

**OPEN A BOOK
OPEN UP WORLDS**



Welcome to First Year English

Maynooth University Department of English
First Year English 2020/21
Module Details and Reading Lists

Welcome to English at Maynooth University

Beginning with words on a page, English is a world-facing subject: it takes you across historical periods, cultures, locations and genres, from poetry and drama to the novel, film, and new media forms of writing too.

A rich and fascinating world of English literature is opened up to you when you study English at Maynooth University. As a student of English, you will learn about different literary forms, about the conditions that shape writing, from history and geography to questions of gender, race, and class, and how literary texts enable us to understand our own complex world. You will learn about different approaches to and theories of literature and how different schools of critical thought or areas have shaped and reshaped the subject of English literary studies.

Why study English literature?

“Literature is a gateway for understanding cultures and experiences outside of our own, and the opening up of minds is crucial to the development of a socio-culturally diverse society.”

Orlagh Woods, PhD student, Maynooth University Department of English.

Studying English at Maynooth University provides an exciting and rewarding student experience. Throughout your degree, you will be encouraged to engage in critical debate about the meaning and value of literature. This will help foster your critical and intellectual abilities, and equip you with the ability to approach problems with an open and enquiring mind. As a result, you will gain analytical skills, finely-honed writing skills and develop critical thinking – skills which appeal greatly to future employers.

Maynooth University Department of English boasts notable expertise in a wide range of literature from the early modern to the present day, and from Irish literature to American, African, Arab, and global literatures. Our lecturers’ research expertise informs their teaching and provides you as a student with the current critical thinking in the broad field of English studies. Our degree programme reflects the changing, global nature of English language literature while also providing you with a thorough understanding of established traditions.

First Year English at a glance:

Take either 15 credits (3) or 30 credits (group 3 & 6) of English

Plus choose 2 or 3 other subjects (or Critical Skills) from the groups available (maximum 1 per group)

EN101: Foundation English 1a

EN102: Foundation English 1b: Poetry and Drama

EN106: Additional Studies in English 1a: Writing in History

EN107: Additional Studies in English 1b: Literary Criticism and Theory

EN101 and EN102 summary

EN101 Foundation English 1a

provides 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 explores two major literary forms, providing you with the knowledge to understand and read poetry and drama in new ways.

EN101: Foundational English 1a

Dr Oona Frawley and Dr Sinead Kennedy

This module is designed to both enhance your love of reading, and to provide you with the knowledge, experience and writing skills you require to develop and express well-informed opinions about what you are reading. The module introduces you to a variety of prose and fictional texts, revealing the power of writing to surprise, engage, move, anger, and persuade the reader. Particular attention is paid to how such texts engage with important historical, social, moral, and political questions, and how writing utilises different literary and rhetorical strategies to further its ideas and achieve particular effects. The module requires you to engage actively and critically with a wide range of texts through reading, discussion, and writing. Small group tutorials, supporting the core lectures, facilitate discussions and incorporate formal writing exercises to ensure that you acquire the necessary skills for studying English at University

Essays / Speeches: 'This is Water (David Foster Wallace); 'On the Uses of a Liberal Education Parts I and II' (Mark Edmundson and Earl Shorris); 'In Praise of Empire' (James Connolly); 'I Have a Dream' (Martin Luther King, Jr); 'Yes We Can' (Barack Obama); 'Shooting an Elephant' (George Orwell); Excerpt from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Mary Wollstonecraft); 'Ain't I A Woman' (Sojourner Truth).

Short Stories: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 'The American Embassy'; Anton Chekov, 'The Lady with the Dog'; James Joyce, 'The Sisters'; Katherine Mansfield 'The Garden Party'.

Novel: Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Norton Critical Edition).

