

## MA (Research) in Early Modern Literature and Drama For students entering in 2012/3

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| Awarding Institution:                       | University of Reading                       |
| Teaching Institution:                       | University of Reading                       |
| Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s): |   |
| Faculty:                                    | Arts, Humanities and Social Science Faculty |
| Programme length:                           | 1 years                                     |
| Date of specification:                      | 23/Jul/2012                                 |
| Programme Director:                         | Prof Michelle O'Callaghan                   |
| Programme Advisor:                          |   |
| Board of Studies:                           | English                                     |
| Accreditation:                              |   |

### Summary of programme aims

This degree provides an in-depth investigation into Early Modern English literature and drama. The programme will introduce students to methods of research essential to the study of Early Modern literature, including history of the book, manuscript studies, databases, and editing. The initial stages of the MA will also require students to think critically about the 'Early Modern' as a chronological category in relation to notions of periodisation in Modern English studies. The optional modules allow students to specialise in vibrant current research interests, both within the field and within the department. This will include such issues as the place of the stage; drama and the contexts of its performance; early modern reconfigurations of identity; negotiations of gender, class and race; and writing and reading practices.

### Transferable skills

Students on this MA will:

- 1) be able to analyse and think critically about complex texts and issues
- 2) develop postgraduate-level study, research, and writing skills
- 3) be able to assess the legitimacy of an argument in its own terms, and to formulate, both in written and in oral form, complex arguments of their own with an awareness of the relevance and consequences of their own formulations and claims
- 4) acquire an extensive understanding of the methods, resources, and skills necessary for them to develop their knowledge and understanding further
- 5) be able to communicate clearly to others their own thinking and the reasons for it

### Programme content

| Code   | Title   | Credits | Level |
|--------|---|---------|-------|
|        | <i>Compulsory Modules</i>                         |         |       |
| ENMMT  | Materiality and Textuality                        | 30      | 7     |
| ENMESE | Modern English Studies - EM                       | 20      | 7     |
| ENMEMD | 20,000-word dissertation                          | 90      | 7     |
|        | <i>Optional Modules</i>                           |         |       |
| ENMUS  | The Unruly Stage in Shakespearean England         | 20      | 7     |
| ENMWR  | Early Modern Writing and Reading                  | 20      | 7     |
| ENMIO  | Identity and Otherness in the Early Modern Period | 20      | 7     |
| ENMEGS | Guided Study in Early Modern Literature and Drama | 20      | 7     |

### Part-time or modular arrangements

Part-time and modular students are required to take the module on Modern English Studies in their first term, and Materiality and Textuality in the first term of their second year. They must complete four modules before beginning their dissertation.

### Progression requirements

### Summary of Teaching and Assessment

Students are taught in plenary seminar sessions, and also in smaller guided study groups, by the tutors of English and research methods in The Department of English Language and Literature. Active participation by students is expected and encouraged at every stage. Classes in research methods and resources are incorporated

into the Materiality and Textuality module. The dissertation is supported by a series of seminars on aspects of dissertation writing, followed by one-to-one supervision.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

**Mark Interpretation**

70 - 100% Distinction

60 - 69% Merit

50 - 59% Good standard (Pass)

**Failing categories:**

40 - 49% Work below threshold standard

0 - 39% Unsatisfactory Work

A Certificate may be awarded on the completion of at least 60 credits (i.e. the first three modules).

A Diploma may be awarded on completion of at least 120 credits to be made up of 90 credits of coursework plus the completion of an extra 30 credits in the form of essays.

**For Masters Degrees**

To pass the MA students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 in modules ENMMT and ENMESE. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

**For PG Diplomas**

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in modules ENMMT and ENMESE. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

**For PG Certificate**

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in modules ENMMT and ENMESE. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.

Reassessment arrangements are that:

- All modules other than the dissertation to be re-assessed in September.
- Students undergoing re-assessment to be allowed one month's extension to submit their dissertation.
- A failed dissertation to be re-submitted within one year from the original submission date.

**Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

At least a 2.i or its equivalent in English or in a discipline in which the study of literature has formed the substantial part.

**Admissions Tutor:** Professor Michelle O'Callaghan

**Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Student Employment, Experience and Careers Centre (SEEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@il) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see [www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

The MA can draw on Reading's lively interdisciplinary Early Modern Research Centre (Director Professor Michelle O'Callaghan; <http://www.reading.ac.uk/english-language-and-literature/Research/EnglishLiterature/ell-EMRC.aspx>), which, along with The Department, organises regular research seminars; MA students are strongly encouraged to take part in these. All students on the programme will be assigned a member of staff as a Personal Tutor. They will be represented on the Staff-Student Liaison Committee, and they will receive full printed information on the MA and the Department, in the form of a comprehensive handbook, on arrival.

