

**School of Arts**  
**Department of English & Humanities**

**MA CREATIVE WRITING**  
**Academic Year 2011-2012**

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*This document is for reference only. Every effort was made to ensure that information was correct at time of print, but discrepancies may still occur due to the nature of this document. Any changes will be communicated to you via your registered email address as soon as the Department of English & Humanities is made aware of any issues.*

# Welcome

When **Birkbeck College** was established in 1823, its principal mission was to provide education and training to working adults who earlier in life had lacked educational opportunity. A College of the University of London since 1920, Birkbeck is committed to the concept of lifelong education, and especially within the world of work. Birkbeck and the other member colleges of the University of London have many research interests in common and share the same standards and degrees structures, but in one important respect Birkbeck is unique. Our mission is 'to provide courses of study to meet the changing educational, cultural and training needs of adults who are engaged in earning their livelihood, and others who are able to benefit' (Birkbeck College Charter).

Birkbeck College has built up special expertise in providing a stimulating, positive learning environment for adult, mature students. Recently we have also expanded our provision for full-time postgraduate students. We award undergraduate degrees in a full range of disciplines and have an unusually high proportion of students following taught Masters and MPhil/PhD courses.

The **MA in Creative Writing** is a venture of the Department of English and Humanities in the School of Arts and can be taken full-time for one year or part-time over two-years. All classes are taught in the evenings. Supporting writers of fiction (with some provision for poetry, playwriting and screenwriting), our aim is to help you develop skills to a professional level in your chosen genre through workshops, regular tutorials and dissertation supervision, and to develop your critical understanding of contemporary literature. Students will benefit from the expertise of writers with international standing, as well as visiting publishers, editors and literary agents. Those students who choose the spring module **Publishing** will be responsible for the programme anthology, *The Mechanics' Institute Review* that showcases student writing and facilitates contact between students and the creative industries.

Students begin the programme in the autumn term with the **Writing and Reading seminar** that concentrates upon the short story. Each weekly class is divided into a writing segment where students present and discuss their writing, and a critical segment in which essential works of short fiction are given close textual readings. In this way students engage in the art of reading as well as writing.

Also in the autumn term, full-time students will take one of the three **Contemporary Literature Core Modules** (part time students in their second year) that focuses on either **genre, poetry, or children's literature** (depending upon demand), and the critical theory propelling such work.

In the spring term the **Writing Workshop** will follow on from the Writing and Reading Seminar and concentrate solely on students' own writing (part-time students take this in their second year). You will critique whole short stories or sections of novels.

The **Option modules** also run in the spring term (part-time students take an option in their first year). You will elect to study one module from a range offered by the

department, but will need to nominate a second and third choice in the event your first choice option is full.

In the summer term there will be a series of **craft seminars** focusing on aspects of narrative art, and **visiting speakers** (such as a leading literary agent, an editor from a publishing house and a literary editor from a national newspaper). These seminars and talks give crucial insights into the mechanisms of the novel and the cultural industries respectively and are not to be missed. The summer term is a non-assessed term.

You will be offered in the second half of the summer term two, one-hour (one, one-hour for part time students) **Dissertation Supervision** periods with your tutors.

Birkbeck is now a corporate member of the **Royal Society of Literature**. More information can be found on their website at [www.rslit.org](http://www.rslit.org).

## Key Personnel

*For contact details see page 40*

### **Professor Russell Celyn Jones**, Programme Director

Russell Celyn Jones' novels are: *Soldiers and Innocents* (Jonathan Cape, 1990), *Small Times* (Viking Penguin, 1992), *An Interference of Light* (Viking Penguin, 1995), *The Eros Hunter* (Little, Brown, 1998), *Surface Tension* (Little, Brown, 2001), *Ten Seconds from the Sun* (Little, Brown, 2006), *The Ninth Wave* (Seren, 2010). He is widely anthologised as a short-story writer and a regular reviewer for *The Times*. He has served as a judge for the John Llewellyn Rhys prize, the Royal Society of Literature Ondaatji award and the Man-Booker prize.

### **Julia Bell**, Senior Lecturer

Julia Bell, MA (UEA), is a lecturer and novelist. Co-editor of the Creative Writing Coursebook (Macmillan 2001) and author of two widely translated novels *Massive* (Young Picador 2002) and *Dirty Work* (Young Picador 2007). She also established and is the managing editor of Birkbeck's literary magazine, *The Mechanics' Institute Review* and the Writers Hub website. Her work reflects an interest in feminist readings of culture, the problems and paradoxes of British regional identity and the need to invigorate and champion independent publishing in an age of globalized media.

