

Maynooth University Department of English

Second Year English 2025-26





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As you prepare to move in to Second Year, we want to inform you about how you might pursue English. Our modules will extend your study of literature through your degree into third year. Second Year English comprises four core modules that variously examine literary theory, literary form, literature in history and through the politics and aesthetics of place, as well as a number of option modules that allow you to focus your study on a specific theme, writer, period, or genre.

First Year English modules were specifically designed to guide you from school or access to university-level study. EN101 Foundation English 1a provided you with the knowledge, experience and writing skills required to develop and express well-informed opinions about what you are reading. EN102: Foundation English 1b: Poetry and Drama equipped you with the skills to interpret these literary forms. For those of you taking 30 credits in English, EN106 Additional English 1a examined how history erupts into literature, while EN107 Additional English 1b, introduced you to new methods of reading, thinking about what literature is and the role it plays in the world.

Second Year English provides you with the opportunity to develop from your foundation in English studies through a set of four core or compulsory modules. EN201: Theorising Literature enables you to think in more detail about how to conceptualise literature through literary theory. EN202 Literature and History explores the interaction between literature and history, with a particular focus on Irish literature from the 18th century and the Irish Literary Revival. EN203 Literary Forms builds on your thinking about the formal nature of literature, with a deeper focus on poetry and drama in historical contexts. EN204 Literatures of Place starts you on the process of thinking about the relationship between literature, place and identity.

Option modules ranging from film studies, creative writing, and American & Victorian literature, to literary modernism, the imagined worlds of the early modern, Romanticism, and Postcolonial literatures will enable you to identify areas of interest now that will provide pathways into further specialism in third year.

We look forward to seeing you in Second Year English.

Programme Options in English

Every student in Maynooth University takes a total of 60 credits per year. The proportion of those credits which you devote to your various subjects determines the type of degree pathway you are on.

Second Year students have the option to take English as a Single Major (this is possible for students who have achieved an average of 50% or more in 1st year English), Double Major, Major/Minor or as a Minor.

Second Year English modules are 5 credits each.

Students may choose to take one optional 10 credit University Elective in 2nd year.

Creative Writing is compulsory in Single Major (EN2SM) and optional in Major in English (EN2MJ).



Programme Options in English

Single Major (EN2SM)

Single Major English means that all 60 credits you take in Second Year are in English. As a Single Major student you will take modules with all other students taking English but, because the Single Major group is usually relatively small, you will have the added advantage of taking additional modules which are only for Single Major students. Your 60 credits will be made up of all core modules plus two option modules in the first semester, and two option modules in the second semester.

EN2SM Second Year Single Major (60 credits of English)				
Choose all core modules plus 2 option modules per semester				
	Semester 1		Semester 2	
CORE MODULES	EN201	Theorising Literature	EN203	Literary Forms
	EN202	Literature in History	EN204	Literatures of Place
	EN262	Writers and Themes	EN263	Creative Writing
	EN280	Books that Made the World I	EN281	Books that Made the World II
OPTION MODULES	EN241	Film & Screen Studies	EN243	Modernism
	EN242	Introduction to American Literature	EN244	Imagined Worlds
	EN246	Romanticism	EN245	Writing Ireland
	EN249	Victorian Literature	EN247	Postcolonial Literatures

Major English (EN2MJ)

For a Major in English you take 40 credits in English across the year, plus 20 credits in another subject, which will be your Minor subject. Major English allows you to specialise in English, to take more option modules and to participate in more seminar-based learning. The 40 English credits will be made up of two core plus two option modules in the first semester, and two core plus two option modules in the second semester.

EN2MJ Second Year Major (40 credits of English)				
Choose all core modules plus 2 option modules per semester				
	Semester 1		Semester 2	
CORE MODULES	EN201	Theorising Literature	EN203	Literary Forms
	EN202	Literature in History	EN204	Literatures of Place
OPTION MODULES	EN241	Film & Screen Studies	EN243	Modernism
	EN242	Introduction to American Literature	EN244	Imagined Worlds
	EN246	Romanticism	EN245	Writing Ireland
	EN249	Victorian Literature	EN247	Postcolonial Literatures
	EN262	Writers and Themes	EN263	Creative Writing
	EN280	Books that Made the World I	EN281	Books that Made the World II

Programme Options in English

Double Major (EN2DM)

Double Major students take 30 credits in English and 30 credits in another subject. In Second Year English this allows you to take two compulsory modules plus one option module in the first semester, and two compulsory modules plus one option module in the second semester.

