

MA Literary Studies Programme Specification

Awarding Institution: University of London
(Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Final Award:
MA Literary Studies

Programme Name:
MA Literary Studies:

Total credit value for programme: 180 credits

Name of Interim Exit Award(s):
Postgraduate Certificate in Literary Studies
Postgraduate Diploma in Literary Studies

Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time or 2 years full-time

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s): (101037) Comparative Literary Studies

QAA Benchmark Group: Not applicable

FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7

Programme accredited by: Not applicable

Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: May 2024

Home Department: English and Creative Writing

Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:
Not applicable

Programme overview

This intellectually rich and rigorous programme gives you the opportunity to develop the study of literature at an advanced level from a variety of perspectives. In the first term you are introduced to, will consolidate your knowledge of, and develop an understanding of **four areas of literary study**: Modern and Contemporary American Literature and Culture; Critical Theory; Modern and Contemporary Literature; Romantic, Victorian and Decadent Literature and Culture.

Students may wish to focus their studies by choosing options in Term 2 that correspond directly with a particular compulsory module in Term 1, thereby creating a pathway through the programme that would conclude with a related dissertation. However, students are free to choose from the full range of available options in Term 2 to broaden the scope of their studies.

Both compulsory and optional modules enable you to combine theoretical angles with the close reading of a wide range of texts, often from different media (literary, filmic, visual), periods, and cultural, geographic and linguistic backgrounds – though all texts will be studied in English, in English translation, or with English subtitles.

A Research Skills Workshop will run a number of sessions throughout the year, including, for example, library and electronic resources, essay-writing at Master's level, planning and developing dissertation projects, applying for MPhil/PhD research.

You will also be able to take part in GLITS, the Department's weekly research seminar; and in the many activities organised by the Graduate School and other Goldsmiths departments. Students will enrich their studies by attending events organised by the ECW's Research Centres: [the Decadence Research Centre](#); the Centre for Comparative Literature; [Goldsmiths Writers' Centre](#); and, co-organised with The Department of Sociology, [The Centre for Philosophy and Critical Thought](#).

Programme entry requirements

The standard requirement is an Upper Second-Class BA or equivalent degree in English, Modern Languages, or a related humanities/arts subject (e.g., Drama, Philosophy); but other qualifications of equivalent level are considered, as are degree results below the upper second class where there are indications of academic strength in this specialism.

A high level of competence in written and spoken English is also required.

Students without BA-equivalent qualifications who have substantial work experience (e.g., in literary journalism, creative writing, publishing etc.) that may be considered as equivalent to formal qualifications, may be admitted.

Aims of the programme:

The main purpose of the programme is to offer a challenging, flexible and advanced scheme of study invigorated by current research, which introduces or extends your knowledge and critical/contextual understanding of literary studies. The Masters programme, with different emphases according to the areas of literary studies students may focus on, aspires to:

1. enhance independent critical and evaluative skills
2. promote your analytical engagement with the complexities of literary discourse
3. expand your knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultural, historical and intellectual contexts of literature and other media
4. deepen your understanding of transformations in literary genres and conventions in the specific periods or cultural areas of your chosen specialisations within the programme, and how particular traditions relate to one another as they evolve
5. enhance your knowledge and understanding of diverse literary movements and schools in their historical and cultural contexts, and of key genres central to their particular culture or period
6. encourage you to appreciate literary practices in the light of the traditions from which they emerge
7. develop your critical awareness of literary language and its responses to historical and cultural contexts
8. encourage you to develop your understanding of and proficiency in interdisciplinary approaches to literature and culture
9. develop your methodological skills in the application of theory to literary and cultural criticism
10. expand your knowledge and understanding of the key theoretical and philosophical figures and tendencies informing particular areas of literary studies, and develop your awareness of the creative traffic between literary and theoretical movements
11. encourage your self-development into professionally organised and interactive individuals by practising skills of selection, assimilation and communication in both written and oral domains
12. facilitate a learning environment that offers an appropriate foundation for further scholarly research in literary studies

