

EN121-30 Medieval and Early Modern Literature

23/24

Department

English and Comparative Literary Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 1

Module leader

Sarah Wood

Credit value

30

Module duration

18 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module will study a number of works of medieval and early modern literature in the context of contemporary beliefs and historical and social developments. The module will be taught by means of language classes (first term only) to introduce students to Middle English; lectures on the historical, cultural and critical context; and seminars to discuss particular texts.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module will study a number of works of medieval and early modern literature in the context of contemporary beliefs and historical and social developments. The module will be taught by means of language classes (first term only) to introduce students to Middle English; lectures on the historical, cultural and critical context; and seminars to discuss particular texts.

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

Week 1 Introduction to the medieval period

Week 2 Chaucer, The Miller's Tale and The Reeve's Tale

Week 3 Chaucer, The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale

Week 4 Chaucer, The Merchant's Prologue and Tale

Week 5 Chaucer, The Pardoner's Tale

Term 2

Week 1 Introduction to the Renaissance and Reformation

Week 2 Thomas More, Utopia

Week 3 The wider world

Week 4 Philip Sidney, The Defence of Poesy

Week 5 Philip Sidney, Astrophil and Stella

Week 7 Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, bk 1 cantos 1-6

Week 8 Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, bk 1 cantos 7-12

Week 9 Shakespeare, Venus and Adonis

Week 10 Marlowe, Dr Faustus

Learning outcomes

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

- By the end of this module you should have: 1. Acquired skill in reading Middle English and knowledge of the structure and history of the English language;
- 2. Acquired some knowledge of Medieval English literature (especially the work of Chaucer and his contemporaries), society and culture;
- 3. Developed awareness of the forms and metres of English poetry;
- 4. Obtained some knowledge of sixteenth-century English poetry, drama and prose and its intellectual and social context;
- 5. Improved your skills in textual analysis and essay-writing.

Indicative reading list

Andrew and Waldron (ed.) Poems of the Pearl Manuscript (Exeter)

L. D. Benson (ed.) The Riverside Chaucer (Oxford)

S. Greenblatt et al. (ed.) The Norton Anthology of English Literature. The Sixteenth Century and Early Seventeenth Century. Volume B (rev. 10th edition, Norton, 2018)

D. Aers, Community, Gender and Individual Identity: English Writing 1360-1430 (1988)

J.A. Burrow, Medieval Writers and their Work 2nd edn (Oxford, 2008)

Maurice Keen, English Society in the Later Middle Ages 1348-1500 (Penguin, 1990)

Jerry Brotton, The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford, 2006)

S.J. Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare, 1980
Peter Marshall, The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford, 2009)
J. Guy, Tudor England (Oxford, 1988)

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

Show skill in reading Middle English and some understanding of the structure and history of the English language

Demonstrate some knowledge of Medieval English literature (especially the work of Chaucer and his contemporaries), society and culture

Show awareness of the forms and metres of English poetry

Demonstrate some knowledge of early modern literature and its intellectual and social context

Transferable skills

Essay writing and research skills

Study

Study time

| Type | Required |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Lectures | 18 sessions of 1 hour (6%) |
| Seminars | 17 sessions of 1 hour (6%) |
| Other activity | 4 hours (1%) |
| Private study | 261 hours (87%) |
| Total | 300 hours |

Private study description

Reading primary texts and recommended further reading from the module reading list; researching and writing essays.

Other activity description

Language and commentary classes (weeks 2-5 term 1 only)

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

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

Assessment group A3

| | Weighting | Study time | Eligible for self-certification |
|--|------------------|-------------------|--|
| Portfolio | 50% | | Yes (extension) |
| Portfolio comprising a) 800-word commentary on a passage from one of the set texts and b) 1800 word essay. The mark for the portfolio is made up of the weighted average mark of the commentary (40% of the final mark) and the essay (60% of the final mark). | | | |
| Essay | 50% | | Yes (extension) |
| Essay of 2000 words | | | |

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback on essays and optional consultation with tutor during office hours.

Availability

Post-requisite modules

If you pass this module, you can take:

- EN3J1-15 Women and Writing, 1150-1450
- EN2J0-15 Poetry and Crisis: William Langland's Piers Plowman in the late medieval culture and society
- EN2J1-15 Women and Writing, 1150-1450
- EN3J0-15 Poetry and Crisis: William Langland's Piers Plowman in the late medieval culture and society

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 1 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing
- Year 1 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 1 of UFRA-QR3A Undergraduate English and French
- Year 1 of UHPA-QR34 Undergraduate English and Hispanic Studies

- Year 1 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 1 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 1 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature

This module is Core option list A for:

- Year 1 of UCXA-QQ39 Undergraduate English and Classical Civilisation
- Year 1 of ULNA-QR37 Undergraduate English and German
- Year 1 of ULNA-QR38 Undergraduate English and Italian
- Year 1 of UPHA-VQ52 Undergraduate Philosophy, Literature and Classics