



University of
Chester

Department of English

**Summer Reading for Students Commencing Studies in Single
Honours English Literature in September 2021**

May 2021

Welcome to the Department of English at the University of Chester! We hope you are looking forward to starting your studies with us in September; we're certainly looking forward to meeting you!

We encourage all of our students to read as widely as possible prior to the start of their studies and during their time with us. This document will provide you with an example of some of the texts you are likely to study during your first year, and you will receive a definitive reading list for each module when you join us in September.

The University is currently developing a scheme for first year students whereby some of the books on the reading lists will be made available to you, as e-books, for free. Unfortunately, at this time, we are unable to advise you as to which books these will be.

The department would like to stress that students are under no obligation to buy copies of all of the texts listed. The University Library is incredibly well stocked; all of the texts will be available on a mixture of short-term and long-term loans, and many are available online. You may, of course, wish to have your own copies of some texts, particularly if you wish to make annotations, but there should be plenty of second-hand copies available through online book stores.

Some of the texts on the reading lists may contain subjects that are difficult to read about/discuss. If you are uncomfortable with any of the topics please do speak to your tutor when you join us in September or contact us at englishadmin@chester.ac.uk.

The English Department would like to wish you an enjoyable summer and we look forward to meeting you in September.

EN4002 Approaches to Literature

Module Convenor: Dr Richard Leahy (email: r.leahy@chester.ac.uk)

CORE TEXTS

These are the two set texts for the course. Alongside these theory texts, we will also be studying the literary texts listed beneath:

Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, Fifth edition (Oxon: Routledge 2016)

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory: Fourth Edition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017)

We will also be studying the following novels, in addition to other literary texts. You will therefore need **your own copies** of these books too. You may already have your own copies of these books, which is fine, but these are the preferred versions we will be using to reference pages in lectures and seminars.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997)

Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (New York: Scholastic, 2008)

Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights* (London: Scholastic, 1995)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

The following books are **recommended** (rather than set) texts. You do not have to buy these, but if you can afford them they are worth getting, as your understanding of the material on the course (and, indeed, of your three years studying English) will be improved a great deal by reading them and applying their ideas. They may be available cheaply second hand (e.g. at the university bookshop, second-hand shops in town; or on-line via abebooks.co.uk, Amazon marketplace or eBay, for instance). If you can get an earlier edition for less than a more recent one, this is acceptable. And of course, you can borrow them from the university library:

Robert Eaglestone, *Doing English*, third edition (London: Routledge, 2009)

Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (eds), *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, second edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

CONTENT WARNING

Although we are studying a selection of Young Adult texts on this Module, the nature of the theories we apply to them can lead to some difficult conversations about gender, race, sexuality, class, and identity. These topics will be treated objectively, critically, and most crucially, with respect. If anyone has any issues with the content, please get in touch with the Module Leader to make them aware.

EN4003 Contemporary Literature

Module Convenor: Dr Ashley Chantler (a.chantler@chester.ac.uk)

[A first-year module taken only by Single Honours English Literature students.]

This core module for Single Honours English students is designed to introduce contemporary literature. Focussing on a range of contemporary writers, the module provides the key skills necessary for degree-level literary analysis. The module is also interested in the creation and expansion of the canon: how texts become part of literary history, or fall silent; and why certain texts are prioritised for study at university. Further to enhancing their critical reading skills, students will develop a more profound understanding of the canon and literary 'value', and of the difference between personal opinion and critical opinion. The module will look at the works of established (canonical) authors (such as Harold Pinter and Ian McEwan) and prize-winning texts (such as Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* and McCarthy's *The Road*), exploring the judgement of literary merit that led to their success. But the module will also consider new work by authors not yet established (such as short stories published by *Flash: The International Short-Short Story Magazine*).

Included in the set texts for this module are the following:

Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending* (Vintage, 2012)

Doris Lessing, *The Fifth Child* (Harper Perennial, 2007) [The front cover has the image of a boy standing at a window]

Harold Pinter, *Celebration & The Room (Faber Plays)* (Faber and Faber, 2006) [Two plays in one book]

EN4007 FICTIONAL WORLDS

Module Convenor: Professor Deborah Wynne (d.wynne@chester.ac.uk)

This module explores how, and with what effects, writers construct a wide variety of fictional worlds. Although prose – the novel and the short story – is the main focus of the module, we will also consider how verse can offer different perspectives on worlds, both real and imagined. Throughout the module we will consider ideas of genre and narrative, examining the use made by different authors of the techniques of fiction writing, as well as reflecting on the processes involved in reading, discussing and writing about fictional texts. Below is a list of some of the texts we will discuss on the module:

Novels (you will need to buy copies of these books):

Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (Penguin, 2008) ISBN-978-0141030937

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* (Norton, 2013) ISBN-978-0-393-93234-8

Alan Garner, *Elidor* (HarperCollins, 2014) ISBN- 978-0007274789

Sarah Waters, *The Night Watch* (Virago, 2006) ISBN-978-1844082414

Short stories (with links to PDF copies):

Zora Neale Hurston, 'Sweat':

<https://www.houstonisd.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=133958&dataid=193682&FileName=sweat.pdf>

Ira Sher, 'The Man in the Well': <https://asyn.files.wordpress.com/2009/09/the-man-in-the-well.pdf>

Thomas Hardy, 'The Distracted Preacher':

<https://www.freeclassicebooks.com/Thomas%20Hardy/Short%20Stories/The%20Distracted%20Preacher.pdf>

Other material will be provided during the module.

EN4008 Studying Literature 1

Module Convenor: Dr Eileen Pollard (e.pollard@chester.ac.uk)

This first of two foundational core modules that are the basis for all students of English at level four. Using a range of texts (poetry, a novella and a novel, studied in detail) from the Romantic to the late Victorian period, the module introduces students to the key skills of literary analysis required at degree level. The module will explicitly consider the skills involved in reading, writing essays, using secondary sources and understanding context at university, as well as introducing students to the important foundational techniques, tools, and terminology of literary criticism. In seminars and tutorials, students will focus on the discussion and analysis of individual texts, for example, Romantic poetry, *A Christmas Carol* and *Pride and Prejudice*.

EN4009 Studying Literature 2

Module Convenor: Dr Eileen Pollard (e.pollard@chester.ac.uk)

This second of two foundational core modules is the basis for all students of English at level four. Using a range of texts (a play, a novel and short stories, studied in detail) from the Renaissance to the present day, the module introduces students to the key skills of literary analysis required at degree level. The module will explicitly consider the skills involved in reading, writing essays, researching historical periods and modern-day texts at university, as well as introducing students to the important foundational techniques, tools, and terminology of literary criticism. In seminars and tutorials, students will focus on the discussion and analysis of individual texts, for example, *Hamlet*, *Purple Hibiscus*, and *Nutshell*.

We will be studying the following novels, in addition to other literary texts. You will therefore need **your own copies** of the books.

Title	ISBN	Author	Price	Publisher
<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	9780141439518	Jane Austen	4.99	Penguin Classics
<i>A Christmas Carol (and Other Christmas Writings)</i>	9780140439052	Charles Dickens	6.99	Penguin Classics
<i>Hamlet</i>	9780141396507	Shakespeare, William;Prescott, Paul;Sinfield, Alan;Sinfield, Alan	7.99	Penguin Classics
<i>Small Island</i>	9780755307500	Andrea Levy	7.37	Tinder Press
<i>Nutshell</i>	9781784705114	Ian McEwan	8.99	Vintage Publishing