Students who successfully complete the MA Literary Studies will demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	A wide range of texts from different genres and areas	All modules
A2	Appropriate methodological, conceptual and analytical tools and terminology with which to engage with a variety of texts	All modules
A3	The relationships between identity and cultural expressions	All modules
A4	Advanced analytical skills specific to particular genres within your area of study, and/or for an interdisciplinary approach to literature, enabling its comparison with other cultural	All modules
A5	A selected topic in your field, and the secondary scholarly literature devoted to it	Dissertation (MA Literary Studies)
A6	The relationship between literary and cultural production and historical context	All modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Conduct detailed and sensitive textual analyses informed by appropriate contextual knowledge	All modules
B2	Synthesise expertly multiple, diverse, but relevant contexts and perspectives	All modules
B3	Assimilate and critically evaluate different theoretical perspectives and alternative accounts of complex cultural formations	All modules
B4	Formulate coherent and persuasive interpretations and arguments informed by high standards of scholarly accuracy	All modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Perceive and account critically and sensitively for interactions between cultural contexts and literary forms in the creation and reception of textual meanings	All modules
C2	Use a range of critical commentary and theoretical perspectives discriminatingly and skillfully	All modules
C3	Analyse proficiently processes of change in the generic conventions of literary and visual texts, and how these respond to different cultural or historical contexts	All modules
C4	Use a range of critical commentary and theoretical perspectives discriminatingly	All modules
C5	Produce own written work to high scholarly standards in organisation, relevance, expression, referencing, and bibliography	All modules
C6	Design and execute an independent extended project of research	Dissertation (MA Literary Studies)
C7	Prepare, contribute to, and on occasion lead seminar discussion on complex texts and contextual issues	All modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Enhanced communication and discussion skills, in written and oral contexts	All modules
D2	Facility in accessing verbal data using hard copy / electronic resources	All modules
D3	Advanced ability to compare and evaluate different verbal or visual materials	All modules

D4	Capacity to handle ideas in rational, critical and evaluative ways	All modules
Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D5	Open-mindedness and capacity for independent judgement	All modules
D6	Management of own learning, including working effectively to deadlines	All modules
D7	Application of skills of detailed close analysis to a variety of texts and contexts	All modules
D8	Power to organise information cogently, and to assimilate and evaluate competing arguments	All modules
D9	Ability to make positive contributions to groups, and perception of group dynamics	All modules

And, more particularly, as appropriate to your chosen focus of study:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A7	A body of literature from a range of different national, historical or geographical areas representative of major tendencies and problems in your areas of study	The compulsory core modules
A8	A range of major critical approaches to, definitions of, and debates in your chosen pathway and related areas (e.g. postmodern practices, postcolonial writing; or on particular authors and problems of the period or area of study)	The compulsory core modules and all option modules
A9	The social, ideological or political contexts and implications of different critical practices as appropriate to your chosen areas of study	The compulsory core modules and all option modules

A10	A diverse range of major thinkers and movements whose ideas have influenced the development of literary and/or cultural studies in your areas of study	The compulsory core modules and all option modules
A11	Concepts of period and genre applicable to the literary, artistic, philosophical or	The compulsory core modules and all option modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B5	Integrate diverse evidence into balanced, coherent and rigorous textual evaluations as appropriate to your chosen areas of study	All modules
B6	Expound accurately and critically a range of discourses in literary, aesthetic, cultural, linguistic, or social theory and criticism as appropriate to your chosen areas of study	All modules
B7	Develop the necessary advanced methodological skills required for the application of critical or theoretical perspectives to literary or cultural texts from a range of periods and provenances as appropriate to your chosen areas of study	All modules
B8	Articulate a coherent and independent theoretical perspective on the study of the literature or culture studied in your chosen areas of study	All modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
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C8	Use sophisticated close reading to produce theoretically and contextually informed independent interpretations of a range of literary texts according to the focus and scope of your chosen areas of study	All modules
C9	Show understanding and ability to apply accurately the terminologies appropriate to advanced comparative, theoretical, literary, visual and/or cultural studies as appropriate to your chosen areas of study	All modules
C10	Research literary, visual and/or theoretical topics using data resources	All modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	AS ABOVE (D1 to D9 at programme level)	All modules

How you will learn

Knowledge and Understanding: The Department is committed to the centrality of the seminar in the teaching and learning process. All modules provide a weekly seminar for every participant, which reinforces knowledge gained through reading, lectures and presentations, and enables you to enhance and develop your understanding.

