

# EN126-30 History and Textuality

**22/23**

**Department**

English and Comparative Literary Studies

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 1

**Module leader**

Michael Meeuwis

**Credit value**

30

**Module duration**

20 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This module will be the core first-year module for students taking VQ32 English & History. History and Textuality explores the limits of history and narrative by considering subjects that have traditionally said to be ahistorical, such as the emotions, sensation, the “primitive,” and the non-human world.

[Module web page](#)

### Module aims

By exposing students to a wide range of historical and literary topics and focusing attention on the theoretical frameworks that scholars use to study these topics, this year will help students define their interests and select an area of concentration within the degree.

### Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

#### TERM 1

1: Introduction to the module and its objectives

## UNIT 1: What is History?

Core texts: Selections from Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790), Carlyle, The French Revolution (1837), and Michelet, History of the French Revolution (1847)

2: ARCHIVES: Farge, The Allure of the Archives; Steedman, Dust: The Archive and Cultural History

3: EVIDENCE: Veyne, Writing History; Chartier, The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution; Corbin, The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination

4: METHODS: Braudel, On History; Koselleck, Futures Past

5: CHALLENGES: James, The Black Jacobins; Gilroy, The Black Atlantic

## UNIT 2: What is Literary History?

Core text: Shelley, Frankenstein (1818)

7: NARRATIVE and HISTORY: Watt, The Rise of the Novel, Michael McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel; Butler, "Frankenstein and Radical Science"

8: HISTORICAL FORMALISMS: Gallagher and Greenblatt, Practicing New Historicism; Hacking, Historical Ontology; Armstrong, "A Gothic History of the British Novel"; Kramnick and Nersessian, "Form and Explanation"

9: HISTORICAL MATERIALISMS: Lukács, The Historical Novel, Williams, Marxism and Literature; Jameson, "Marxism and Historicism," Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe

10: CRITIQUE: Michel Foucault, "Was ist Aufklärung?"; Judith Butler, "What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue"; Felski, The Limits of Critique

## UNIT 3: What is Cultural Memory?

Core text: Alison Bechdel, Fun Home

11: INHERITANCE: Hobsbawm and Ranger, The Invention of Tradition; Nora, "Between Memory and History"; Thompson, The Voice of the Past 12: MEMORIALIZATION: Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country; Doss, Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America; Crimp, "The Spectacle of Mourning" and "Portraits of People with AIDS" Week

13: MEDIATION: Landsberg, Prosthetic Memory; Rosenstone, Visions of the Past; Bell and Gray, "History on Television"

14: TRAUMA: LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss"; Suleiman, Crises of Memory and the Second World War; Eyerman, Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity

15: COLLECTIVE MEMORY: Assman, Cultural Memory and Western Civilization; Dawdy, Patina: A Profane Archaeology; film screening of Daughters of the Dust (dir. Julie Dash) UNIT 4: Where is History Going? Core Text: W.G. Sebald, Rings of Saturn

17: THE SENSUAL TURN: Taussig, "Tactility and Distraction," Agamben, "Notes on Gesture"; Berlant, "Thinking about Feeling Historical"

18: THE SENSORY TURN: Thompson, The Soundscape of Modernity; Smith, Sensing the Past

19: THE NONHUMAN TURN: Callon, "Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay"; Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses"; Roberts, Mirror-Travels 20: THE DIGITAL TURN: Guldi and Armitage, The History Manifesto; Moretti, Graphs, Maps, and Trees

TERM 3 UNIT 5: The Angel of History Core text: Octavia Butler, Kindred (1979)

21: Benjamin, "On the Concept of History"; Trouillot, Silencing the Past

22: Nietzsche, Untimely Meditations; Fasolt, The Limits of History Week 23: Module review

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- To demonstrate a familiarity with the organizing questions of historical and literary historical scholarship; to gain an understanding of the place of literary history in historical writing (and vice versa); to conduct a comparative assessment of the two disciplines; to understand the bases for critiques of western historiographic and aesthetic traditions; to situate new historical practices within these traditions.

## Indicative reading list

- Selections from Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790), Carlyle, The French Revolution (1837), and Michelet, History of the French Revolution (1847)
- Shelley, Frankenstein (1818)
- Alison Bechdel, Fun Home
- W.G. Sebald, Rings of Saturn
- Octavia Butler, Kindred (1979)

## Subject specific skills

Demonstrate a familiarity with the organizing questions of historical scholarship; Demonstrate a familiarity with the organizing questions of literary historical scholarship

Demonstrate an understanding of the place of literary history in historical writing. Demonstrate an understanding of the place of literary history in literary studies

Explain 2-3 reasons for critiques of western historiographic and aesthetic traditions

## Transferable skills

Conduct a comparative assessment of the two disciplines

Situate new historical practices within these traditions

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## Study

## Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	18 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	18 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	264 hours (88%)
Total	300 hours

## Private study description

Reading & research.

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Assessed Responses 500 word essay	5%	
Assessed Responses 500 word essay	5%	
Assessed Essay 1 2500 word essay	50%	
Assessed Essay 2	40%	

### Feedback on assessment

Written commentary on assignments with further feedback available through one-on-one meetings with tutors.

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## Availability

## Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History