### **Toby Litt**, lecturer

Toby Litt is the author of the novels: *Beatniks*, *Corpsing*, *deadkidsongs*, *Finding Myself*, *Ghost Story*, *Hospital*, *I play the drums in a band called okay*, *Journey into Space*, and *King Death*. He has also published two books of short stories: *Adventures in Capitalism* and *Exhibitionism*. He was chosen as one of Granta's Best of Young British Novelists in 2003. Along with Ali Smith, he edited the New Writing 13 anthology. He reviews for The Guardian and The Financial Times, and appears regularly on Radio 3's The Verb. He is a member of English PEN. His website is at [www.tobylitt.com](http://www.tobylitt.com).

## **Colin Teevan (playwriting)**

Colin Teevan's plays include *How Many Miles to Basra?* (West Yorkshire Playhouse, winner of Clarion Award Best New Play 2006), *Amazonia* (with Paul Heritage for the Young Vic), *The Diver and The Bee* (both with Hideki Noda for Soho Theatre and Setagaya Theatre, Tokyo), *Monkey!* (Young Vic, Dundee Rep and West Yorkshire), *Missing Persons: Four Tragedies and Roy Keane* (Assembly Rooms and Trafalgar Studios) *Alcmaeon in Corinth* (Live! Theatre, Newcastle) and *The Walls* (National Theatre). His adaptations include *Kafka's Monkey* (Young Vic, Wharf, Sydney and Malthouse, Melbourne), *Don Quixote* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Peer Gynt* (National Theatre of Scotland, Dundee Rep and Barbican) and *Svejk*. His translations include *Bacchai* (National Theatre), *Iph...* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast), *Cuckoos and Marathon* (Gate Theatre). Colin has written over ten plays for BBC Radios 3 and 4 and is an Artistic Associate of West Yorkshire Playhouse.

Other sessional staff cover Poetry and Screenwriting.

## **Anne-Marie Taylor, Senior Administrator**

Anne-Marie is responsible for sending out programme information and communications from the Department and MA Creative Writing programme tutors, and is on hand to answer your queries about the course and studying at Birkbeck. Please ensure you keep Anne-Marie informed of any changes to your contact details, especially e-mail as that is the primary method of contact. Anne-Marie's office hours during term-time are 10am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

# Starting your Course

## **Enrolment: Important Information**

After receiving an offer of a place on the degree course, you need to enrol as soon as possible (see Administrative information, below). For early applicants this option is usually available starting in May and for late applicants (those interviewed in September) may experience some delay in receiving their enrolment letters at what is the busiest time of the year for Registry. Please be patient, but also persistent, and if you have difficulties contact your administrator.

The College will expect you to have formally enrolled and to have begun paying your fees by mid-October. You must enrol by the end of October or you may not be eligible to continue your degree.

A student who withdraws after enrolling is liable for payment of fees for the first term of their intended study, and all subsequent terms up to and including the term in which they withdraw **or** for the full fees due for all modular enrolments (whichever is greater). Fees are not returnable, but requests for ex-gratia refunds of part of the fees paid in cases where a student is obliged to withdraw because of circumstances beyond the student's own control (but normally excluding changes in employment) may be made. All such refunds are subject to an administrative charge of £100, and will be pro-rated to reflect the proportion of a study already elapsed.

## **Fees/ Finance**

College fees may be paid by many methods. Additional expenses will be incurred and it is important to budget for the purchase of books. Whilst we have great sympathy with students who find difficulties in paying their fees, neither the Course Director nor any of your supervisors have the power to waive fees or sanction delays in payment. The College Finance Office deals with fees and you should communicate and negotiate with them directly on 020 7631 6295. Students who fail to pay their fees may become ineligible to continue the course or unable to submit assessments. Any student who has a debt to the College at the end of the year will not have their marks relayed to them.