Term 1

Full-time students take the following **four** 15-credit modules; part-time students choose **two** modules in Term 1, Year 1, and **two** modules in Term 1, Year 2:

- EN71062C “Pathways in Literary Studies: Modern and Contemporary Literature” (15 credits)
- EN71064B “Pathways in Literary Studies: Modern and Contemporary American Literature and Culture” (15 credits)
- EN71061B “Pathways in Literary Studies: Critical Theory” (15 credits)
- EN71072B “Pathways in Literary Studies: Nineteenth-century Literary Romanticisms” (15 credits)

Term 2

Full-time students take a total of **60** credits from a list made available by the Department of English and Creative each year. Part-time students choose **30** credits' worth of modules in Term 2, Year 1, and **30** credits' worth of modules in Term 2, Year 2:*

*Under College regulations, where academically appropriate and approved by the relevant Programme Coordinators, students may choose a module from another College programme.

Term 3

EN71065B Dissertation

Student may wish to focus their studies by choosing options in Term 2 that correspond directly with a particular compulsory module in Term 1, thereby creating a pathway through the programme that would conclude with a related dissertation. However, students are free to choose from the full range of available options in Term 2 to broaden the scope of their studies.

In all of these, learning is through a 2-hour weekly block for each module taken. This block may contain a 1-hr lecture and a 1-hour seminar, or it may comprise a 2hr seminar. This structure enables the provision of contextual and/or theoretical perspectives and detailed seminar discussion in relation to the texts studied.

These modules support and develop all of programme outcomes (1) to (5) and (7) to (11). Outcomes (1), (2) and (5) are further supported and sustained by specialist option modules, which are underpinned by up-to date staff research specialisms. Outcome (6) is further supported by an individually supervised dissertation, involving guided independent research, and by a required, non-assessed 'Dissertation Workshop' in the Summer Term, in which each student will offer a presentation on their chosen research topic. These sessions will address the methodological and theoretical problems and challenges involved in independent research.

Cognitive and Thinking Skills:

These skills are cultivated across the programme's syllabi. Through seminars and lectures you are continuously exposed to—and encouraged to evolve—fresh perceptions and evaluations of literary, critical, and visual forms and techniques; and through self-managed learning you further assimilate a range of contextual approaches to and analyses of them.

Subject Specific Skills and Professional Behaviours and Attitudes:

These skills are cultivated across the curriculum, though with varying emphases according to modules. In addition, the Programme Handbook provides initial advice on aspects of C5, and Information Services on aspects of C10. Suitable bibliographical information is normative for each module and its efficacy tested in student evaluation. The compulsory core modules provide a grounding in C6-10, and the option modules build further on that grounding, particularly in relation to C1, C2, C4 and C9. Specific sessions on essay writing and dissertation preparation further support C5-6, and C10. C6 is particularly addressed in the Dissertation Workshop and in the programme of individual supervision offered in the summer period, devoted to the dissertation and facilitated by guidance in the Programme Handbook. Seminars are the forum for C7.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies linked to these transferable skills:

Powers of expression and discussion, and the handling of ideas, are developed everywhere in the programme, since all modules require production of written work that communicates and argues well, and all modules use seminar discussion as part of the learning process, thus supporting D7-8 in particular. These are further supported by a dedicated Dissertation Workshop in which all student present and discuss their projects. Staff give module-specific help with D2. D3-5 should be demonstrated to you by staff and peer example. D6 is a crucial skill everywhere fostered in a timetabled curriculum.

How you will be assessed

Knowledge and Understanding: Summative assessment takes the following forms, allowing you to demonstrate a range of appropriate skills: (i) by a 3000-word essay for all modules (some option modules taken from other programmes may be assessed differently, please check option information) (ii) by a 12,000-word dissertation. Staggering of essay deadlines allows for feedback and formative assessment.

