poetry	15 UK credits	January 2021	<i>This module is designed to introduce students to a variety of major poems in English. The module ranges widely from the Renaissance to the present day, involving practice in close reading while also engaging with issues of historical understanding and critical judgement. Throughout the term, we hope you will develop the confidence to engage with a range of stylistic elements in relation to poetry, and that you will seek to develop a critical awareness of the complex ways in which poetry relates to social and political events. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></i>



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EN1001	Encountering Medieval Literature: Beowulf to Chaucer	15 UK credits	January 2021	<p>The purpose of this module is to provide students with elementary knowledge of the cultural, linguistic and literary contexts of Old and Middle English literature, and to examine representative works from the rich variety of verse, prose and drama of the period. Texts change from year to year, but they often include: <i>The Battle of Brunanburh</i>, <i>The Wanderer</i>, <i>The Dream of the Rood</i>, <i>Beowulf</i>, Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i>, Malory's <i>Morte d'Arthur</i>, and <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>.</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2010	Renaissance Literature	30 UK credits	September 2020	<p>This module is designed as an introduction to the literature of the English Renaissance, beginning in the 1590s with erotic narrative poems by Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, and concluding with John Milton's drama, <i>Samson Agonistes</i>, first published in 1671. Marlowe and Thomas Middleton represent the extraordinarily rich drama of the period, while John Donne and Andrew Marvell are the most famous of the so-called metaphysical poets. A feature of the module is the attention given to situating these works in their historical and cultural contexts.</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2120	The Age of Oppositions: Literature 1660-1780	30 UK credits	September 2020	<p>Between the English Revolution and the French Revolution, British literature was pulled by opposing cultural forces and experienced an extraordinary degree of experimentation. The eighteenth century is sometime called <i>The Age of Reason</i>, but it is also called <i>The Age of Sensibility</i>. It was dominated by male writers, but also facilitated the rise of the woman novelist and the emergence of coterie of intellectual women. It continued to be an essentially rural nation, but London grew to be the biggest city in the world and industrialisation was beginning to herd workers into towns. This whole unit explores some of the tensions and oppositions which were played out in the literature of this period.</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2213	Romanticisms	30 UK credits	September 2020	<p>This module aims to introduce the student to a broad range of literatures in the period 1780-1830. It aims to problematise and scrutinise the idea of Romanticism as a homogenous literary movement and to raise awareness of the range of competing literary identities present in the period.</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>



## Module options for visiting students

EN2325	Modernist Literature	30 UK credits	September 2020	<p><i>The aim of this module is to provide an introduction to the study of literary modernism, a period of intense experimentation in diverse sets of cultural forms. It will deal with such issues such as modernist aesthetics; genre; gender and sexuality; the fragment; time and narration; stream-of-consciousness; history, politics and colonialism; technology, and the status of language and the real.</i></p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2001	Middle English Poetry	15 UK credits	September 2020	<p><i>This module will develop your skills in the close reading and critical analysis of Middle English poetry, focusing on set passages from three important fourteenth century texts: Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, Langland's Piers Plowman, and the anonymous Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. The module invites you to think about how poets understood the status of Middle English as a literary language, in comparison with Latin and French.</i></p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2004	Medieval Dream and Vision	15 UK credits	January 2021	<p><i>This half-unit provides an opportunity for an in-depth study of a major literary genre which attracted all the great poets of late medieval England: the dream vision. It considers the origins of the genre and the questions it raises about poetic identity and the status of fiction. Lectures will explore the social, cultural and religious backgrounds to these works, as well as focusing on individual authors and texts.</i></p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2005	Strange Fictions: Romance in the Middle Ages	15 UK credits	September 2020	<p><i>Romance was one of the most popular genres of secular literature in late medieval England. We begin by looking at the Arthurian romances of Chretien de Troyes, then go on to consider works by Chaucer, the Gawain-poet and Sir Thomas Malory. We will encounter romances set in the mythical British past, in the classical cities of Troy, Thebes and Athens, and in the more recognisable landscapes of medieval England and France. Attention will be paid throughout to the often inventive and unpredictable ways in which medieval romance works to articulate specific historical and cultural anxieties.</i></p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>



