

# IP313-15 The Quest II: Exile and Homecoming

**24/25**

**Department**

Liberal Arts

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Bryan Brazeau

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

---

## Description

### Introductory description

“The concept of country, homeland, dwelling place becomes simplified as ‘the environment’—that is, what surrounds us; we have already made a profound division between it and ourselves. We have given up the understanding...that we and our country create one another, depend on one another, are literally part of one another.”

This quotation from Wendell Berry’s 1977 *The Unsettling of America* prompts us to consider how we conceive of the relationship between ourselves and our home. How does our environment shape who we are and the stories we tell each other? Does exile or distance from home make the heart grow fonder?

The idea of the "quest" was an animating principle throughout the premodern world. Through the quest an individual could fight evil, heal a broken social order, discover previously-unknown worlds, forge new alliances, and find their true selves along the way. How do we conceive of the quest in an age that Max Weber characterised as dominated by rationalisation, intellectualisation, and above all, a profound sense of "disenchantment" (Entzauberung)? What currency does the idea of the quest have in the modern, bureaucratic, secular world?

This module explores the problem that lies at the end of all quests: that of transitioning from the

status of being in exile to one's homecoming (broadly conceived). What do we hope to gain at the end of a quest? How has our concept of "home" shifted alongside our concept of individuality and selfhood? How have those we left behind changed? If we continually change along the quest, can the concept of home and homeland offer any kind of epistemological certainty or emotional comfort?

The module explores this problem through case studies that focus on a key aspect of the quest from various fields. Each case study is framed through the lens of a particular "quest," with each path converging on the central problems of exile and homecoming in the modern world. As such, "the quest" lens functions as an intervention in multiple contemporary problems that resist easy solutions, and can only be approached from a transdisciplinary perspective, such as that of the "disenchantment of the modern world," and the many avenues we seek out in order to re-enchant it and construct meaning.

**Students should note that this module will involve a significant amount of reading and preparation outside of class time (approx 100 pp./week).**

[Module web page](#)

## Module aims

This module complements other core and optional modules offered in Liberal Arts and encourages students to draw upon and extend prior knowledge. The purpose of the module is for students to explore the problems involved in how quests from various disciplines frame the concept of wandering, exile, and homecoming.

Through an exploration of these issues, students will learn to think critically about problematising the straightforward narratives they receive through the idea of the quest in popular and contemporary culture.

In addition to the learning outcomes below, students will benefit from this module by further refining their transdisciplinary analytic skills through collaborative problem-solving and student-led learning. As the module focuses on the problem of engaging with the unknown, it is hoped that students will also develop their own strategies for grappling with unfamiliar ideas and perspectives outside their comfort zone.

The module will be an optional module for Liberal Arts students but also open to students from across the university. It will help students think along transdisciplinary lines, and further refine their capacity for original transdisciplinary analysis by engaging with complex problems that resist simple solutions.

## 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.

The indicative outline syllabus below provides an overview of the key sections and subsections of the module rather than a week by week breakdown.

A) Introduction: The Perennial Problem of Homecoming

- i) Quest Archetypes: Home and Exile
  - ii) “You Can’t Go Home Again:” Heimat, Nostalgia, and Nostos
  - iii) Postcolonial Nostoi; Négritude, Race, and Belonging
- D) Freedom and Constraint: The Quest for Authenticity
- i) Disenchantment, Authenticity, and the Modern Condition
  - iii) “Taming the Restless Heart”: Selfhood as Home?
- B) “Shelter From the Storm:” The Quest for Security
- i) Diasporas, Home, and Negotiations of Belonging
  - ii) Eco-Exile — Sustainability as Nostos
- C) Re-Enchanting Modernity: The Quest for New Homelands
- i) Imagined Communities: Nationalism and the Dangers of New Political Myths
  - ii) Magical Realism and Metaphysical Art: False Illusions or a Way Home?
- F) Conclusions

## Learning outcomes

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

- Identify key “quest archetypes” and apply them to contemporary problems.
- Consider, in detail, the motivations, features, structure, and problems inherent in such quests along with their—often unforeseen—social, intellectual, economic, cultural, and ecological impacts.
- Critically analyse themes of exile and homecoming across disciplines, case studies, and time periods.
- Apply advanced cognitive skills to build transdisciplinary knowledge that fosters transformative dialogue between fields such as: philosophy, literary studies, politics, social sciences, intellectual history, critical race theory, ecocriticism, and other fields
- Implement meta-cognitive skills in approaching complex contemporary problems.
- Collaboratively create their own versions of a “modern homecoming quest”, along with a critical analysis of its motivations and multifaceted impacts

## Indicative reading list

Alpers, Paul. *What is Pastoral?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 1983.

Arendt, Hannah. “We Refugees.”

Augustine. *The Confessions*. Trans. Sarah Ruden.

Baldwin, James. “Stranger in the Village,” in *Notes of a Native Son* (1955).

