

# **PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

## **MA English Literature: Modern and Contemporary Fictions**

## **PART ONE: PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION COURSE RECORD INFORMATION**

Name and level of final award:	MA English Literature
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma in English Literature Postgraduate Certificate in English Literature
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Regent site, University of Westminster
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Dr Leigh Wilson
Course URL:	<a href="http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/english/postgraduate-courses/full-time/p09fplit-ma-english-literature">http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/english/postgraduate-courses/full-time/p09fplit-ma-english-literature</a>
Mode and length of study:	Full time or Part time
University of Westminster course code:	
JACS code:	
UK PASS code:	021675
QAA subject benchmarking group:	
Professional body accreditation:	Not applicable
Date of course validation/review:	Last Review 2012
Date of programme specification:	

### **ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants are normally required to have a good first degree (2:1 or above) or equivalent in a relevant subject. Students whose first language is not English must have an IELTS certificate with an overall score of 7.0, or be able to demonstrate an equivalent level. Applicants will also be required to give one academic reference and to submit a 1500 word essay.

### **AIMS OF THE COURSE**

The MA English Literature is part of a suite of Masters programmes under the title of Cultural, Critical and Literary Studies that is based within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. This suite also includes the MAs in Critical and Cultural Studies, in Art and Visual Culture, and in Museums, Galleries and Contemporary Culture. The MA English Literature provides a course that is wide-ranging in terms of historical period, but also has specific focus on particular topics. Options are offered

across the four MAs, enabling students to construct a programme of study in which they can follow particular themes in the areas that most interest them.

Specifically the MA English Literature aims to:

- develop and scrutinise the ideas of reading, re-reading and interpretation
- provide an advanced, wide-ranging study of English Literature
- examine recent critical developments in literary studies
- set literary studies within an interdisciplinary contextual framework
- conduct specific examination of particular periods, movements and locations
- foster an ability to apply theoretical perspectives to texts
- develop advanced skills in argument, synthesis and critical expression
- enhance advanced skills of research and presentation specific to English
- provide a route to further research.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND FURTHER STUDY OPPORTUNITIES**

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements which will inform the service delivered to students.

The MA English Literature is intended to provide students with sophisticated critical skills and a widely applicable knowledge base. This enables further study at MPhil or PhD levels, but is also particularly relevant to teaching and to a range of professions in the creative and cultural industries.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. They are threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

Graduates of the MA will:

- have examined a range of literary texts and other forms of cultural production
- be able to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of some recent critical developments
- be familiar with the interdisciplinary connections of literary studies
- have a sophisticated knowledge of particular periods and movements

- understand and use the critical ideas of re-reading and interpretation
- have a sophisticated knowledge of current critical positions and debates
- be able to deploy advanced theoretical approaches in relation to a variety of texts
- have developed advanced skills of argument, synthesis and critical expression
- have enhanced skills of research and presentation.

### **Specific Skills**

Graduates of the MA will acquire a range of advanced scholarly and critical skills such as:

- critical skills in the close reading and analysis of texts
- critical skills in the reading and assessment of a range of critical works
- advanced use of an appropriate critical terminology
- sophisticated awareness of generic conventions and of the shaping effects upon communication of context, authorship, textual production, and intended audience
- the ability to place critical arguments and debates within the discipline as an historical and conceptual discourse
- an ability to articulate how different formal, linguistic and cultural contexts affect the nature of language and meaning
- a sophisticated response to the central role of language in the creation of literary meaning
- advanced skills in effective communication and argument, oral and written
- the scholarly skills appropriate to the discipline, including accurate citation of sources and use of bibliographical conventions.

### **Key Transferable skills**

Graduates of the MA will be able to demonstrate:

- the ability to present sustained and persuasive written and oral arguments, advanced literacy and communication skills, and the ability to cogently and clearly apply these in appropriate contexts
- the capacity to critically examine any form of discourse using close reading and analysis of texts
- the ability to acquire quickly substantial quantities of complex information of diverse kinds in a structured way, involving the use of sophisticated interpretive skills
- competence in planning and execution of essays and other kinds of work
- capacity for independent thought and judgement
- advanced skills in critical reasoning
- the ability to comprehend and develop intricate concepts in an open-ended way which involves an understanding of purpose and consequences
- the ability to work with, and in relation to, others through the presentation of ideas and information
- the ability to understand, interrogate and apply a range of theoretical positions, as well as the importance of alternative perspectives
- the ability to handle information and argument in a critical and self reflective manner
- sophisticated research skills, including scholarly information retrieval
- information-technology skills such as word processing and electronic data access information
- interpersonal and team skills, relating to the ability to work flexibly and creatively with other people and engage in rational debate

- time-management and organisational skills, as shown by the ability to plan and present findings effectively
- confidence in expression and the articulation of complex ideas.

## TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

Modules are taught by one two-hour or three-hour seminar per week, depending on the subject. Seminars are focussed on student-centred learning, with use of non-assessed presentations and in-class projects to encourage student participation. Teaching will also centrally involve the use of London institutions as a resource, including the directed use of various archives, museums, and galleries. Further to this each student will be assigned an academic tutor from among the academic staff with whom they will have at least one timetabled session in the first semester.

Assessment methods deployed on the course include coursework in the form of essays, reports and oral presentations, as well as the final 10,000-12,000 word dissertation. There are no formal examinations.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time postgraduate students study 180 credits in the academic year. Part-time students will normally complete 180 credits in two academic years. The MA consists of four core modules (of which the dissertation is one) and four options modules.

