

EN2J9-30 Writing History

23/24

Department

English and Comparative Literary Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Michael Meeuwis

Credit value

30

Module duration

20 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The core module for the second year of the English & History degree ('Writing History') builds upon the first-year module ('History & Textuality') by developing a more 'hands-on' practical approach to historical analysis and interpretation. Writing History is built around a sequence of four historical episodes or processes, and examines how they have been figured in prose fiction, history, poetry, and film. By engaging with different modes of making history, students will apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired during their first year to historicise and critically evaluate historical and literary texts; consider the bases, nature and limits of historical and literary scholarship, and the relationship between them; and enhance their understanding of how the qualities of writing, and the intellectual and literary traditions within which it is undertaken, fundamentally shape our conception of historical knowledge and 'truth'.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

To understand the role of writing and of the writer in the construction of historical knowledge; to identify and analyse historical narratives in literary and historical texts, in a range of forms and media; to historicise changing practices of historical writing, and to evaluate historicism as a method of literary analysis; to independently apply theoretical writings to the interpretation of literary and historical 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 module and its objectives

UNIT 1: The Black Atlantic in the Age of Revolutions

- Amasa Delano, Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres; comprising Three Voyages Round the World (1817)
- Herman Melville, Benito Cereno (1855)
- C.L.R. James, selections from The Black Jacobins (1938)
- Greg Grandin, The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World (2014)
- Primary source documents (in translation) related to the slave revolt on the Tryal in 1806

UNIT 2: England in 1819

- Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'England in 1819,' 'Prometheus Unbound,' and A Philosophical View of Reform; John Keats, Ode to Psyche; Lord Byron, from Don Juan (all 1819)
- Walter Scott, The Bride of Lammermoor (1819)
- "The Scene of Reading in 1819" and selections from James Chandler, England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism (1998)
- Mike Leigh dir., Peterloo (2018)

TERM 2

UNIT 3: India in 1857

- William Howard Russell, My Diary in India, In the Year 1858-9 (1859, repr. 2010)
- John William Kaye, The History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-8 (1864-76) – excerpts
- Indian fiction in English, e.g. Soshee Chunder Dutt, Shunker (1885), G.A. Henty, 'A Pipe of Mystery' (1898)
- Tapti Roy, The Politics of a Popular Uprising: Bundelkhand in 1857 (1994)
- Karl Marx, "On Imperialism in India" (1853-1858)

UNIT 4: The Harlem Renaissance

- Alain Locke ed., The New Negro: An Interpretation (1925)
- Fire!! A Quarterly Devoted to Younger Negro Artists (1926)
- Nella Larsen, Quicksand (1928)
- Ma Rainey, "Prove It On Me Blues" (1928) and other selections
- W.E.B. DuBois, Dark Princess: A Romance (1928)
- Jacob Lawrence, The Migration Series (1941)

TERM 3

UNIT 5: Global 1968 or 9/11 or Theoretical Overview?

- Art Spiegelman, *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2003)
- Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)
- Selections from *The 9/11 Commission Report*

Week 23: Module Review

Learning outcomes

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

- Understand the role of writing and of the writer in the construction of historical knowledge
- Identify and analyse historical narratives in literary and historical texts, in a range of forms and media
- Historicise changing practices of historical writing, and to evaluate historicism as a method of literary analysis
- Independently apply theoretical writings to the interpretation of literary and historical texts

Indicative reading list

Houston A. Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (1987)

Crispin Bates, *Subalterns and Raj: South Asia since 1600* (2007)

Lord Byron, *Don Juan* (1819)

James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (1998)

Amasa Delano, *Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres; comprising Three Voyages Round the World* (1817)

Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins, *The Perils of Certain English Prisoners* (1857)

W.E.B. DuBois, *Dark Princess: A Romance* (1928)

Fire!! A Quarterly Devoted to Younger Negro Artists (1926)

Greg Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity: Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World* (2014)

Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)

Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues* (1926)

Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on the Road* (1942)

———. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)

Indian fiction in English, e.g. *Soshee Chunder Dutt, Shunker* (1885), G.A. Henty, 'A Pipe of Mystery' (1898)

C.L.R. James, selections from *The Black Jacobins* (1938)

John William Kaye, *The History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-8 (1864-76)* – excerpts

John Keats, *Ode to Psyche*

Mike Leigh dir., *Peterloo* (2018)

Alain Locke ed., *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (1925)

Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (1928)

Jacob Lawrence, *The Complete Jacob Lawrence*

Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno* (1855)

The 9/11 Commission Report

Ma Rainey, "Prove It On Me Blues" (1928)

Michael North, *The Dialectic of Modernism* (1998)
Parama Roy, *Indian Traffic: Identities in Question in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (1998)
Tapti Roy, *The Politics of a Popular Uprising: Bundelkhand in 1857* (1994)
William Howard Russell, *My Diary in India, In the Year 1858-9* (1859, repr. 2010)
Wallace Thurman, *The Blacker the Berry* (1929)
Jean Toomer, *Cane* (1926)
Walter Scott, *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819)
Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Major Works* (2009)
Art Spiegelman, *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2003)

Subject specific skills

Understand the role of writing and of the writer in the construction of historical knowledge

Transferable skills

Identify and analyse historical narratives in literary and historical texts, in a range of forms and media

Historicise changing practices of historical writing, and to evaluate historicism as a method of literary analysis

Independently apply theoretical writings to the interpretation of literary and historical texts

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.

Assessment

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

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Assessed Essay 1 1 x 4,000-word essay	50%	
Assessed Essay 2 1 x 4,000 word essay	50%	

Feedback on assessment

Face to face and via Tabula.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History