Beiner, Ronald. *Dangerous Minds: Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the Return of the Far Right*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.

- Berman, Morris. *The Reenchantment of the World*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Brazeau, Bryan. "Building a Mystery: Giorgio de Chirico and Italian Renaissance Painting." *The Italianist* 39.2 (2019): 20-43.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 3rd Ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *Don Quijote* (1605). Translated by Edith Grossman. New York: Ecco Press, 2005.
- Dante Alighieri, Letter 10, "To a Florentine Friend"
- Davis, Gregson. "'Homecomings without Home': Representations of (Post)colonial nostos (Homecoming) in the Lyric of Aimé Césaire and Derek Walcott." In *Homer in the Twentieth Century: Between World Literature and the Western Canon*. Edited by Barbara Graziosi and Emily Greenwood, 191-209. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Eliot, T.S. *The Waste Land*. Edited by Michael North. Norton Critical Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000.
- Fire at Sea*. Directed by Gianfranco Rosi, 01 Distributions, 2016. (film)
- Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*. Trans. Wayne Rebhorn.
- Hiltner, Ken. *What Else is Pastoral? Renaissance Literature and the Environment*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Homer, *The Odyssey*. Trans. Emily Wilson. New York: W.W. Norton, 2018.
- Horkeheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.
- Jothen, Peder. *Kierkegaard, Aesthetics, and Selfhood: The Art of Subjectivity*. New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Kierkegaard, Søren Abbaye. *Either/Or*. Trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton UP, 1980.
- Kierkegaard, Søren Abbaye. *The Sickness Unto Death*. Trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton UP, 1980.
- Kovář, Jan. "A Security Threat or an Economic Consequence? An Analysis of the News Framing of the European Union's Refugee Crisis." *International Communication Gazette* (2019). DOI: 10.1177/1748048519832778.
- Lee, Raymond M. "Weber, Re-Enchantment and Social Futures." *Time and Society* 19.2 (2010): 180-192.
- McIntosh, Malcolm. *Thinking the Twenty-First Century: Ideas for the New Political Economy*. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Merjian, Ara H., *Giorgio de Chirico and the Metaphysical City: Nietzsche, Modernism, Paris*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Murdock, Maureen. *The Heroine's Journey*. Boulder, CA: Shambhala Publications, 1990.

Nabokov, Vladimir. *Invitation of a Spring*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

Nicholson, Sarah. "The Problem of Woman as Hero in the Work of Joseph Campbell," *Feminist Theology* 19.2 (2011): 182–193. doi: 10.1177/0966735010384331

*Night of the Shooting Stars (La notte di San Lorenzo)*. Directed by the Taviani Brothers. 1982. (film)

Rushdie, Salman. *Quichotte*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2019.

Saler, Michael. "Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review," *The American Historical Review* 111, 3 (June 2006): 692-716.

Segal, Robert A. *Theorizing about Myth*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999.

Spence, Jonathan D. *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*. New York: Viking, 1984.

Takolander, Maria. *Catching Butterflies: Bringing Magical Realism to Ground*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007.

Taylor, Charles. *The Malaise of Modernity*. 1991.

Taylor, Charles. *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. 1989.

Wolfe, Thomas. *You Can't Go Home Again*. 1934.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## Research element

Students will write a rigorously researched final paper with the instructor's guidance. They will be expected to conduct significant research for this assessment.

## Interdisciplinary

Like all Liberal Arts modules, this one is radically interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. The module combines a wide variety of materials and perspectives from literary studies, philosophy, psychology, business studies, medical humanities, sociology, game studies, material culture, and religious studies.

## International

The module is inherently international and intertemporal. It combines sources, authors, and perspectives from multiple traditions (and readings will always be made available in the original languages to draw on students' prior knowledge if applicable).

Moreover, it encourages students to think about the topics and problems we will examine from a global and international perspective (for example, when discussing the experiences of James Baldwin in Switzerland as a way of reflecting on his experience in America, or those of the Italian

Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, whose identity occupied a liminal cultural state between Italian and Chinese).

## Subject specific skills

Students will gain increased familiarity with transdisciplinary knowledge and contemporary problems. Moreover, this module will allow them to draw on existing knowledge from other modules in the department (Art and Revolution, Science, Society, and the Media, Consumption, Sustainability) both to apply to problems under examination and as material for their own critical examination through the lens of the quest.