EN2DM Second Year Double Major (30 credits of English)				
Choose all core modules plus 1 option module per semester				
	Semester 1		Semester 2	
CORE MODULES	EN201	Theorising Literature	EN203	Literary Forms
	EN202	Literature in History	EN204	Literatures of Place
OPTION MODULES	EN241	Film & Screen Studies	EN243	Modernism
	EN242	Introduction to American Literature	EN244	Imagined Worlds
	EN246	Romanticism	EN245	Writing Ireland
	EN249	Victorian Literature	EN247	Postcolonial Literatures

Minor English (EN2MI)

For a Minor in English you take 20 credits in English and 40 credits in another subject. Your 20 English credits will be made up of any two modules in the first semester, and any two modules in the second semester.

EN2MI Second Year Minor (20 credits of English)				
Choose 2 modules per semester				
	Semester 1		Semester 2	
OPTION MODULES	EN201	Theorising Literature	EN203	Literary Forms
	EN202	Literature in History	EN204	Literatures of Place
	EN241	Film & Screen Studies	EN243	Modernism
	EN242	Introduction to American Literature	EN244	Imagined Worlds
	EN246	Romanticism	EN245	Writing Ireland
	EN249	Victorian Literature	EN247	Postcolonial Literatures

Overall Second Year Skills Aims and Objectives

Aims

- analytical skills: the ability to think critically about ideas and to begin to assess the validity of arguments;
- reading and interpretative skills: the ability to understand the varieties of the ways and forms by which texts communicate meaning;
- subject skills: an awareness of boundaries of the learning in the field and the preparation required to push back those boundaries through further learning.
- communication skills: the capacity to discuss and present opinions;
- research skills: the ability to locate and gather relevant information from a variety of sources, and to record it in an accessible fashion;
- writing and presentational skills: the ability to structure a written argument, to select supporting evidence, to write confidently with clarity and lucidity, and to present written work with consistent use of bibliographical and typographical conventions.

Objectives

- extensive reading in a wide range poetry, prose and drama from a variety of different times and cultures;
- analysis and discussion of literary texts, of their historical and cultural contexts, and of contemporary critical ideas and theory;
- participation in lectures and small groups discussion;
- the regular writing of essays and other modes in a continuous assessment system;
- the introduction of an increased critical vocabulary and of current concepts in critical theory.

Registration Information

It's very important that you are registered for all the modules you are taking, enrolment on a Moodle page alone is not sufficient. You must register online on Student Web or directly with the Student Registration Office or you will not earn credits for that module.

Check for timetable clashes before registering for your modules. If you choose an option module in your other subject and find a timetable clash with a compulsory English module, you will need to choose an alternative option. Likewise, if you find your option module in English clashes with a compulsory module in your other subject you must choose another English option.

Students may choose to take one Elective in their second year. Each Elective is worth 10 credits; you will take one 5 credit Elective module in semester 1 and the follow on 5 credit module in semester 2. Taking an Elective doesn't mean taking on extra modules; students who take an Elective do 10 credits less in their other subjects.

- Option modules in English are capped at 80 students, places are available on a first come first served basis during Registration. It is not possible to register for a module that has reached quota.
- Aim to study equal credits each semester so your workload will be balanced for the year.
- If you choose to take an Elective module and find a timetable clash with a compulsory module from your programme, you will need to choose an alternative Elective.
- Most option modules in English have a tutorial component. Tutorial registration takes place on the Moodle page for the module during the first week of semester in which the module runs. Tutorials are strictly capped at 20 students, places are available on a first come first served basis. It is not possible to register for a tutorial that has reached quota.

Second Year English Modules

Modules are 5 credits each

EN201 Theorising Literature

This module introduces students to some of the major schools of contemporary literary theory. It outlines their philosophical, literary and cultural impact and seeks to help students understand their importance as a way in which to enhance their critical understanding of literary texts. Theoretical positions discussed in the module might include, but not be limited to: Marxism; feminism; post-colonial theory; cultural materialism & new historicism; post-structuralism; deconstruction; queer theory; new directions in literary studies.

Teaching Method: Lectures

Assessment: 50% CA & 50% Exam; Supplemental sitting 100% Exam

EN202 Literature and History

This module examines literary texts in their historical contexts. The module discusses the relationship between literature and history and how this can be understood in a variety of ways (through, for example, materialist, gendered, political, philosophical and other critical perspectives). The module concentrates on examples of historical moments when the literary interacts with historical events and phenomena.

