

Welcome to First Year English at Maynooth University

OPEN A BOOK
OPEN UP WORLDS



Discover more with English
Virtual Open Day, 27 June 2020

Beginning with words on a page, English is a world-facing subject: it takes you across historical periods, cultures, locations and genres, from poetry and drama to the novel, film, and new media forms of writing too.

A rich and fascinating world of English literature is opened up to you when you study English at Maynooth University. As a student of English, you will learn about different literary forms, about the conditions that shape writing, from history and geography to questions of gender, race, and class, and how literary texts enable us to understand our own complex world. You will learn about different approaches to and theories of literature and how different schools of critical thought or areas have shaped and reshaped the subject of English literary studies.



Why study English literature?

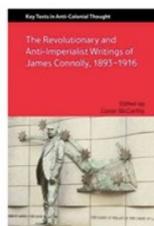
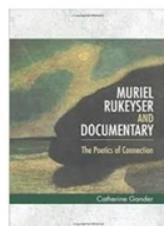
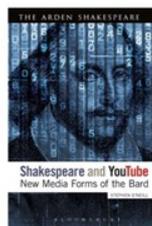
Studying English at Maynooth University provides an exciting and rewarding student experience. Throughout your degree, you will be encouraged to engage in critical debate about the meaning and value of literature. This will help foster your critical and intellectual abilities, your awareness of the multi-dimensional nature of human situations, and equip you with an ability to approach problems with an open and enquiring mind. As a result, you will gain strong analytical skills, finely-honed writing skills and develop critical thinking – characteristics that appeal greatly to future employers.

As a student of English, you will learn about

- different literary forms
- the conditions that shape writing, from history and geography to questions of gender, race, and class
- how literary texts enable us to understand our own complex world
- different approaches to and theories of literature
- how different schools of critical thought or areas have shaped and reshaped the subject of English literary studies.

Maynooth University Department of English

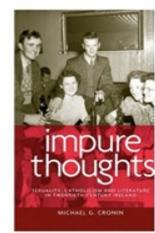
About us...



OPEN A BOOK,
OPEN UP WORLDS.



American Literature / Creative Writing / Eighteenth-Century Literature / Film studies / Gender studies / Irish Literature / Literary Theory / Modernism / Migrant Writing / Postcolonial and Global Literatures / Shakespeare and early modern studies / Visual Culture



What English means to our students and staff...

"Literature is a gateway for understanding cultures and experiences outside of our own, and the opening up of minds is crucial to the development of a socio-culturally diverse society."

Orlagh Woods, PhD student

"To me, literature is a network: it forges connections between people, things and places. It creates and sustains feelings. A recent favourite example is Richard Power's *The Overstory* (2019), a novel as much about the secret life of trees as it is about humans. It invites us to look at our world anew, to imagine other living forms, to recognise that a culture is no better than its forests."

Dr Stephen O'Neill, Head of Department

"I love literature for its power of transportation, for its ability to bring the world and its people to us. Among my favourite novels are Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* and Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, for their gorgeous, poetic descriptions of places."

Dr Oona Frawley

"'A terrible beauty'... 'things fall apart'... 'mere anarchy'. These phrases from W.B. Yeats's poem 'The Second Coming' have been used to describe the global financial crisis, the coronavirus pandemic, and the talents of the baseball player Ty Cobb. One of the reasons I study Yeats is to understand why his poetry continues to have such a strong influence on the English language."

Professor Lauren Arrington

"Reading is meat and drink to me! I think that reading a novel or a poem is a way of experiencing the world, and its fundamental difference from me. To delve into a great novel by Conrad or Austen is to see, feel, and think alternate times, experiences, lives, and ideas. No other activity can offer us this contact with other experiences or alternative concepts quite as richly as reading literature. A day without reading is a wasted day."