A specific introduction to the use of the University Library will be provided. The University Library has substantial holdings in early modern literature. The Library also has a large microfilm collection, including the Thomason Tracts (an extensive collection of seventeenth-century texts). In addition, the Bodleian Library and the British Library are within easy reach. The University Library also has a strong range of digital research resources, including *Early English Books Online*, the *MLA Bibliography*, and the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

### **Career prospects**

The MA will provide excellent preparation for PhD research in terms of research skills and methods, and especially with reference to the Early Modern field. The ability to understand and work with complex material in detail has also supported students entering into, or returning to, employment in other fields. Those who wish to become, or who already are, teachers of English or the Humanities will find their specialist knowledge of Early Modern literature greatly enhanced, and their awareness of approaches and analytical techniques sharpened and developed. Skills of research presentation, self-reflection and presentation, will serve graduates well in a range of employment outside the classroom.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

These are not applicable to this course.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

##### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

- 1) Early Modern Literature in English. The forms and modes of cultural production and consumption in the Early Modern period, with specific reference to performance, manuscript, and the emergence of the book trade. Concepts, theories, and histories of English studies. Nationhood and ethnicity in relation to the literature and drama of empire and travel. The circulation of discourses of gender and sexuality in Early Modern literature and drama.
- 2) A range of the literary, theoretical, and historicist discourses that had an impact on the understanding and organisation of English studies.
- 3) Research methods and resources, including bibliography, palaeography, editorial practices, and

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- There will be two foundational, compulsory modules. Full-time students will take two modules in each of the first two terms.
- On the foundational modules, there will be one two-hour seminar per module, per week, for full-time students. Material for seminars will be set in advance and discussed in small groups with the seminar leader.
- On the optional, guided study modules, there will be one two-hour seminar per week for full-time students. Material for discussion will be arrived at on a week-by-week, consultative basis.
- Seminars will be devoted to acquainting students with the range of archival, print, and

databases.

electronic resources. Some seminars will take place in the University Library, using material from the special collections. Special seminars for the planning of the dissertation will be provided at the beginning of the writing period. Each student will arrive at his/her dissertation topic in advance of the writing, and in consultation with staff. Regular supervisions will be given during the summer term.

#### *Assessment*

Assessment on the 'Materiality and Textuality' module takes the form of a 5,000 word essay/bibliographical piece worth 30 credits. All of the other three modules taken will be worth 20 credits each, and will be assessed by long essay (4000 words). The dissertation may be up to 20,000 words, and must be submitted by 20 September.

### **Skills and other attributes**

#### **B. Intellectual skills - *able to:***

1. Think critically and analytically about texts and contexts.
2. Engage with a range of approaches and ideas, including the various ideas and perspectives of staff and students.
3. Evaluate and participate in their own learning process, and to develop an independence in learning and argument in written work.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- On all modules, students are encouraged to look at texts within a number of specific contexts, and to use texts and contexts to interrogate one another.
- In seminar, students are expected and encouraged to debate with one another and with tutors, and to raise questions and problems.
- One-to-one essay supervisions will be used to ensure that students take responsibility for the formulation, research, and presentation of their own ideas and arguments.

#### *Assessment*

Students must demonstrate the development of these skills in their coursework essays, and in their 20,000-word dissertation.

#### **C. Practical skills - *able to:***

1. Use research facilities such as libraries and the internet, appropriately and efficiently.
2. Use the special resources of the University Library, and apply bibliographical methods to research.
3. Use information technology, such as computer software, where it is useful.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- Library induction, including the use of electronic resources; raising awareness of the range of primary resources in Reading and beyond (using such resources as the Location Register of Literary Manuscripts).
- Training in bibliographical method and use of print resources.
- Attendance of University IT modules where appropriate; learning on modules to assess and differentiate the validity of internet text as information and/or argument, and learning to use these effectively in criticism and scholarship.

#### *Assessment*

There will be an assessed bibliographical component in the first term.

#### **D. Transferable skills - *able to*:**

1. Think about present-day texts and issues in the light of their literary and cultural antecedents.
2. Analyse and think critically about complex texts and issues.
3. Assess the legitimacy of an argument in its own terms, and to formulate, both in written and oral form, complex arguments of their own, with an awareness of the relevance and consequences of their own formulations and claims.
4. Communicate clearly to others their own thinking and the reasons behind it, and work with others in groups, acknowledging and comprehending a variety of arguments.
5. Promote awareness of ways and resources for the development of further knowledge and understanding, as part of an ability to learn independently.
6. Take responsibility for their own work and to meet deadlines.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- The structure of the course, and of each module, is designed and will be taught to make explicit the emergence of many of the chronological ideas that have informed the critical institution of English studies.
- Discuss and analyse a wide variety of texts in a range of historical and intellectual contexts.
- Engage closely with these texts to develop critical and analytical skills.
- Participate actively in seminar discussion, and prepare and deliver oral presentations to their peers.
- A familiarity with library and IT resources is developed through the course both in terms of discussion and information on where material is available, and how such material should be approached and evaluated.
- Students will be encouraged to develop independent and disciplined thought in seminar and written work.

#### *Assessment*

All these transferable skills are assessed in the writing of the essays and the dissertation.

**Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**