

MA IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

MA Nineteenth Century Studies Modules 2009-2010

AUTUMN SEMESTER

LIT6390 Interdisciplinary Approaches to Nineteenth Century Studies

30 credits

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness'. Dickens was ruefully appreciative of his age's superlative contradictions, and this course aims to develop an understanding of such vibrant variety by drawing on a range of interdisciplinary research techniques to consider four revolutions of 'the times': French, industrial, intellectual and gender. The course may also involve sessions at the City Archives and the Ruskin Gallery; authors studied will include Gaskell, Dickens, Tennyson, Ruskin, Kipling, and other literary and visual artists in England and Europe; topics discussed will include political satire, Darwinism, prophecy and progress, imperialism, and men dressing up as women.

This course is designed to widen and deepen your knowledge and understanding of the Nineteenth Century, and to introduce you to the kinds of academic enquiry that are directed it from a range of disciplines. You will learn about, and learn to negotiate, the differences and the links between a range of approaches to this eventful and complex century. The course will develop your research skills; you will be expected to use electronic and library research resources on a regular basis, and to learn about and put into practice a wide range of research methods pertaining to the various disciplines. Most importantly, the course is designed to introduce you to a wide range of possible subject areas, and a wide range of possible methodological approaches to help you develop your own independent lines of enquiry and research.

* Compulsory for MA in Nineteenth Century Studies

Contact: samantha.matthews@sheffield.ac.uk

LIT6007 The Rise of the Gothic, 1790-1890

30 credits

The Rise of the Gothic will examine the transmutations of the Gothic genre in Britain between 1790 and 1900. In the late eighteenth century the Gothic emerged as a powerful discourse well-suited to the tempestuous politics of the time, in such diverse and 'non-literary fields' as aesthetics, political theory and polemic, and science. We will chart the rise of the Gothic in Britain through considering these 'non-literary' areas beside the 'literary' Gothic. We will trace the genre's influence through its early use of terror, to its changing emphasis on vampire and sensation fiction towards the close of the nineteenth century. You will emerge from the course with an understanding of the Gothic genre in relation to contemporary and often conflicting discourses of the time.

* Available on the MAs in English Literature, Eighteenth Century Studies, Nineteenth Century Studies

Contact: h.fill@sheffield.ac.uk

SPRING SEMESTER

LIT6011 Fiction and Reality, 1848-1859

30 credits

This unit treats selected fictions by some of the greatest novelists of the 'long' nineteenth century, such as Austen, Dickens, Balzac, Flaubert, Tolstoy, James, Eliot, Hardy and Conrad. It considers the importance of the realist mode in these works, examining what realism in art meant to the writers, and the ways it influenced their representation of their world. It will discuss how attitudes to history, conceptions of truth, and views on the purposes of fiction are filtered through notions of realism and embodied in the period's fiction. Discussion of the novels is supplemented by examination of contemporary debates about fiction and reality and more recent critical perspectives on the topic. The emphasis will be on the English realist tradition, informed by some comparative work on American novels and European novels read in translation.

* Available on the MAs in English Literature and Nineteenth Century Studies

Contact: samantha.matthews@sheffield.ac.uk

LIT6024 The City in Nineteenth-Century English Literature

30 credits

Shelley's vision of nineteenth-century London – metropolis and capital of empire – as a hellish 'populous and smoky city', could also describe the new industrial cities of the midlands. Yet these polluted and problematic urban centres were also cradles of culture, innovation and imagination, and inspired a rich body of urban writing that represents and invents the heterogeneous and uncontainable modern city, and the diverse lives of its visitors and inhabitants. This

module covers texts by a range of Romantic and Victorian authors, considering a range of genres and literary traditions, city types, urban spaces and motifs.

* Available on the MAs in English Literature and Nineteenth Century Studies

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