Cognitive and Thinking Skills: These skills are assessed through the essays and the dissertation.

Subject Specific Skills and Professional Behaviours and Attitudes: The skills in C1-6 and C8-10 are tested through the assessment methods of essays and dissertation. C6 is tested mainly but not exclusively in the dissertation. C7 is included among the department's measures of student progress but for technical reasons (policies on anonymity, verification) it is informally assessed.

Assessment of Transferable Skills: D1-8 are repeatedly tested during the programme through the requirement to produce, by specified dates, written discussions, through the dissertation, the dedicated workshops, and through the adoption of seminars as the key learning medium. Attainment in D1-8 is measured in the assessed written work. D9 is an ubiquitous element of the programme: it is subject to formative tutor assessment by oral feedback.

Your written work is assessed with regard to (a) the Department's general assessment criteria, (b) the particular assessment criteria identified for a given module, and (c) the requirements of the specific essay or assignment undertaken.

The Department's general assessment criteria for written work are as follows and should be borne in mind throughout your work in your degree programme:

1. Relevance of discussion and argument to the topic; ability to discriminate between merely descriptive statements and critical analysis, and to identify pertinent issues with precision.
2. Ability to present, sustain and conclude fluently a discussion, investigation or complex argument based on close and imaginative engagement with the theories and text(s) in question, and to draw reasoned and logical conclusions.
3. Clarity of the work in terms of legibility, spelling, punctuation and grammar; and the professionalism of the presentation.

Assessed work is given a percentage mark. The following explanations will give an idea of how marks are assigned. (But note that marking criteria are flexible. An excellent discussion may be compromised by poor expression or organisation: an eloquent discussion may be fundamentally irrelevant. Examples of other factors adversely affecting a mark would be repetition, or manifest incompleteness or serious failure to meet the prescribed length.)

Grading Criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	Evidence of extensive relevant reading and an outstanding grasp of current major issues in the field. This knowledge will have been reviewed critically with insight and independence of thought. Arguments and the presentation of evidence will demonstrate sophisticated reasoning and be exceptionally clear, well-focused and cogent.

70-79%	Distinction	Mature and full grasp of issues raised by the question, communicated fluently within a structured essay demonstrating analytical rigour and well substantiated independent thought and reaching cogent conclusions; supported by detailed insight into primary texts and into context and/or secondary criticism; a professional standard of execution.
60-69%	Merit	Lucid and analytical discussion showing clear understanding of the principal issues raised by the question/topic, and making aptly selective use of module text(s) and concerns and of relevant contextual or secondary criticism in a structured way to reach substantiated conclusions. Well-articulated and presented to a good standard of professionalism.
50-59%	Pass	Adequate discussion showing understanding of some of the issues raised by the question/topic, making use of module text(s) and concerns in a reasonably coherent way to reach sufficiently substantiated conclusions. Satisfactorily clear, with an adequate standard of presentation and execution.
30-49%	Fail	At this level of study, an essay, dissertation or examination answer may show adequate knowledge of the syllabus but fail on grounds of inadequate relevance to the question/topic; it may be fluently argued but lack adequate evidence of the student having understood the work set for the module; or it may be relevant and well-informed but incoherent in expression and argument.
10-29%	Bad fail	A submission that shows a significant overall failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes. Written work shows no evidence of an attempt to address the question.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment.

Mode of study

On Campus

Programme structure

The programme is available in full-time (12 months) and part-time (24 months) modes. It awards a total of 180 credits. All students take eight taught modules (each worth 15 credits) and complete a dissertation (60 credits).

The dissertation is also compulsory, and is submitted at the end of the first year by full-time students, and at the end of the second year in the case of part-time students.

Full-time students take four compulsory core modules in the Autumn Term and four option modules in the Spring Term. Part-time students take two compulsory core modules in the Autumn Term and two option modules in the Spring Term of the first year and follow the same pattern in their second year. All the department's modules, and especially the option modules, are informed by the research interests of staff.

In accordance with Goldsmiths' general MA examination regulations, students must pass all assessed elements in order to be awarded the degree.

