

ENGLISH- SUBJECT INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Introduction

Welcome to English!

Reading defines who we are as human beings. It shapes how we understand and appreciate the world from manuals to manuscripts and from libraries to love songs. But we don't always think about how we read. By making us pay attention to this – to precisely what, how, and why we read – **studying English literature** opens up new ways of understanding ourselves and others. And it can be fun, too.



Poet Katie Hale in performance

The programme in **First Year English** at **NUI Galway** is designed to introduce you to different ways of **reading**. We consider the forms in which literature is composed (poetry, fiction, drama). We talk about how different people, including writers, philosophers and literary critics, have been reading literature (and other texts) and how that affects our responses now. We look at English literature as it interacts with different historical periods, media, and cultural contexts, and how to 'read' these too.

Most of all the course asks you to **practise your own reading**, closely, slowly, deeply, and widely. By reading carefully, thoughtfully, and productively, you learn to better explore literature for yourself. And to help you take control of your own learning you develop

different skills of speaking and writing about literature using all the rigour, passion, creativity and expression at your command.

Studying English at university can be a little different from studying at school. You have more freedom, but at the same time more is demanded from you. **Most of your time is spent in reading and preparation for class.** Thankfully there is a huge variety of texts to get to grips with in first year English, from poetry of the heroic past and innovations of the present to novels dealing with the contemporary world, from the latest in critical thinking to forms of theatre that engage our minds, bodies, and our creative and political energies. So, come and explore, get reading, and get ahead!

Structure of the Programme

OVERVIEW of FIRST YEAR (1BA) ENGLISH

EN124 – Introduction to English 1

Semester One

Reading Literature and Reading Poetry European Academic Credits (ECTS): 5

- **Reading (and Writing About) Literature** – Semester One, Weeks 1-6.

Dr Dermot Burns and Professor Marie-Louise Coolahan

- **Reading Poetry** – Semester One, Weeks 7-12.

Dr Cliodhna Carney and Dr Adrian Paterson

Reading Literature offers a general introduction to studying literature at university. Together we explore how to read literature with reference to key examples from literary studies and wider culture, contrasting different critical approaches and considering how they change the way we read and think about the world. We think not only about how writers write, but how others have written in response: and spend some time thinking about how we ourselves can improve our own writing. Overall, the course hopes to generate an informed awareness of the possibilities available to us as readers, critics, and writers throughout the English degree.

Reading Poetry introduces ways of reading (and hearing) poetry for yourself, in songs, sonnets, lyrics and limericks, and narrative poetry. The course takes sound as a starting point in considering the origins and effects of patterned language. It asks simple questions that are harder to answer: *what* is a poem? *why* and *how* might we read it? *whose* is it? and *where* is it when it's at home? Experiencing poetry directly is key, and the course helps develop

personal responses and critical skills to help see and hear what makes poems tick and how form creates meaning – from Old English epics and Renaissance songs, to Romantic classics and contemporary innovation.

Required Reading

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1849). Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2017). Key readings in theory and criticism are also made available online via **Blackboard**.

1BA Reading Poetry Handbook (available online via **Blackboard** and from **Media Linn**, next to An Bialann restaurant, beneath the concourse & Yellow Thing). This book contains poems, notes, essays and resources vital for your reading. Further resources are available online via **Blackboard**.

Please get hold of all these texts and read them carefully!

EN125 – Introduction to English 2

Semester Two

Reading Drama and Reading Fiction

ECTS: 5

- **Reading Drama** – Semester Two, Weeks 1-6.
Prof Lionel Pilkington and Dr Finian O’Gorman
- **Reading Fiction** – Semester Two, Weeks 7-12.
Dr Emily Ridge and Dr Coralline Dupuy

Reading Drama looks at theatre and performance over time by examining key texts and theatre forms and movements from ancient times to the present. We consider theatrical forms and techniques from different ages and places, and trace continuities and change and practices and audiences. We interrogate how to read dramatic texts in relationship to performance histories, nationhood, and social/political contexts, and investigate how theatre has been a response to and a force for social change and cultural innovation throughout the centuries.

In **Reading Fiction**, we study the origins, development, and reinvention of one key fictional genre: the *bildungsroman*: novels of personal growth and development. Through this genre, we examine the basic mechanics of fictional writing in terms of character, plot, narrative perspective, form, style, symbolism and setting. We also consider the intertextual dialogues that arise between different texts across periods and cultures. Applying techniques of close

reading is key as we explore the creation of new imaginative worlds through fictions of desire, fear, gender, race, education and politics from the nineteenth through to the twenty-first century.

EN125 Introduction to Literature 2: Required Reading

Reading Drama: Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*. Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*. John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*. Carlo Goldoni, *The Servant of Two Masters*. Dion Boucicault, *Arrah-na-Pogue*. Lady Augusta Gregory, *The Rising of the Moon* and *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (co-authored with W.B. Yeats).

Reading Fiction: Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*. Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*. Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*.

Further texts, performance extracts, and course resources are on **Blackboard**.

EN124 Introduction to English 1 and **EN125 Introduction to English 2** are assessed by means of written assessment exercises at the end of each semester. Texts may also feature on **Exploring English** courses and assessments.

EN1102 Exploring English

BOTH semesters, 10 ECTS

for Bachelor of Arts (Joint Honours) or Denominated students **ONLY**

ENSK1100 Exploring English

BOTH semesters, 5 ECTS

for BA Connect Students **ONLY**

Exploring English tutorial classes are your focus for reading, researching, and writing: your chance to have your say and practice better expression. They are skills-based, small-group classes focussed on individual and group work which help students cultivate their abilities and techniques in reading, writing and research. They provide a space for discussion about literature and how we respond to it. They operate through continuous assessment short tasks, helping you develop a reader's understanding and facilities as a thinker and writer. Students **sign up** at the beginning of the semester and keep the same tutor and group for the **whole year**.

MORE INFORMATION

Due to **COVID-19 guidelines** and staff restrictions, English courses are streamlined this year. **All English courses** are delivered through a blend of learning methods including talks, videos, online resources, discussion points, and reading exercises. **Most important is your own reading** and learning to develop your own responses to texts and performances.

Some parts of the course are online only (Semester One: EN1102 and ENSK1100 tutorials and the Reading Poetry section of EN124), while the Reading (and Writing About) Literature section of EN124 is also being delivered on campus to smaller groups on a rotational basis. It is important to note that all of the key information, lecture slides, and course content for all modules will be available online for all students to access. It is not a requirement that you attend on-campus lectures when they are available to your specific group. If, for whatever reason, you feel that you are not able to attend the on-campus lectures in the first semester, be assured that you will have all the information you need online to succeed this year (including recordings of on-campus lectures). A decision on how semester 2 teaching is delivered will be made near the end of semester 1.

NUI Galway Blackboard learning hub is the central point for all course details, learning materials, tutorial groups, further resources, and assessment portals.

NUI Galway English website features our **1BA Handbook** and more about courses, the department and staff. <http://www.nuigalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/arts-social-sciences-and-celtic-studies/english-creative-arts/departments-centres/english/>

The **NUI Galway English Facebook page** opens up wider interests and comments.

For more about **English at NUI Galway** contact **English Secretary** Irene O Malley, irene.omalley@nuigalway.ie or the **Directors of First Year English** Dr Dermot Burns dermot.burns@nuigalway.ie and Professor Marie-Louise Coolahan marielouise.coolahan@nuigalway.ie