Dr Conor McCarthy

"I value literature because it equips us with infinite ways of thinking about what it means to be alive, in every possible situation. Right now, under lockdown, it's hard not to think of Lord Byron's lines:

So, we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

But literature also equips us to keep 'beating on', as with those great last lines of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*: 'Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning—

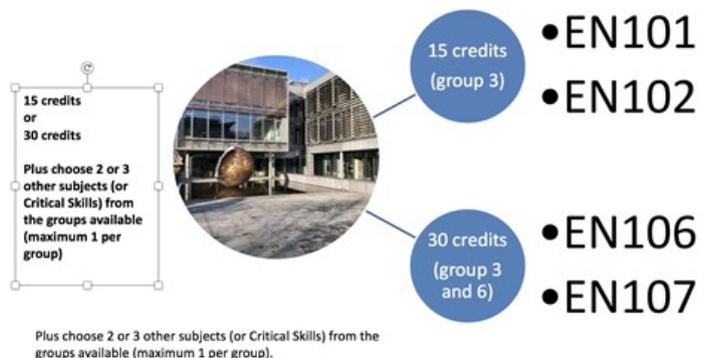
—
So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.'"

Professor Pat Palmer

Your options taking English:

You can take English as 15 credits, or as 30 credits.

In both options, you will attend weekly lectures, as well as small group classes or tutorials where you will work closely with your tutor on the material and get feedback on your assignments.



EN101 Foundation English 1a provides you with the knowledge, experience and writing skills required to develop and express well-informed opinions about what you are reading. This module is delivered through lectures, as well as weekly tutorials, or small groups, where you work closely with a tutor on the material.

EN102: Foundation English 1b: Poetry and Drama explores two major literary forms, providing you with the knowledge to understand and read poetry and drama in new ways. This module is delivered through lectures, as well as weekly tutorials, or small groups, where you work closely with a tutor on poetry and drama.

Spotlight on EN101: Foundational English designed to both enhance your love of reading, and to provide you with the knowledge, experience and writing skills you require to develop and express well-informed opinions about what you are reading. The module introduces you to a variety of prose and fictional texts, revealing the power of writing to surprise, engage, move, anger and persuade the reader.

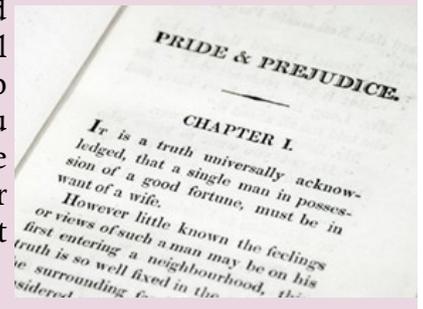
Essays / Speeches: 'This is Water' (David Foster Wallace); 'On the Uses of a Liberal Education Parts I and II' (Mark Edmundson and Earl Shorris); 'In Praise of Empire' (James Connolly); 'I Have a Dream' (Martin Luther King, Jr); 'Yes We Can' (Barack Obama); 'Shooting an Elephant' (George Orwell); Excerpt from A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (Mary Wollstonecraft); 'Ain't I A Woman' (Sojourner Truth).

Short Stories: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 'The American Embassy'; Anton Chekov, 'The

Lady with the Dog'; James Joyce, 'The Sisters'; Katherine Mansfield 'The Garden Party'.

Novel: Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Norton critical edition).

Particular attention is paid to how such texts engage with important historical, social, moral, and political questions, and how writing utilises different literary and rhetorical strategies to further its ideas and achieve particular effects. The module requires you to engage actively and critically with the a wide range of texts through reading, discussion, and writing. Small group tutorials, supporting the core lectures, facilitate discussions and incorporate formal writing exercises to ensure that you acquire the necessary skills for studying English at University.



EN102: Foundation English 1b: Poetry and Drama

Drama:

Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes*, Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Lillian Hellman, *The Little Foxes*, Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, Jean Genet, *Deathwatch*, Harold Pinter, *The Hothouse* Jackie Sibblies Drury, *We Are Proud to Present*.