## **Contact Details/Email**

Birkbeck students are required to maintain their personal details via the “My Studies” Portal (student intranet) throughout their period of study. Failure to inform maintain this information via your student portal will mean that you may miss important information concerning the course: all documentation, reading lists, class notices, etc, is sent to students via the Birkbeck e-mail system, as is information about associated events that may be of interest. You may nominate an email via your “My Studies” Student Portal. If you encounter any difficulty with this process please visit the MyBirkbeck Helpdesk in the main Malet Street building. Email is the normal means of communication in the School of Arts.

## **Location**

The School of Arts occupies a Birkbeck College building, 43 Gordon Square, where you will find the Administrative Office and individual staff offices. Teaching often takes place in our building, but your lectures may be housed in any of the University of London or University College of London buildings. Notice boards and pigeonholes

for communications with students are located at 43 Gordon Square, and should be checked frequently. During term time the Gordon Square entrance is staffed from 8.00am to 9.00pm, Monday to Friday. Urgent messages outside these times can be left at Malet Street reception desk, which is open until 10.00pm.

### **The Administrative Office**

The School of Arts Administrative Office is in room G22, 43 Gordon Square, and is open from 1.00pm to 6.00pm, from Monday to Thursday, and from 1.00pm to 5.30pm on Fridays during term-time. The administrative team is ready to answer your enquiries, take calls relating to absence, messages for academic staff, and help with any information they can. Outside of the office hours of 1.00pm-6.00pm please contact your administrator by phone or email to discuss your query or to book an appointment. 43 Gordon Square is open between 9.00am-6.00pm on Saturdays during term time for access to student pigeonholes and coursework delivery.

### **Blackboard**

You will be expected, throughout your studies, to submit relevant coursework through the Blackboard Learning Environment (BLE).

You will need your Birkbeck College username and password in order to gain access to Blackboard. Your username and password are created by ITS and all enrolled students will receive them. You cannot access this system if you are not enrolled. If you do not have your username and password, please contact ITS Reception in the main Malet Street building or by email at [its-helpdesk@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:its-helpdesk@bbk.ac.uk). If you have difficulty using BLE, please contact/visit the ITS Help Desk where they can walk you through the process.

### **Books: to buy or borrow?**

Throughout your degree you will be given reading lists, which will include both essential texts forming the basis of lectures and seminars, and suggestions for wider reading. The distinction between these two categories is clearly marked in this booklet. The first you will normally be expected to buy (particular versions or editions are specified in some cases) or photocopy from the short loan collection in Birkbeck Library. If you have trouble obtaining the recommended edition, or already own an alternative, a substitute will often be acceptable; consult the lecturer concerned if you are in any doubt. If you intend to rely on libraries, bear in mind that many other students will inevitably need the books at exactly the same time as you do. It is your responsibility to obtain these books in time for the classes. If you do find that a book has become unobtainable for any reason, please let the lecturer know as soon as possible.

### **Attendance Requirements**

Taking a degree course at Birkbeck requires a high level of commitment, it is important that you attend lectures and classes consistently. **It is your responsibility to make sure you sign the register at every class you attend.** It is accepted that through illness or exceptional pressure at home or at work you may have to miss occasional classes, but **if you have to be absent from several classes, or you know that you are going to have difficulties in attending regularly, please inform your Course Director as many departments enforce a 75% attendance policy.**

**Module Choices**

You will be contacted by your Department in regards to the modules you would like to take for the coming year. Please do not delay in returning your choices as modules are allocated first by year of study and then by date of submission. Students are grouped by year with the earliest submission gaining highest priority within that year. There is a strict deadline in place from the College that is enforced within the School of Arts. This date will be made clear to you on your module choice forms. Students submitting after this date will have modules allocated to them based on degree requirements.

# Programme Structure

## Part-Time

|                                      | Term 1  | Term 2   | Term 3   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Part-time students<br/>Year 1</b> | Writing and Reading Seminar<br><br><b>Wednesday</b><br><br><i>2 tutorials (up to 30 mins)</i> | Option Modules<br><br><b>Various days</b>  | Dissertation supervision<br><i>1 tutorial: up to 60 minutes</i><br><br>Craft seminars and visiting professionals |
| <b>Part-time students<br/>Year 2</b> | Contemporary Literature module<br><br><b>Tuesday or Thursday</b>                              | Writing Workshop<br><br><b>Wednesday</b><br><br><i>2 tutorials (up to 30 mins)</i> | Dissertation supervision<br><i>1 tutorial: up to 60 minutes</i><br><br>Craft seminars and visiting professionals |

