

MA in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture: Relocating Modernity For students entering in 2012/3

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:	Dr Lucy Bending
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	English
Accreditation:	

Summary of programme aims

Many aspects of modern culture which are usually identified with the twentieth century, and which remain central today, had their roots in the early nineteenth century and in the Victorian period. This MA aims to offer an introduction to a number of key debates and issues within nineteenth-century literature and culture, arguing that our understanding of modernity can be greatly enhanced by an awareness of its origins in the earlier period. This focus on the perception of change is also applied to English studies itself: introductory work will invite students to think about the advantages and liabilities of chronological terms, with seminars on, for instance, nineteenth-century ideas of the Renaissance, and on early twentieth-century ideas of eminent Victorians. From introductory work through specialised modules, students will develop their ability to question and to think critically and analytically about nineteenth-century literature and its institutional contexts. The MA will also provide students with skills and confidence to undertake research in their chosen area, and will provide appropriate training in research methods and resources.

Transferable skills

Students on this MA will:

- 1) be able to analyse and think critically about complex texts and issues.
- 2) be able to 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.
- 3) be aware of methods and resources to develop their knowledge and understanding further, as part of an ability to learn independently.
- 4) be able to communicate clearly to others their own thinking and the reasons for it.

Programme content

Code	Title	Credits	Level
ENMMT	Materiality and Textuality	30	7
ENMESN	Modern English Studies - Nineteenth-Century	20	7
ENMVNE	Nation and Empire in the Nineteenth-Century	20	7
ENMSSC	Science Sex and Crime	20	7
ENMVD	20,000 word Dissertation	90	7
ENMVES	Essay for students taking Diploma	30	7

Part-time or modular arrangements

Part-time students are required to take the module on Modern English Studies in their first term. They must take the Materiality and Textuality module in the first term of their second year, and complete four modules before submitting the dissertation. The timing of optional modules will be agreed between the student and the programme director.

Progression requirements

Summary of Teaching and Assessment

Students are taught in group seminars by the tutors of nineteenth-century literature in English. Active participation by the students is expected and encouraged in the seminar teaching. In addition, each student will

be expected to give a presentation of work in progress towards his/her dissertation. Classes in research methods and resources, which will support and enhance learning throughout the course, are given special attention in Materiality and Textuality. The dissertation is further supported by a series of seminars on aspects of dissertation writing, followed by one-to-one supervision.

Each module will be examined through coursework which will be double-marked by the module convenor and another teacher on that module. Students will be encouraged to submit a draft of each piece of work for comment prior to final submission.

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 ENMESN. 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 ENMESN. 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 ENMESN. 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:

- A 2.i or higher in English or in a discipline in which the study of literature has formed a substantial part.
- In the case of non-standard applicants, applications will be assessed on their individual merits, taking into account relevant experience.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Lucy Bending

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 (SECC), In-sessional 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

A specific induction to the use of the University Library is provided. The University has substantial holdings in nineteenth-century literature, including extensive collections in the literature of the 1890s. There are also good resources in critical and cultural theory. In addition, Reading has strong links with the V&A, and is close to the Bodleian Library and the British Library. Reading University also has a strong range of digital research resources including the MLA Bibliography and the Dictionary of National Biography.

The Department runs a regular series of research seminars in which MA students will become involved. All students on the course are assigned a member of staff as a Personal Tutor, and will also be able to participate in a regular students' contact group in the Department of English Language and Literature. Students will be provided with a Course Handbook to ensure that they know what is required of them and what they may require of their tutors.

Career prospects

The course provides excellent preparation for PhD research in terms of the emphasis on critical and analytical thinking and the examination of the construction and formulation of argument. 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 the nineteenth-century 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

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

- 1) Nineteenth-century literature and culture.
 - i. the emergence of new forms and genres, and changes in modes of cultural production and consumption.
 - ii. the role of nineteenth-century scientific thinking in the formation of modern intellectual culture.
 - iii. the role of imperialism and nationalism in nineteenth-century literature.
 - iv. the development of discourses on gender and sexuality and their impact on notions of identity.
- 2) A range of literary and other theories relevant to the study of these

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- 1) There will be four modules, and full-time students will take two in the first two terms.
- 2) There will be one two-hour seminar per module per week for full-time students. Material for the seminars will be set in advance and discussed in small groups with the seminar leader.
- 3) Seminars will be devoted to acquainting students with the range of archival, print and 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

3) Research methods and resources

writing period. Each student will discuss the dissertation in advance, and 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, and the differing ideas or perspectives of staff and other students.
- 3) evaluate and participate in their own learning process, and to develop an independence of learning and argument in written work.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- 1) 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.
- 2) In seminars, students are expected and encouraged to debate with one another and the tutors, and to raise questions and problems. In essays, students are expected to engage with relevant critical debates.
- 3) One-to-one essay supervisions will be used to ensure that students take responsibility for the formulation of their own ideas and arguments.

Assessment

Students must demonstrate the development of these skills in their coursework essays and 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 necessary and useful.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- library induction, including 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) texts as information and argument, and using these effectively in criticism and scholarship.

Assessment

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

D. Transferable skills - *able to:*

1. Think about contemporary texts and issues in the light of their literary and cultural inheritance.
2. analyse and think critically about complex texts

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- The structure of the course and each module is designed and will be taught to make explicit connections between Victorianism and modernity.

- 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 for 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 meeting deadlines.

- Discuss and analyse a wide variety of texts in a range of broadly defined historical and intellectual contexts.
- Engage closely with these texts to develop critical and analytical skills.
- Participate actively in seminar group 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 materials are available, and how they may 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 expect 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 module and programme handbooks. 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 processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.

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