EN102 Foundation English 1b: Poetry and Drama

Prof. Lauren Arrington and Dr. Karl O'Hanlon

This module will introduce key concepts and ideas in the history of poetry and drama. It is designed to build on skills introduced and developed in Foundational English 1a with the aim of furthering the student's understanding of the formal and thematic aspects of poetry and drama. The module will introduce students to methods of reading, analysing, and contextualising poetry at university level and allow students to become familiar with the thematic and formal elements that need to be considered when approaching the poetic text (rhythm, form, poetic terminology, national/canonical traditions). The module will also consider several key theatrical texts and explore the shifting historical and performance contexts that govern theatrical expectations and dramaturgical practice. The module will enhance the student's understanding of poetry and drama and provide

students with the knowledge, experience and writing skills to develop and express well-informed opinions about what they are reading. Small group seminars, supporting the core lectures, will facilitate discussions and incorporate formal writing exercises to ensure that students continue to acquire the necessary skills for studying English at University.

Part 1: Drama

- Bulleted texts indicate required reading, viewing, or listening.

Core Reference Texts for Part 1

Meisel, Martin. *How Plays Work: Reading and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007; 2011). <http://tinyurl.com/ya4wur6j>

Kennedy, Dennis, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Theatre & Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). <http://tinyurl.com/ya4wur6j>

Unit 1: Theatre of the People?

Lecture 1: The origins of modern European theatre and ideas of democracy

- P.E. Easterling, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). <http://tinyurl.com/ybwlvgzv>
- Chapters 1, 3, 9-12 will be important to this unit, and you should aim to read them during the course of the first four lectures.

Lecture 2: World War Two Antigones

- Bertolt Brecht, *The Antigone of Sophocles* in Kuhn and Constantine, *Collected Plays* 8 (London: Methuen, 2004). Available as a pdf on Moodle.
- Jean Anouilh, *Antigone*, trans. Christopher Nixon. Podcast available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ya5cy6ka>
- Frank Jones, 'Tragedy with a Purpose: Bertolt Brecht's "Antigone,"' *Tulane Drama Review* 2.1 (Nov 1057), 39-45. <http://tinyurl.com/ybkama3k>
- Keri Walsh, 'Allied Antigone: Jean Anouilh in America and England,' *Modernism/modernity* 23.2 (2016). <http://tinyurl.com/ycs8aqyb>

Lecture 3: The State on Trial

- Seamus Heaney, *The Burial at Thebes* (London: Faber, 2005). <http://tinyurl.com/yafv9j39>
- Tom Paulin, *The Riot Act* (London: Faber, 1985) <http://tinyurl.com/yb85fxst>
*This text is not required but is strongly recommended
- Stephen Wilmer, 'Finding a Post-Colonial Voice for Antigone: Seamus Heaney's *Burial at Thebes*' in *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). <http://tinyurl.com/ybnknb7y>

Lecture 4: Tragedy of the status quo

- Henrik Ibsen, *Ghosts*, trans. Thomas Kilroy (Oldcastle: Gallery Press, 2002). <http://tinyurl.com/yap9pqaq>

- Robert Corrigan, 'The Sun always Rises: Ibsen's "Ghosts" as Tragedy?', *Educational Theatre Journal* 11.3 (1959), 171-180. <http://tinyurl.com/y9975mdv>

Unit 2: Staging the American Dream; or, twentieth century Ibsens

- James McFarlane, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), <http://tinyurl.com/y9x84f8k>
- Chapters 11-14 are important to this unit, and you should aim to read them over the course of lectures 5-7.

Lecture 5: Lillian Hellman, *The Little Foxes*

- Lillian Hellman, *The Little Foxes* (Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street Press, 2007). <http://tinyurl.com/ybwbjba2>
- Watson, Ritchie D. 'Lillian Hellman's "the Little Foxes" and the New South Creed: An Ironic View of Southern History', *The Southern Literary Journal*, vol. 28/no. 2, (1996), pp. 59-68. <http://tinyurl.com/yapp2v5u>