## Full-time

| Term 1  | Term 2   | Term 3   |
|---|--|--|
| Writing and Reading Seminar<br><br><b>Wednesday</b><br><br><i>2 tutorials (up to 30 mins)</i> | Writing Workshop<br><br><b>Wednesday</b><br><br><i>2 tutorials (up to 30 mins)</i> | Dissertation supervision<br><i>Two tutorials up to 60 minutes each</i> |
| Contemporary Literature module<br><br><b>Tuesday or Thursday</b>                              | Option Modules<br><br><b>Various Days</b>  | Craft seminars and visiting professionals                              |

## **Aims and Outcomes of the Programme**

**The aims of the programme are to enable students to:**

- Develop to a professional level the craft of writing in a particular genre
- Develop confidence, sensitivity and discernment in their analysis of their own and their fellow students' work
- Develop a greater critical understanding of contemporary literary developments
- Place their own writing in the context of developments in contemporary fiction
- Develop to professional level skill in editing of both their own and fellow students' creative work
- Gain a greater practical knowledge and understanding of the markets for fiction
- Complete under supervision a creative dissertation of high literary quality

**By the end of the programme students will have:**

- Developed the skills and techniques involved in writing in a particular genre and in completing a substantial creative dissertation
- Developed a critical understanding of literary writing through study of contemporary movements and theory, close readings of individual texts and by placing your own work in relation to contemporary writers
- Gained practical knowledge of the publishing industry by learning how to present and market your creative work
- Completed and submitted for assessment a creative writing portfolio

## **Module Availability**

We reserve the right to cancel modules that do not recruit the minimum student numbers as required by Birkbeck College. In addition, please remember that both the requirements of the Department and the personal circumstances of tutors may change over the course of the year. This booklet is for reference only.

# Module Information

## Autumn Term

The autumn term starts on Wednesday 28 September with an induction for all new students. This is an opportunity for you to meet tutors and fellow students and to learn more about the programme. It is important that you attend as the course pack for the Writing and Reading Seminar will be distributed, and class groups will be drawn up.

## Writing and Reading Module

**ENHU036S7**

Wednesday

6-8.00pm

### Module Aims and Outcomes

- Develop to a professional level the craft of writing in the short story genre
- Develop confidence, sensitivity and discernment in their analysis of their own and their fellow students' work
- Develop a greater critical understanding of contemporary literary developments
- Place their own writing in the context of developments in contemporary fiction
- Develop to professional level skill in editing of both their own and fellow students' creative work
- Gain a greater practical knowledge and understanding of the markets for fiction

### Module Description

This module focuses on the student's emerging creative writing and the significance of reading texts for the writer. Each of the ten sessions is divided into writing segments where students present a short story for the class to critique (These stories should be no longer than 4000 words in length but can be shorter). This is followed by a related critical segment where essential works of short fiction are given close textual readings from the point of view of style and construction.

### Assessment

| Assignment     | Description | Weighting |
|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| Coursework     | 4000 words  | 100%      |
| Assessed Essay | 1000 words  |           |

### Required Texts

Course Pack from Birkbeck College

Ford, Richard, ed., *The Granta Book of the American Short Story* (Granta, 2007)

### Optional Reading

Beard, Alan, *Taking Doreen Out of the Sky* (Picador, 1999)  
Borges, Jorge Luis, *Labyrinths* (c. 1964; Penguin edn, 2000)  
Carter, Angela, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (Gollanz, 1979)  
Carver, Raymond, *Where I'm Calling From* (Harvill, 1993)  
Chekhov, Anton, *The Kiss and other Stories* (Penguin, 1982)  
Davis, Lydia, *Almost No Memory* (Picador USA, 2001)  
Diaz, Junot, *Drown* (Faber, 1997)  
Mansfield, Katherine, *The Collected Stories* (Penguin, 2004)  
Moore, Lorrie, *Birds of America* (Faber, 1998)  
Packer, Z. Z., *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere* (Canongate, 2004)  
Prichett, V. S., *Collected Stories* (Hogarth Press, 1993)  
Proulx, Annie, *Close Range: Wyoming Stories* (4<sup>th</sup> Estate, 2000)  
Simpson, Helen, *Hey Yeah Right Get a Life* (Vintage, 2001)  
Smith, Ali, *Other Stories and Other Stories* (Granta, 1999)  
Wolff, Tobias, *The Collected Stories* (Bloomsbury, 1997)  
(As these are volumes of stories and tend to go in and out of print – check <<http://abebooks.co.uk>> for relatively cheap editions)