Teaching Method: Lectures

Assessment: 50% CA & 50% Exam; Supplemental sitting 100% Exam

Second Year English Modules

Modules are 5 credits each

EN203 Literary Forms

This module examines how literary forms acquire their meaning, how they are structured and used in literature and how they change over time. It introduces students to the analysis and understanding of a selection of literary forms within the broad genres of poetry, fiction and drama by concentrating on the techniques deployed in specific literary forms, their development, their ideological accumulations of meaning, and the historical moments at which genres have changed and altered.

Teaching Method: Lectures

Assessment: 50% CA & 50% Exam; Supplemental sitting 100% Exam

EN204 Literatures of Place

This module examines the geographies of literature and looks at how literary culture reflects on and shapes the places which it inhabits. The module begins by discussing spatial theories of culture in terms of, for example, colonial expansion, ecocriticism or psychogeography, and then studies examples of geographical areas which have produced and are produced by literary texts. Examples might include, but are not limited to: utopias and dystopias; colonization; the representation of cities in literary texts; nature writing.

Teaching Method: Lectures

Assessment: 50% CA & 50% Exam; Supplemental sitting 100% Exam

Second Year English Modules

Modules are 5 credits each

EN241 Film & Screen Studies

This module provides an introduction to film as an aesthetic, economic, and cultural phenomenon. Mastering the vocabulary associated with narrative, editing, cinematography, mise-en-scene, and sound, which are the fundamental tools required for the close analysis of film texts, lays the groundwork for the interpretive analysis of film texts. We will further consider key historical, economic and ideological contexts that inform the production and consumption of films and film genres. Topics that link to second semester modules in the Film/Screen studies elective stream will be incorporated.

Teaching Method: Lectures & screenings

Assessment: 40% CA & 60% Exam; Supplemental sitting 40% CA & 60% Exam

EN242 Introduction to American Literature

This module will treat the literature of the United States in terms of its distinctively American cultural claims, claims which evolve and become contested as its citizenry becomes more diverse. The texts chosen will illustrate formal as well as thematic innovations in fiction, poetry, and/or drama showing how the need to tell new and unfamiliar stories requires traditional literary forms to adapt to the rhythms of new voices. Students will be required to consider texts that reflect a prolonged historical experience and which engage issues of political controversy. Most importantly, students will be encouraged to consider what makes a text distinctively “American” and to consider the implications of the fact that America, like American Literature itself, is very much “a work in process”.

Teaching Method: Lectures & tutorials

Assessment: 100% CA

Second Year English Modules

Modules are 5 credits each

EN243 Modernism

This module examines Modernism in literature and related art forms, introducing students to key themes and writers in the field. We will consider how literature and culture responded to the profound social, cultural and political changes that characterised the beginning of the twentieth century. The module will concentrate on the defining characteristics of Modernism, considering, but not limited to, questions of time and space; representation; interiority and self-consciousness; history and politics. Students will have the opportunity to focus on a variety of literary forms and to develop close readings skills of some of defining texts within Modernism.

Teaching Method: Lectures & tutorials
Assessment: 100% CA

EN244 Imagined Worlds

This module explores how language creates imaginary worlds and how imagined worlds, in turn, shape and change the real world. It focuses on the great Renaissance texts of exploration, fantasy, travel and imagination; it looks at fairyland, the ghostly and the supernatural, at the marvellous and the monstrous, at the dreams and nightmares of a civilisation. It examines questions of, for example, colonialism, migration, globalisation, race, exoticism and religion and, in doing so, it raises big questions about the relationship between the imaginary and the real. Students will be invited to consider how literary texts provoke us to see the world in new and complex ways.

Teaching Method: Lectures & tutorials
Assessment: 100% CA

Second Year English Modules

Modules are 5 credits each

EN245 Writing Ireland

This module introduces students to the range and variety of Irish literature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The module will facilitate students to become careful readers of different forms (poetry, drama, fiction) and aesthetic modes (realism; modernism; Revivalism; the Gothic). Through studying on this course students will explore how generations of Irish writers sought in their work to represent and critically evaluate the condition of Irish life, while also imagining and debating what 'Ireland' could be. Furthermore, the module will facilitate students to situate the specificity of Irish literature within global literary and cultural history, as well as understanding the contribution of Irish writers to world literature.