Lecture 6: Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

- Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* in *A Streetcar Named Desire and Other Plays* (London: Penguin, 2000). Available as a pdf on Moodle.
- Londré, F. Hardison, 'A streetcar running fifty years'. In M. Roudané Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Tennessee Williams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 45-66. <http://tinyurl.com/ycmmmkeg>

Lecture 7: Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

- Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (London: Methuen, 2001). Available as a pdf on Moodle or as a library e-book. Stay tuned!
- Adrienne Macki Braconi, 'African American women dramatists, 1930-1960' in Harvey Young, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to African American Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 118-136. <http://tinyurl.com/yba39pqc>

Unit 3: The Absurd

- Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin, 2001). Introduction and Chapters 4 (Genet), 5 (Pinter), and 9 (Beyond the Absurd) available as pdfs on Moodle or as an e-book. Watch this space!

Lecture 8: Brendan Behan, *The Quare Fellow*

- Brendan Behan, *The Quare Fellow* in *Complete Plays* (London: Methuen, 2001). Available as a pdf on Moodle
- Kontouli, Patra, and Eliza Kitis. 'Human Absurdity and Empty Idealism in Brendan Behan's "The Quare Fellow"', *Yearbook of English Studies* (1991). <http://tinyurl.com/y89qspr5>

Lecture 9: Harold Pinter, *The Hothouse*

- Harold Pinter, *The Hothouse* in *Plays One* (London: Faber, 1991). <http://tinyurl.com/yct8vn2n>

Francesca Coppa, 'The Sacred Joke: comedy and politics in Pinter's early plays' in Peter Raby, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Harold Pinter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 43-55. <http://tinyurl.com/y796efgt>

Lecture 10: Jackie Sibblies Drury, *We Are Proud to Present...*

- Jackie Sibblies Drury, *We are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Hero of Namibia, Formerly Known as Southwest Africa, from the German Sudwestafrika, Between the Years 1884-1915* (London: Methuen, 2014).
- Willis, Emma Willia. 'Metatheatres and Dramaturgies of Reception in Jackie Sibblies Drury's *We are Proud to Present*', *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English* 4.1 (2016). <http://tinyurl.com/y8qqzcu8>

Part 2: Poetry

- Bulleted texts indicate required reading, viewing, or listening.

Core Reference Texts for Part 2

Eagleton, Terry. *How to Read a Poem* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).
<https://tinyurl.com/y7bs8ke8>

Robinson, Peter. *The Sound Sense of Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). Available as a pdf on Moodle or as a library e-book. Stay tuned!

Greene, Roland et al. *The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics: 4th edn* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012). <https://tinyurl.com/y94ehmux>

Unit 1: The Politics of Poetic Form

Lecture 1: The Politics of Poetic Form

- Caroline Levine, 'Strategic Formalism: Toward a New Method in Cultural Studies', *Victorian Studies* vol. 48, no. 4 (Summer 2006), 625-657.
<https://tinyurl.com/yc9zruk>
- Robinson, *The Sound Sense of Poetry*. Chapters 1-4 will be important in this half of the course, so please aim to read them during the course of the first four lectures.

Lecture 2: Uneasy Republic—Milton's *Lycidas* and the contentious sonnets

- John Milton, *Lycidas* and selected sonnets, in John Leonard, ed., *The Complete Poems* (London: Penguin, 1998). Available as a pdf on Moodle.
- J Martin Evans, '*Lycidas*', and R.F. Hall, 'Milton's sonnet and his contemporaries', in Dennis Danielson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). <https://tinyurl.com/yc6eofqy>

Lecture 3: Visions of Albion—William Blake's prophetic poems

- William Blake, selections from the prophetic books including *The Book of Thel*, *America a Prophecy* and *Europe a Prophecy* in David V. Erdman, ed., *The Poems of William Blake* (Harlow: Longman, 1971). Available as a pdf on Moodle.