### Further Reading

Atwood, Margaret, *Negotiating with the Dead* (CUP, 2001)  
Bell, Julia, and Paul Magrs, eds, *The Creative Writing Coursebook* (Macmillan, 2000)  
Lodge, David, *The Art of Fiction* (Penguin, 1992)  
Tighe, Carl, *Writing and Responsibility* (Routledge, 2004)

## Contemporary Literature Modules

Students to select ONE of the following modules, nominating a SECOND & THIRD choice in the event your first choice module is oversubscribed. Please inform Anne-Marie Taylor at [a.taylor@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:a.taylor@bbk.ac.uk) of your option choices by 2 September 2011 at the latest.

**\*Places are limited on the Writing For Young Adults module. If you would like to be considered for a place please submit a one page synopsis of a current Young Adult work-in-progress with your module choice form.\***

***Please note that options will only run if there are enough students (5 is the minimum) and therefore undersubscribed options may be cancelled.***

### Contemporary Literature: Poetry Workshop

Module code to be confirmed

Tuesdays  
6-8pm

Fiction is a language art and a narrative form. Everything however, is built out of the sentence. Not just a carrier of narrative, a sentence has to be its own story. It

needs to be declarative and arresting. In other words, the sentence has to do everything.

One of the best training grounds for the novelist on the level of the sentence is a poetry workshop. Poetry is a concentration of language, where not a single word can be wasted. Poetry also has rhythm and musicality.

This poetry workshop will be useful to all students of fiction who want to improve their literary language skills and push the sentence to another level of expertise.

### **Learning Objectives and Aims**

On successful completion of this module, students will be expected:

- To be able to compose poetry at a formal and experimental level.
- To demonstrate knowledge of various set forms
- To evaluate their own work in a critical fashion.
- To apply their new skills to other modes of writing.
- The module will further provide students with a broad knowledge of published poetry

Communication skills learned in the workshop will aid them both socially and professionally.

### **Module Description**

The requirements of poetry, whether we are writing in a strict form or not, often force — and free us to surprise ourselves, and to make discoveries in and with our writing, as we're writing. At the same time, poetry's emphasis on the texture of writing along with its relative compactness make it a very efficient means of homing in on and developing certain aspects of craft.

This module is designed to give fiction writers the opportunity to enhance their skills through the study and practice of the techniques of the poet. We will combine close readings of canonical and contemporary poems with writing exercises and the process of the workshop to explore such weekly themes as: the impact of the image, the right words in the right order, the telling detail, clarity and consistency of character, the reach of connotation, the riches of understatement, catching and shifting the tone, writing with your ear and how words feel.

Through these themed topics, students will extend their understanding of how form and structure (including sound and rhythm) contribute to meaning; how metaphors and symbols grow out of images (and how to harness the power of figurative language); how "writing off the subject" is often the best way in; how inference and innuendo can draw the reader on and how writing that addresses the senses invites the reader to make the experience his or her own.

The course will also include a visit to the National Gallery.

## Assessment

| Assignment | Description   | Weighting |
|------------|---|-----------|
| Coursework | Portfolio of up to 12 poems that have been previously submitted to the workshop, and a 1000 word essay on one aspect of the craft of poetry | 100%      |

## Contemporary Literature: Genre and Narrative

ENHU041S7

Thursdays (if demand requires this course will also run on Tuesdays)

6-8.00pm

### Learning Outcomes and Aims

- A broad understanding of the textual strategies underlying a range of genres that dominate contemporary story-telling.
- An advanced understanding of the fundamental principles of plot structure.

### Module Description

Whatever your voice or thematic preoccupation, it's almost a certainty that you will have to place your characters within a compelling story if they are to engage the reader from the first page to the last. Easier said than done, perhaps. Conflict, passion, risk and uncertainty are the powerful forces at work in the world of your characters but how can you channel these into an effective structure that provokes the reader into turning the pages?

There are few better ways of exploring these issues than looking at what is often labelled "genre fiction". Dealing predominantly with matters of plot and narrative, this module will focus as much on the underlying and archetypal structures that genre stories seem to share as on the features that distinguish one genre from another.