Teaching Method: Lectures & tutorials
Assessment: 100% CA

EN246 Romanticism

This module introduces students to the major characteristics and themes of Romantic literature and culture. The module looks at these elements as they manifest in poetic, fictional and intellectual writings of the era. The module also discusses the relationship between various literary forms and the wider context of political and social development and intellectual change of the period.

Teaching Method: Lectures & tutorials
Assessment: 100% CA

Second Year English Modules

Modules are 5 credits each

EN247 Postcolonial Literatures

“Colonialism” describes how Europeans annexed, planted and secured territories in other parts of the world, initially, for capital and commercial gain but, later, for the purpose of consolidating and expanding their power and spheres of influence. For the people of colonised territories, it involved not only the physical traumas of military violence and subjugation, dispossession and forced migration but also the loss of language and culture, subjection to falsified images and narratives, alienation from history and a loss of familiarity with “self”. In this module, we will consider the work of selected writers and film-makers who have recognised that challenging colonialism, and its contemporary neo-colonial and global reiterations, requires not only instigating and achieving politico-economic transitions – entailing, for instance, the signing of declarations, the raising and lowering of flags, and the establishment of new governments, states and systems of socioeconomic regulation – but also a rigorous and ongoing contestation of its language, narratives and aesthetic orders. These are artists, poised between worlds, who recollect, reaffirm and celebrate (sometimes ambivalently) the agency and cultures of their peoples but also ones who have used their hybrid, and often contradictory, positions to creatively engage pressing issues of migrancy, movement, (dis)location, transcultural communication and change in the contexts of globalization and global social justice movements. During the module, we will analyse the works closely, attending primarily to the thematics and material histories of “self”; issues of form and formal innovation; and questions about the social and political functions of literature and film, more generally. The writers and film-makers we will consider may include, for example, Tayeb Salih [Sudan], Chimamanda Adichie [Nigeria], Binyavanga Wainaina [Kenya] or Jonas Carpignano [Italy].

Teaching Method: Lectures & tutorials
Assessment: 100% CA

Second Year English Modules

Modules are 5 credits each

EN249 Victorian Literature

This module examines fiction and poetry of the Victorian age, introducing students to key writers and themes during the period. We will discuss how poetry and fiction of the period reflects and interacts with the dynamics of the nineteenth century, concentrating on aspects such as, but not limited to: imperialism; industrialisation; the emergence of an urban working class; and the rise of aestheticism; and a new politics of gender and sexuality towards the end of the nineteenth century. Students will have the opportunity to study texts in detail and will be able to contextualise Victorian literature historically and socially.

Teaching Method: Lectures
Assessment: 100% CA

EN262 Writers and Themes

In this module students will study in detail the work of one or more authors and/or themes. Students will be introduced to the methodologies of close study of one specific research topic and will discuss critical, historical and theoretical contexts for understanding the chosen specialist area of literary study. Students will be encouraged to undertake a deep study of the writer(s) and/or theme(s) under discussion in the module.

Teaching Method: Seminars
Assessment: 100% CA

Second Year English Modules

Modules are 5 credits each

EN263 Creative Writing

Over the course of the semester students will be introduced to the practice of creative writing. Workshops will focus on the practicalities of writing, editing, and giving and taking criticism of creative work. Students will be expected to produce writing for discussion and criticism and to work on developing and revising their writing in the light of that criticism. Students will also look critically at the work of established writers and will be encouraged to reflect on their own writing in the light of their reading.

Teaching Method: Seminars

Assessment: 100% CA

EN280 & EN281 Books that Made the World I & II

We are living in a world where the key discourses which have dominated our understanding of politics, economics and culture at large feel inadequate to the task of addressing the urgent and multiple crises consuming our world. This module will consider the significant role that books have played, both in the past and in the present, in reproducing and analysing cultural values and ideologies, but also in articulating responses and resistance to those. Through the prism of a range of books students will explore the impact of writing in a range of areas, such as economic and social conditions, power structures, individual desire, sexuality, gender, the unconscious, art, literature, science, and philosophy. The module's themes will vary from year to year and include issues such as gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, migration and ecology. Books will be selected on the basis that they influence, directly or indirectly, the assumptions and contexts of the world in which we live. The module emphasises the study of primary texts in their original contexts and the history of their subsequent transmission and reception.

Teaching Method: Seminars (EN280 is a semester 1 module, EN281 is a semester 2 module)

Assessment: 100% CA



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<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/english>