Poetry:

Milton's *Lycidas* and the contentious sonnets, William Blake's prophetic poems, Vahni Capildeo's *Odyssey Calling*, Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues*, Adrienne Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language*, Jericho Brown and Terrance Hayes, Selections from W.B. Yeats ('Meditations in Time of Civil War' and other poems), Medbh McGuckian, selections from *On Ballycastle Beach* and *The High Caul Cap*.

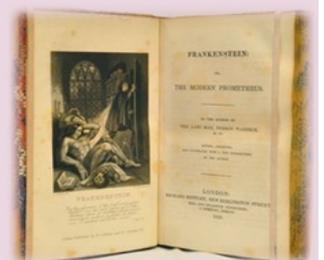


Take 30 credits of First Year English and you'll consider how history erupts into literary texts in **EN106**. The focus is on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), a text alive with the possibilities of science and the ethics of creation, and Jeanette Winterson's *Frankissstein*

(2018), which returns to and reimagines Shelley's novel. In the second semester of your 30 credits of English, **EN107**, our Literary Criticism module, introduces you to new methods of reading, thinking about what literature is and what role it plays in the world. You'll read works such writers as Sylvia Plath, Arundhati Roy and E.M. Forster and discover how literary criticism and theory enables us to interpret literary production in a variety of ways. These modules prepare you to decide on your options for second and third year English.

Spotlight on ... EN106: Additional Studies in English – Writing in History is designed to broaden and deepen your knowledge and understanding of the evolution of literature in English. The module addresses questions of literary culture, tradition and genre from the perspective of both the writer and the reader. Engaging with selected literary texts, the module also explores questions of theme, the significance of form, and the social and political impact of literature. Tutorials supporting the core lectures will facilitate discussion and engagement with the topic and allow you to further develop writing skills.

Readings: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus* (any edition); Jeanette Winterson, *Frankissstein: A Love Story*, Johnathan Cape (2019).



Continuing with English in Second and Third Year

Students have the option to take English as a Single Major (this is possible for students who have achieved an average of 50% or more in 1st year English), Double Major, Major/Minor or as a Minor from 2nd year.

First Year into Second Year English

Second-year English provides you with the opportunity to develop from your foundation in English studies through a set of four core or compulsory modules. **EN201: Literary Theory** enables you to think in more detail about how to conceptualise literature through literary theory. **EN201 Literature and History** explores the interaction between literature and history through the example of the Irish Literary Revival and its legacies. **EN203 Literary Forms** builds on your thinking about the formal nature of literature, with a deeper focus on poetry and drama in historical contexts. **EN204 Literatures of Place** starts you on the process of thinking about the relationship between literature, place and identity.

Option modules enable you to identify areas of interest in genres, cultural contexts, and literary periods that will provide pathways into further specialism in third year.

Areas available include:

- American Literature
- Creative writing
- Early modern imagined worlds
- Film studies
- Literary modernism
- Romanticism
- Postcolonial literature
- Writing Ireland



About Us

With a history that dates back to the 19th century, Maynooth University Department of English is a supportive and dynamic learning environment and a centre of cutting-edge research in English, Irish, and global literatures. Comprising seventeen internationally-renowned scholars and teachers, each of whom are widely published and influential in shaping the field of English studies, as well as dedicated tutors and postgraduate researchers, the Department accommodates a diverse range of research interests including:

- American Literature
- Creative Writing
- Eighteenth-Century Literature
- Film studies
- Gender studies
- Irish Literature
- Literary Theory
- Modernism
- Migrant Writing
- Postcolonial, Global Literatures, and Critical Race Studies
- Renaissance and early modern studies, especially the Irish / Gaelic context
- Shakespeare studies
- Visual Culture

Overview – Some Key Points



Subject Requirement:
entry via MH101 Arts,
but ideally a B or
higher in Leaving
Certificate Honours
English



Degree Options:
in First Year,
take English as
15 or as 30
credits



The Subject:
English takes
you across
historical
periods,
cultures,
locations and
genres,
from poetry
and drama to
the novel, film,
and
new media.



Careers Paths:
education, the
civil service,
journalism,
customer
services and
sales

(Source: HEA
Graduate
Outcomes
Survey)

Further information

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