We will place a special emphasis on the "Detective Story" as a key to understanding the process of *investigation* that seems to underpin most genre stories, be they heist narratives, spy intrigues, sci-fi dramas or supernatural thrillers. We will also examine certain techniques used by feature film screenwriters for "plotting" stories with strong narrative momentum and assess their utility for the writing of prose fiction of all kinds.

**Hopefully, the content of the course will be of benefit to those writers looking to work explicitly *within* certain genres but also to those looking to *hybridize* genres or understand more generally the process of designing a compelling plot.**

The course will be comprised of interactive seminars examining the selected texts and presentations. Because of this, it is *recommended* that students read as many of the required texts *before* the start of term as they can.

**NB – The *first* session of the module will focus on Barthes' essay: "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" (supplied in the *Genre***

**Coursebook).**

**Assessment:**

| Assignment                                      | Description | Weighting |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| Assessed Essay<br>(essay titles to be supplied) | 4,000 Words | 100%      |

**Required Reading (fiction)**

Chandler, Raymond, *The Big Sleep* (Penguin, 2004)  
Christie, Agatha, *The Murder at the Vicarage* (HarperCollins, 2005)  
Cortazar, Julio, "Circe" (short story to be supplied)  
Cortazar, Julio, "Axolotl", "Secret Weapons" and "Continuity of Parks" in *Blow-up and Other Stories* (Pantheon, 2004)  
Faulks, Sebastian, *Birdsong* (Hutchinson, 2003)  
Fischer, Tibor, *The Thought Gang* (Vintage, 1996)  
Moore, Suzanne, *In the Cut* (Picador, 1997)  
Vonnegut, Kurt, *Slaughterhouse 5* (Vintage, 1991)

**Required Reading (non-fiction)**

Barthes, Roland, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" in *Image Music Text* (essay extract to be supplied)  
Freud, Sigmund, "The Uncanny" (essay extract to be supplied)  
Mabely, Edward, *Dramatic Construction* (essay extract to be supplied)  
Todorov Tzvetan, "Definition of the Fantastic" in *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (essay extract to be supplied)

**Required Viewing (feature film)**

*The English Patient* (1996, dir: Anthony Minghella)

**Suggested Further Reading**

Campbell, Joseph, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (Paladin Books, 1993)  
Chandler, Raymond, *The Long Good-bye* (Penguin, 2004)  
Chatman, Seymour, "Story: Events" in *Story and Discourse* (Cornell University Press, 1980)  
Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Penguin, 2005)  
McKee, Robert, *Story* (Methuen, 1999)  
Vogler, Christopher, *The Writer's Journey* (Pan, 1999)

**Contemporary Literature: Writing for Young Adults**

Module code TBA

Tuesdays

6 to 9.00pm

**\*Places are limited on this module. If you would like to be considered for a place please submit a one page synopsis of a current Young Adult work-in-progress with your module choice form.\***

## **Learning Objectives and Aims**

- To understand and explore the practice of writing children's literature with a view to producing a text suitable for publication.
- To identify the technical aspects of good prose fiction.
- To identify the strengths/weaknesses in their own work and to apply that knowledge in an editorial context to their own work.
- To evaluate the strengths/weaknesses in the work of their peers and to apply that through written and oral critique.
- To have produced upwards of 10,000 words of prose fiction for Children & Young Adults.
- To enable students to transfer their knowledge and skills into professional lives (e.g. education, librarianship, writing).
- To understand the Children's and Young Adult market for books and the different genres within that market.
- To develop skills and methodologies that will inform dissertation work, creative work and wider understanding of the field and develop innovative approaches to research.
- To develop personal confidence in delivering presentations, working with other students and engaging with the ideas of peers. However, specifically in relation to critiquing the creative works of others as well as in presenting and exchanging work and ideas in seminar discussion and workshop environments.

## **Module Description**

This module is a term-length workshop based course for students interested in writing prose fiction for Children and Young Adults.

This module will teach the basic principles of writing fiction for young adults using a combination of approaches: reading, writing and peer appraisal. In relation to the latter approach, students will be expected to produce new work for class appraisal as well as read work by their peers and appraise it. This will all be done under supervision of the class tutor.