## Transferable skills

In Liberal Arts we do not use the term "transferable skills" as our students gain direct skills that will be useful in their future careers. Through our problem-based learning method, students learn skills such as leadership, coaching, collaboration, presentation skills, and self-directed learning. Below are some of the skills students acquire in this module:

Critical and independent thinking - developed through: Weekly tasks, readings, and homework; encounters with and employment of complex critiques of homecoming and modernity (Weber, Nietzsche), surrealist approaches to racial exile (Césaire, Baldwin), theories of spiritual exile (Augustine) and eco-exile (Ward), along with artwork and texts that gesture towards solutions of homecoming (García Marquez, De Chirico); encounters with nostos narratives regarding the possibility/impossibility of homecoming from ancient world to present day and the need to find, evaluate, and critique connections between these (along with their reception); and Problem-Based Learning activities and in-class discussion. Written communication - developed through: Research Essay; and weekly reflection diaries (blogs) with ongoing weekly feedback for each student. Oral communication - developed through: Presentation at the end of term where students create their own nostos and explain how they created it in line with ideas seen in the module; and weekly seminar tasks and presentations. Research and evaluation - developed through: Weekly problems and tasks that require the students to research and evaluate issues concerning the origin, function, purpose, and power of exilic and nostos narratives; and the final research paper involves the formulation of their own research question and conducting their own in-depth reviews and analysis of theories, archival materials, case studies, or interpretations of expressive works (fiction, non-fiction, and many works that defy and question this binary). Time and self-management - developed through: Weekly groupwork and problems; a series of five pop quizzes throughout the term that measure engagement both with the readings and with in-class discussions; group presentation where students create their own nostos and provide analysis of the choices that shape the permanent exile, homecoming, or lack thereof, and underlying problems. The project requires consistent groupwork, task management, and the keeping of a groupwork diary/log; and weekly readings, problems, and tasks (sometimes in groups, other times individually).

---

## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (36%)
Private study	35 hours (64%)
Total	55 hours

### Private study description

Students will engage in private study of approx. 3.5 hours per week to prepare readings, weekly tasks, problem development, and group discussion topics.

## Costs

Category	Description	Funded by	Cost to student
Books and learning materials	While there will be no mandatory costs, students will be encouraged to purchase one key text: 1) Homer's /Odyssey/ (Wilson trans.). The total cost below reflects the cost for both book in the UK as of February 2022.	Student	£10.00
	We will also reflect on the differences between physical texts and online e-books/e-texts.		

## Assessment

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

### Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
The Critical Quest	50%	55 hours	Yes (extension)
Students use the thematics of the quest as developed throughout the module to examine a problem of their own choosing (either one seen in the module or one related to their own interests) in significant depth. The topic is open but should be linked to the students' own research interests, along with one of the themes discussed in the module.			
Students will explore the problem they choose by framing the problem within broader temporal and multidisciplinary contexts and conducting independent research.			
Troll Challenges (Pop Quizzes)	20%	5 hours	No
Over the course of the term, the module will feature 5 pop quizzes, each composed of 5 multiple-choice questions.			
These will be direct and simple in nature, but will test whether or not students have been engaging with the in-class discussion and readings.			
The mark on the lowest of the 5 quizzes will be dropped, and the average (mean) of the top four quizzes will be used for this assessment.			
Your Modern Quest	30%	35 hours	No
Students will work together in small groups to design their own quest based on the frameworks			

## Weighting

## Study time

## Eligible for self-certification

and lenses seen in class. The quest can be a video, a podcast, a series of branching scenarios on Moodle, a video game design, a choose-your-own-adventure text-based quest, or another format discussed with the instructor.

Students will share their quest with the class one week prior to its presentation. During this time, other groups will undertake the quests that have been designed. Students will then present their quest to the class and critically analyse the motivations for their choices and the impact of their design while receiving encouraging and collaborative feedback from peers.

## Feedback on assessment

Detailed feedback for written assignments will be provided via Tabula.  
Group feedback on the media assignment will be provided via Tabula.

---

## Availability

### Pre-requisites

Some familiarity with other modules in Liberal Arts would be helpful, as would familiarity with some of the texts/traditions we will be examining (but this is not necessary).

Familiarity with other languages is always an asset as it will allow the student to either read texts in that language or to explore scholarship and unique/different cultural perspectives in that language.

## Courses

This module is Optional for:

- UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
  - Year 2 of LA92 Liberal Arts with Classics
  - Year 2 of LA73 Liberal Arts with Design Studies
  - Year 2 of LA83 Liberal Arts with Economics
  - Year 2 of LA82 Liberal Arts with Education
  - Year 2 of LA95 Liberal Arts with English
  - Year 2 of LA81 Liberal Arts with Film and Television Studies
  - Year 2 of LA93 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 2 of LA97 Liberal Arts with History
  - Year 2 of LA91 Liberal Arts with Life Sciences
  - Year 2 of LA75 Liberal Arts with Modern Languages and Cultures
  - Year 2 of LA96 Liberal Arts with Philosophy
  - Year 2 of LA94 Liberal Arts with Theatre and Performance Studies



This module is Unusual option for:

- UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
  - Year 2 of LA99 Liberal Arts
  - Year 3 of LA99 Liberal Arts
- Year 4 of UVCA-LA98 Undergraduate Liberal Arts with Intercalated Year