Credit Level 7				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
1ENL7A1	Subjectivities in Modern and Contemporary Fictions	Core	20	10
1ENL7A2	Institutions and Histories in Modern and Contemporary Fictions	Core	20	10
SENL701	Dissertation	Core	40	20
SENL700	Knowledge, Cultural Memory, Archives and Research	Core	20	10
1ENL7B2	London Vortex: the City and Modernism	Option	20	10
1ENL7A0	Photography, Literature and Writing	Option	20	10
1ENL7A9	Reading Contemporary Culture	Option	20	10
1CUS7A1	Urban Cultures	Option	20	10
1CUS7A4	Sexuality and Narrative	Option	20	10
1VIS7A8	Work Placements in Cultural Institutions	Option	20	10

NB: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year.

## Academic regulations

The MA English Literature and its intermediate awards operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called Essential Westminster, which is available at [westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster](http://westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster). The following regulations should be read in conjunction with Section 18: Modular Framework for Postgraduate Courses and relevant sections of the current Handbook of Academic Regulations, which is available at [westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations).

## Award

To qualify for the award of MA English Literature, a student must have:

- obtained a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 (this may include a maximum of 30 credits at Level 6 where validated as part of the award);
- attempted modules worth no more than 240 credits; and  
Note: A first attempt of any module will count as an attempt, and a re-attempt of any module that a student has failed will count as a further, separate attempt. Re-assessment following referral at the first sit will not count as a further separate attempt.
- satisfied the requirements contained within any course specific regulations for the relevant Course Scheme.

The University may award:

- a Masters Degree with Merit to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at Level 7.
- a Masters Degree with Distinction to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at Level 7.

## SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Upon arrival, an orientation programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the Faculty Registry. Students will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at their Faculty. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books).

Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the

courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students.

[Student Affairs](#) provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The Student Affairs Hub is located at 101 New Cavendish Street, Cavendish House (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), with an additional office located at the Harrow Campus. [westminster.ac.uk/study/new-students/when-you-arrive](http://westminster.ac.uk/study/new-students/when-you-arrive)

The [University of Westminster Students' Union](#) also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University. <http://www.uwsu.com/>

## REFERENCE POINTS FOR THE COURSE

### Internal

Primary internal reference points for teaching, learning and assessment policies on the MA are the University Handbook of Academic Regulations, the Quality Assurance Handbook, and the Guide to Higher Education and Career Management Skills produced by the Education Initiative Centre (EIC).

The course is designed to enhance and extend the resources offered by research in literary studies going on within the University, as well as by the kinds of transdisciplinary work across the areas of literary, visual and historical studies that are among the research and teaching strengths of the Faculty. The MA is situated within the suite of Cultural, Critical and Literary Studies MAs hosted by the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, and makes use of the wide range of cognate research interests and forms of expertise that exist across the various disciplines and staff members involved in the delivery of this programme.

The course structure meets the requirements of the modular frameworks and the academic regulations of the University, as well as of the Faculty Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy. At the same time, it is designed to take account of both the University Policies on skills development and employability and one of the key themes in the University strategic plan – creative and cultural industries – providing advanced theoretical and critical work relevant to these areas.

### External

The primary external reference point for the academic infrastructure of the course is the Quality Assurance Agency ([qaa.ac.uk](http://qaa.ac.uk)); in particular, the Code of Practice for the assurance of quality and standards, the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and the details of programme specifications. For credit level descriptors (specifically 'M' level descriptors), the reference point is the South England consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer [www.seec-office.org.uk](http://www.seec-office.org.uk) Reference may also be made to the materials provided by various subject centres of the Higher Education Academy [www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk)

## **QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT**

### **Course Management**

The Course is hosted in the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, one of the departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. The Course is directly managed by a Course Leader within the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, and will be overseen by a Programme Director with responsibility for the management and co-ordination of the Cultural, Critical and Literary Studies MAs suite as a whole. Each module on the course also has a designated Module Leader responsible for the administration and monitoring of its design and delivery.

The course teaching team consists of staff from the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies. Key members of the course team meet regularly each year to identify and address ways of improving the design and delivery of the course. Staff undergo annual appraisal and observation of their teaching by colleagues leading to staff development through course attendance and/or research and scholarly activity. Staff teaching on the course also attend events organised by the Faculty Academic Standards and the Faculty Teaching and Learning Groups around current teaching, learning and assessment issues.

The MA course intersects with, and draws upon, the institutional resources provided by the wider set of events and research initiatives co-ordinated by staff within the Faculty as well as both the research seminar series hosted by the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, and by the various events and collaborative ventures organised under the umbrella of the Institute of Modern and Contemporary Culture.

### **Course approval, monitoring and review**

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2001. The Panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from academia to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other Universities and the relevance to employers. Periodic Course Review helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. The Course was most recently revalidated in 2012.

The course is monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from External Examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee considers the Faculty action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

### **Student involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal



mechanism for feedback on the course is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group in various discussions. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

All students are invited to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the Module Leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced. The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience.

Students meet with Review Panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from Course Committees are part of the Faculty quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course:

[westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/english/postgraduate-courses/full-time/p09fplit-ma-english-literature](http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/english/postgraduate-courses/full-time/p09fplit-ma-english-literature)

**Please note:** This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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