The course will also address issues pertinent to Children and Young Adult fiction in considering audience, genres and methods. As well as being encouraged to investigate these issues through the production of creative work, students will critically read and discuss a selection of set texts. In this way, the module aims to take the student through the technical issues of viewpoint, structure, character development, dialogue and voice through giving time in each workshop for the discussion of a set text.

The syllabus will be defined by the work the students produce for class each week. The class will consider a maximum of four pieces of 3,000 words per week written by their peers. Each piece will be given 20 minutes of time for class discussion with time at the end of each workshop given over to a discussion of a set text. These discussions will cover topics such as point of view, character development, structure, dialogue, denouement, catalysts and description using classic and contemporary texts as example.

**Assessment:**

| <b>Assignment</b>  | <b>Description</b> | <b>Weighting</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Creative work      | 4,000 words        | 100%             |
| Critical appraisal | 1,000 words        |                  |

**Required Reading****Week One - The Crossover**

Nicholson, Joy, *The Tribes of Palos Verdes*

**Week Two - Character**

Dahl, Roald, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

**Week Three - Setting**

Rossoff, Meg, *How I Live Now*

**Week Four - Point of View**

Haddon, Mark, *The Curious Incident of the Dog*

**Week Five - Structure**

Ness, Patrick, *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (Walker)

**Week Six - Adventure**

Landman, Tanya, *Apache, Girl Warrior* (Walker)

**Week Seven - Dystopia**

Christopher, John, *Empty World*

**Week Eight - History**

Rees, Celia, *Witch Child*

**Week Nine - The Real**

Burgess, Melvyn, *Junk*

**Week Ten - Magic**

Pullman, Phillip, *The Amber Spyglass*

Students are also encouraged to consult

Rustin, Margaret & Michael, *Narratives of Love and Loss: Studies in Modern Children's Fiction*, (Karnac, 2001)

## Spring Term

The Spring term begins on Monday 9 January 2011. Full and part-time first year students take one option course (full details follow here and in the MA Options booklet). Full-time and second year part-time students also take the Writing Workshop.

## The Writing Workshop

ENHU039S7

Wednesday

6-8.00pm

### Module Outcomes and Aims

- Develop to a professional level the craft of writing in either the short story or novel genre
- Develop confidence, sensitivity and discernment in their analysis of their own and their fellow students' work
- Develop a greater critical understanding of contemporary literary developments
- Place their own writing in the context of developments in contemporary fiction
- Develop to professional level skill in editing of both their own and fellow students' creative work
- Gain a greater practical knowledge and understanding of the markets for fiction

### Module Descriptions

This workshop follows on from the Writing and Reading Seminar and centres upon students' own writing (5000 words maximum per submission). There will be no published texts used in the workshop. Instead ongoing reference will be made to specific examples of contemporary writing that relate in some way to each student's work. You will have the opportunity to continue writing short stories or begin to develop a novel with the critical support of the class.

### Assessment

| Assignment | Description | Weighting |
|------------|-------------|-----------|
| Coursework | 5000 words  | 100%      |

### Required Texts

#### Reading

Bell, J., and P. Magrs, eds, *The Creative Writing Handbook* (Macmillan, 2001)

Lodge, David, *The Art of Fiction* (Penguin, 1992)

#### Further Reading

Bennet, Alan, *Writing Home* (Faber, 1998)

Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, (Penguin, 1972)

Bradbury, Malcolm, ed., *The Novel Today: Contemporary Writers on Modern Fiction* (Fontana, 1990)

Cixous, Hélène, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (Columbia University Press,

1993)

Cuddon, J. A., *Book of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (Penguin, 1992)

Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory* (Blackwells, 1996)

O'Connor, Flannery, *Mystery & Manners: Occasional Prose* (Farrar Straus Giroux, 1969)

Sellers, Susan, ed., *Taking Reality By Surprise* (Women's Press, 1991)

Singleton, J., and M. Luckhurst, eds, *The Creative Writing Handbook* (Macmillan, 1996)

Turner, Barry, ed., *The Writer's Handbook* (Macmillan - yearly)

## Option Modules

Options are allocated on a first come, first served basis. Students to select ONE of the following modules, nominating a SECOND & THIRD choice in the event your first choice module is oversubscribed. Please inform Anne-Marie Taylor at [a.taylor@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:a.taylor@bbk.ac.uk) of your option choices by 28 October 2011 at the latest.