MA Literary Studies – Full Time

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Pathways in Literary Studies: Modern and Contemporary Literature	EN71062C	15	7	Compulsory	1
Pathways in literary Studies: Modern and Contemporary American Literature and Culture	EN71064B	15		Compulsory	1
Pathways in Literary Studies: Critical Theory”	EN71061B	15		Compulsory	1
Pathways in Literary Studies: Nineteenth-century Literary Romanticisms	EN71072B	15		Compulsory	1

Optional modules to the value of 60 credits (from a list made annually by the Department of English and Creative Writing)	Various	60	7	Optional	2
Dissertation (MA Literary Studies)	EN71065B	60	7	Compulsory	1-3

MA Literary Studies – Part Time

Year 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Two modules (30 credits) from these four compulsory modules:					
Pathways in Literary Studies: Modern and Contemporary Literature	EN71062C	15	7	Compulsory	1
Pathways in literary Studies: Modern and Contemporary American Literature and Culture	EN71064B	15	7	Compulsory	1
Pathways in Literary Studies: Critical Theory”	EN71061B	15	7	Compulsory	1
Pathways in Literary Studies: Nineteenth-century Literary Romanticisms	EN71072B	15	7	Compulsory	1
and					
Optional modules to the value of 30 credits (from a list made annually by the Department of English and Creative Writing)	Various	30	7	Optional	2

Year 2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
The remaining two modules (30 credits) form these four compulsory modules					
Pathways in Literary Studies: Modern and Contemporary Literature	EN71062C	15	7	Compulsory	1
Pathways in literary Studies: Modern and Contemporary American Literature and Culture	EN71064B	15	7	Compulsory	1
Pathways in Literary Studies: Critical Theory”	EN71061B	15	7	Compulsory	1
Pathways in Literary Studies: Nineteenth-century Literary Romanticisms	EN71072B	15	7	Compulsory	1
and					
Optional modules to the value of 30 credits (from a list made annually by the Department of English and Creative Writing)	Various	30	7	Optional	2
Dissertation (MA Literary Studies)	EN71065B	60	7	Compulsory	1-3

Part-Time mode progression requirements Year 1 to Year 2: The two compulsory core modules taken must be passed to progress to year 2. Any failed option must be retaken in Year 2.

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least three a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success. All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the [Library](#) and information available on [Learn.gold \(VLE\)](#) so that they have access to department/ programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the [Goldsmiths website](#) and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support

arrangements should their circumstances change. The [Disability](#) and [Wellbeing](#) Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The [Careers Service](#) provides central support for skills enhancement, and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report ([HEAR](#)).

The [Centre for Academic Language and Literacies](#) works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

Employability and potential career opportunities

Graduates of this programme have gone on to pursue careers in publishing, journalism, public relations, teaching, advertising, the civil service, business, industry, the media.

Skills: Transferable skills, including enhanced communication and discussion skills in written and oral contexts; the ability to analyse and evaluate a wide variety of spoken and written texts from informal as well as institutional settings; an understanding of the concept of communicative competence; the ability to organise information, and to assimilate and evaluate competing arguments.

Programme-specific requirements

All taught postgraduate degrees have a minimum total value of 180 credits and involve one calendar year of full-time study. Some programmes may extend over more than one calendar year and, when this is the case, they have a higher total credit value. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section “How the programme is structured” above. Normally, all modules are at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the [Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework](#).

Intermediate Exit Points for the MA in Literary Studies

Students may apply for the intermediate exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma, if extenuating circumstance prevent the completion of the MA. These intermediate awards may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to

the value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. The awards are made without classification. For the award of the Postgraduate Certificate, two compulsory core modules must be passed, along with two optional modules, amounting to 60 credits. For the award of Postgraduate Diploma to be awarded, all compulsory core modules must be passed, along with four optional modules, amounting to 120 credits.

Programme-specific rules and facts

Progression Requirement

Part-time students must have passed the compulsory modules taken before proceeding to the final year of the programme. Any failed option must be retaken in year two.

Tuition fee costs

Information on tuition fee costs is available at: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/students/fee-support/>

Specific programme costs

Not applicable