

EN3L6-15 England and the Islamic World, 1550-1660

24/25

Department

English and Comparative Literary Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Natalya Din-Kariuki

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module examines England's encounters with the Islamic world, broadly conceived, from 1550 to 1660. These encounters, which were both actual and imaginative, took a variety of forms: the formalisation of diplomatic and mercantile relationships with the Ottoman, Mughal, and Safavid Empires, including the establishment of the Levant Company and the East India Company; collaborations between English and Ottoman pirates along the Barbary coast in joint opposition to Catholic Europe; enslavement; religious conversions, from Christianity to Islam and vice versa; representations of Islam and Muslims on the English stage; and the baptism of "strangers" in English churches. Such encounters had an important impact on the literature of the period, prompting acts of formal and stylistic experimentation, including attempts to capture Muslim (or "Turk" or "Mahometan") voices in print, as well as interpretation, such as the publication of the first complete English translation (via French) of the Qur'an in 1649. By reading texts drawn from a range of genres including travel writing, diaries, letters, pamphlets, drama, and sermons, students will broaden their knowledge of early modern literature, and deepen their understanding of the histories of diplomacy, religion, slavery, colonialism, empire, and race.

Module aims

This module aims to provide an understanding of the literary significance of England's encounters with the Islamic world in the period 1550-1660. It will enable students to situate early modern texts from a range of genres within their historical and geopolitical contexts, and to distinguish between, and evaluate, the different methodological and theoretical approaches employed in relevant scholarship. Finally, it will enable students to formulate original arguments about literary representations of transcultural encounter – from travel writing to translation – based on independent research.

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.

Week 1: selections from Edward Said, "Orientalism" (1978), Nabil Matar, "Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery" (1999), Gerald Maclean, "The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720" (2004), and Julia Schleck, "Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands: Forms of Mediation in English Travel Writing, 1575-1630" (2011).

Week 2: Account of William Harbourne's embassy to the Ottoman Empire in Richard Hakluyt, "The Principall Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation" (1598-1600).

Week 3: Accounts of Robert Sherley's embassy to the Safavid Empire in Thomas Herbert, "A Relation of Some Years Travaile" (1634) and Thomas Middleton trans. "Sir Robert Sherley his Entertainment in Cracovia" (1609)

Week 4: Accounts of Thomas Roe's embassy to the Mughal Empire in "Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619" ed. William Foster (1899) and Edward Terry, "A Voyage to East-India" (1655)

Week 5: Writings about Mariam Khan, Teresa Sampsonia Sherley, and Ann Broomfield Keeling, all women associated with the East India Company, in "Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East" ed. William Foster (1902) and "The East India Company Journals of Captain William Keeling and Master Thomas Bonner, 1615-1617" eds. Michael Strachan and Boies Penrose (1971).

Week 6: Reading week.

Week 7: Robert Daborne, "A Christian Turn'd Turk" (1612), based on English pirate John Ward's conversion to Islam.

Week 8: William Percy, "Mahomet and His Heaven" (1601)

Week 9: On the baptism of "strangers", as described in Thomas White, "A true relation of the conversion and baptism of Isuf the Turkish chaous, named Richard Christophilus in the presence of a full congregation" (1659) and in Imtiaz Habib, "Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible" (2008).

Week 10: "The Alcoran of Mahomet...newly Englished" (1649), including commentary by Alexander Ross.

Learning outcomes

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

- Describe and explain the formal and stylistic characteristics of selected texts produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the literary significance of transcultural encounters.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the historical and geopolitical contexts of England's encounters with the Islamic world in 1550 to 1660.
- Analyse early modern literature's relationship to notions of cultural, racial, religious, and national identity, transcultural encounter and multilingualism, and the structures of colonialism and empire.
- Formulate original arguments to do with an aspect of the module based on independent research (to be demonstrated through the essay).
- Evaluate major critical approaches studied in the module, including New Historicism, postcolonial studies, premodern critical race studies, rhetoric studies, and formalist analysis (to be demonstrated through the final essay).

Indicative reading list

Patricia Akhimie and Bernadette Andrea eds., "Travel and Travail: Early Modern Women, English Drama, and the Wider World" (2019); Jonathan Burton, "Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624" (2005); Mary B. Campbell, "The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600" (1988); Urvashi Chakravarty, "More Than Kin, Less Than Kind: Similitude, Strangeness, and Early Modern English Homonationalisms", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67.1 (2016), 14-29; Nandini Das, "'Apes of Imitation': Imitation and Identity in Sir Thomas Roe's Embassy to India" in Jyotsna G. Singh ed., "A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion" (2009), 114-128; Matthew Dimmock, "Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammed in Early Modern English Culture" (2013) and Dimmock, "Converting and Not Converting Strangers in Early Modern London", *Journal of Early Modern History* 17 (2013), 457-478; Su Fang Ng and Carmen Nocentelli eds., "England's Asian Renaissance" (2021); Jane Grogan, "The Persian Empire in English Renaissance Writing, 1549-1622" (2014); Imtiaz Habib, "Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible" (2008); Nabil Matar, "Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery" (1999); Gerald Maclean, "The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720" (2004); Gerald Maclean and Nabil Matar, "Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713" (2011); Mary Louise Pratt, "Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation" (1992), Edward Said, "Orientalism" (1979); Julia Schleck, "Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands: Forms of Mediation in English Travel Writing, 1575-1630" (2011); Gitanjali Shahani, "Tasting Difference: Food, Race, and Cultural Encounters in Early Modern Literature" (2020).

Research element

The assessment is an essay which will require students to undertake independent research. They will formulate an original research question based on an aspect of the material they have studied, and draw on both primary texts and secondary literature to demonstrate their understanding of the key concepts and contexts covered by the module.

Interdisciplinary

This module is situated within an interdisciplinary area of research. Although it primarily draws on the concerns and approaches of literary criticism and literary history, it is also informed by scholarship from other disciplines including history, geography, and anthropology. The module will introduce students to scholarship produced in all of these contexts, and ask them to think carefully about the ideas and assumptions underpinning different disciplinary approaches.

International

This module situates English literature within a global context, and provides an understanding of England's engagements with the Mughal, Ottoman, and Safavid Empires in particular.

Subject specific skills

Close reading; analysis of genre, form, and style; capacity to understand, judge, compare, and employ different critical approaches.

Transferable skills

Analysis, research, and the formulation of original and informed arguments.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour 30 minutes (9%)
Private study	136 hours 30 minutes (91%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Students will spend this time completing preparatory reading for seminars, undertaking research for the assessment, as well as writing their essays.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
Research essay	100%	
Students will produce an essay based on original research, discussing any aspect of the module. Their essay titles will be formulated independently, in consultation with the tutor.		

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback, as well as opportunities for further oral feedback in office hours.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core option list C for:

- Year 4 of UCXA-QQ38 Undergraduate Classics and English (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 4 of UPHA-VQ73 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature with Intercalated Year