- Christopher Rowland, 'Blake: Text and Image', in Stephen Prickett, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to the Bible and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 307-326. <https://tinyurl.com/yalgvjm9>

Lecture 4: 'Windrush Reflections'—Vahni Capildeo's *Odyssey Calling*

- Vahni Capildeo, *Odyssey Calling* (Bristol: Sad Press, 2020). Available as an eBook or pdf on Moodle. Stay tuned!
- Vidyan Ravinthiran, 'Myriad Minded', in *Poetry* (May 2020). <https://tinyurl.com/yd4l2e82>
- Elleke Boehmer, Chapter Two: Questions of Postcolonial Poetics', in *Postcolonial Poetics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 19-38. Available as an eBook or pdf on Moodle. Stay tuned!

Unit 2: America Was Promises—Modern American Poetry

Lecture 5: Langston Hughes, poems of the Harlem Renaissance

- Langston Hughes, poems from Arnold Rampersad, ed., *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* (New York: Vintage, 1994). Available as a pdf on Moodle.
- Ira Dworkin, "'Near the Congo": Langston Hughes and the Geopolitics of Internationalist Poetry', *American Literary History*, 24.4 (Winter 2012), 631-657. <https://tinyurl.com/ybd2thqu>

Lecture 6: Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language*

- Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language* (New York: Norton, 1978). <https://tinyurl.com/yc8vcnwa>
- Christopher Spaide, "'A Delicate, Vibrating Range of Difference": Adrienne Rich and the Post-war Lyric "We"', *College Literature*, 47.1 (Winter 2020), 89-124. <https://tinyurl.com/yafibrw>

Lecture 7: 'The Tradition': Jericho Brown and Terrance Hayes

- Jericho Brown, *The Tradition* (London: Picador, 2019). Available as an eBook or pdf on Moodle. Stay tuned!
- Terrance Hayes, *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin* (New York: Penguin, 2018). Available as an eBook or pdf on Moodle. Stay tuned!
- Emily Ruth Rutter, 'Contested Lineages: Fred Moten, Terrance Hayes, and the Legacy of Amiri Bakara', *African American Review*, 49.4 (Winter 2016), 329-342. <https://tinyurl.com/yb2hhmgb>

Unit 3: Emblems of Adversity—Modern Irish Poetry

Lecture 8: W.B. Yeats

- Selections from W.B. Yeats ('Meditations in Time of Civil War' and other poems). Available as a pdf on Moodle.
- R.F. Foster, 'Philosophy and Passion: W.B. Yeats, Ireland, and Europe', in Warwick Gould, ed., *Yeats Annual*, 20 (2016). <https://preview.tinyurl.com/yc8s84x4>

Lecture 9: Medbh McGuckian

- Selections from Medbh McGuckian, *On Ballycastle Beach* and *The High Caul Cap*
- Borbála Faragó, Ch.1 of *Medbh McGuckian* (Plymouth: Bucknell University Press, 2014). <https://tinyurl.com/y7hkez2z>

Lecture 10: Revision

EN106: Additional Studies in English: Writing in History

Dr Kevin Tracey

This module is designed to broaden and deepen your knowledge and understanding of the evolution of literature in English. This module addresses questions of literary culture, tradition, and genre from the perspective of both the writer and the reader. Engaging with a wide range of literary texts, the module will also focus on questions of theme, the significance of form, and the social and political impact of the literature. Tutorials supporting the core lectures will facilitate discussion and engagement with the topic and allow you to further develop writing skills.

Readings: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus* (any edition); Jeanette Winterson, *Frankenstein: A Love Story* (2019).

EN107 Additional Studies in English 2B: Literary Criticism and Theory

Dr Michael Cronin

This module takes a conceptual approach to the study of English literature and will allow students to broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding of literature. The module will focus on exploring particular conceptual and theoretical frameworks for understanding literature and culture. The module aims to develop an awareness and understanding of key themes and concepts underlying literature and culture today. Small group seminars, supporting the core lectures, will facilitate student discussion and engagement with the module ideas and allow students to further develop their writing skill

Readings: E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924); Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (1963). Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (1997)

Continuing with English in Second and Third 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 from 2nd year.