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EN2014	Early Modern Bodies	15 UK credits	September 2020	<p>Charting a progression from Galenic humoral theory to Cartesian dualism, this module considers the representation and significance of corporeality in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts. Reading Renaissance plays and poetry alongside anatomical textbooks, manuals of health, erotica, and philosophical essays, the module seeks to contextualise the period's literary treatment of the body; authors and works studied will range from familiar names such as Marlowe, Donne, and Sidney, to the comparatively less canonical (for example, the plague tracts of Thomas Lodge; Jacques Ferrand's cure for love-sickness, <i>Erotomania</i>; or Helkiah Crooke's anatomical treatise, <i>Microcosmographia</i>).</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2015	Paradise in Early Modern Literature	15 UK credits	September 2020	<p>This half unit offers the opportunity to study one very important and characteristic aspect of Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i>: his depiction of Eden, the paradise that was lost at the fall. Throughout his account of Paradise, Milton works to make the loss of paradise poignant by lavishing on it all his evocative powers as a poet. We will spend at least three sessions looking at Milton's epic, covering aspects such as Edenic sex and marriage, Eden's fauna and flora, and work in Eden. Throughout the course images of Paradise will be given attention, starting with Hieronymus Bosch's 'The Garden of Earthly Delight'. Alongside art works, we will touch briefly on some of the Bible scholarship which tried to locate the site of paradise, and deduce its fate. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2012	Drama and Witchcraft	15 UK credits	January 2021	<p>The texts covered span virtually the whole period in which early modern English drama flourished: from Marlowe in c.1593 to 1634. The texts range from famous plays like <i>Macbeth</i> and <i>The Tempest</i> to little-known comedies like <i>The Wise-woman of Hogsden</i>. Two central texts will be <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i> and <i>The Late Lancashire Witches</i>, plays which deal with historically documented witchcraft accusations and scares. Non-dramatic texts about witchcraft are also included for study in the course. These will include news pamphlets, works by learned contemporaries expressing their opinions about witchcraft, popular ballads and other archival texts. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>



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EN2221	Frankenstein	15 UK credits	January 2021	<p>As a nineteenth-century novel that occupies a unique place within the cultural imagination, Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818) raises vital questions about literature and science, narrative and epistemology, creation and theology, gender and power. In addition to exploring these questions through detailed readings of the text, this course also considers the novel as it relates to genre and, in particular to the epistolary form, science-fiction and the female Gothic. An emphasis on the formal attributes of the text will be supplemented by a consideration of the historical and cultural context of this novel. Debates about Shelley's relation to Romanticism, anxieties about the body and the role of myth-making in <i>Frankenstein</i> will lead into an exploration of the ways in which the text has influenced subsequent literary and cinematic renditions of monstrosity.</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2217	Queer Histories	15 UK credits	September 2020	<p>This course will examine a range of novels by gay and lesbian writers in Britain and Ireland which have emerged in the wake of the AIDS catastrophe and queer theory. We will focus on interesting though rather peculiar trends in the post-queer novel: queer historical and biographical fictions, and explore the reasons behind the dominance of these approaches in recent gay and lesbian literature.</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2321	Dark Reform	15 UK credits	September 2020	<p>This course aims to provide an introduction to American literature via the tradition which David Reynolds labels 'dark reform'; a satirical and often populist mode which seek out the abuses which lie beneath the optimistic surface of American life, often through grotesque, scatological, sexualized and carnivalesque imagery. It explores the contention that because of America's history, with its notions of national consensus and fear of class conflict, political critique in America has often had to find indirect expression. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>



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EN2206	Gaskell, Eliot and Dickens	15 UK credits	September 2020	<p><i>In this course we immerse ourselves in novels that transformed ideas of what stories could do in the world. This in-depth study of a selection of works by three extraordinary nineteenth-century writers takes us from village life in Cranford, out into the industrial city and the new global networks of the 'age of Empire'. Along the way we explore how Gaskell, Eliot, and Dickens played with new possibilities of the literary marketplace in the industrial era, struggled to give a voice to subjects rarely before represented in fiction, and scandalised many by their treatment of sexuality. We will reflect on readership as well as writing in the nineteenth century and explore the challenges that we now face, letting go and committing to immersing ourselves in these long-form stories. Texts studied will include Gaskell's Cranford, and Mary Barton, Dickens's David Copperfield and Great Expectations, stories from George Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life.</i></p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
EN2011	Intensive Shakespeare	15 UK credits	January 2021	<p><i>This half-unit explores in depth three supreme examples of Shakespearean comedy, tragedy and historical drama: Richard III (1592-3), A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595-6), and Macbeth (1606).</i></p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>