***Please note that options will only run if there are enough students (5 is the minimum) and therefore undersubscribed options may be cancelled.***

**You are strongly advised to give careful consideration to options offered by the Department of English and Humanities and not just those options taught by members of the creative writing team. The opportunity to study under world-class academics is a chance not to be missed that will extend your range of literary reference and help contextualise your own writing.**

Full details of all the options offered by the Department are available in the MA Options Booklet, which you will be sent in due course.

### Introduction to Screenwriting

**ENHU040S7**

Tuesday or Thursday (depending on student numbers)

6.00-8.00pm

#### Learning Objectives and Aims

- An advanced understanding of the craft of professional screenwriting as it's currently practised in the industry.

#### Module Description

This module will give students as thorough a grounding in the art, craft and business of writing for the screen as is possible in ten weeks. Through a mix of interactive seminar presentations, writing assignments, workshops and analyses of produced screenplays (both on screen and on the page), we will develop an appreciation and understanding of:

- the tools of screenwriting (structure, characterisation, theme, subplot, dialogue etc.)

- knowledge of what *distinguishes* the process of writing for the screen from writing prose fiction or stage drama.

During the course of the module, we will look at screenwriting techniques relevant to a range of genres and screenwriting forms. By the end of the module students will have produced two drafts of an original script (15-30 correctly formatted pages), analysed at least three feature-length screenplays and viewed a range of complementary material.

**Note:** the screenplays you are required to *read* will be made available to you at some point during the Autumn term *before* the module starts.

### Assessment

| Assignment               | Description                     | Weighting |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| An original short script | 15-30 correctly formatted pages | 100%      |

### Required Reading:

Snyder, Blake, *Save the Cat!* (Michael Wise Productions 2005)

### Scripts for analysis:

*In The Bedroom* by Rob Festinger and Todd Field

*Seven* by Andrew Kevin Walker

*Sleepless in Seattle* by Jeff Arch, Nora Ephron and Delia Ephron

### Films for analysis:

*Notting Hill* (1999, dir: Roger Michell)

*The Wings of the Dove* (1997, dir: Iain Softley)

*Training Day* (2001, dir: Antoine Fuqua)

### Suggested Further Viewing:

*Dirty Pretty Things* (2002, dir: Stephen Frears)

*Top Gun* (1986, dir: Tony Scott)

### Suggested further reading:

Vogler, Christopher, *The Writer's Journey* (Pan, 1999)

McKee, Robert, *Story* (Methuen, 1999)

## **Publishing**

**ENHU038S7**

Thursday

6.00-8.00pm

### **Learning Objectives and Aims**

During the module the students will be expected to make decisions on format, content, design, and production of Birkbeck's annual literary magazine – *The Mechanics' Institute Review* - as well as oversee the physical manufacture and launch of the magazine. Although students on the module will not be eligible to submit work to that year's issue of MIR, they will be able to submit in subsequent years, and during the module they will be expected to prepare a short story for publication and see their tutor for one to one editorial sessions on their work.

By the end of the course students will have a clear understanding of the process of producing a book as well as developed editorial and copy editing skills.

### **Module Description**

A twelve week module which will comprise of one seminar and eleven production and editorial meetings that will take place on specified dates during the spring and summer term.

The students will be responsible for the selection of material, production and publication of *The Mechanics' Institute Review* - a magazine of short fiction and novel extracts by Birkbeck Creative Writing students, and MACW Alumni. A call for submissions will be sent out annually in December. The aim of the magazine is to showcase the best new fiction by Birkbeck writers, with a distribution beyond the university to literary agents, publishers, etc. During the module the students will be expected to make decisions on format, content, design, and production, as well as oversee the physical manufacture and launch of the magazine. Although students on the module will not be eligible to submit work to that year's issue of MIR, they will be able to submit in subsequent years, and during the module they will be expected to prepare a short story for publication and see their tutor for one to one editorial sessions on their work.

The module will be complemented by a series of talks by visiting professionals and a trip to the London Book Fair. **This module runs into the first half of the summer term.**



## Assessment

| Assignment    | Description                | Weighting |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Final Product | The finished review itself | 50%       |
| Viva Voce     | ½ an hour                  | 50%       |

## Essential Texts

Bradley, Sue - *The British Book Trade: An Oral History* (British Library Publishing Division 2008)

## Reading

Athill, Diana, *Stet* (Granta, 2001)

Barry, Turner, ed., *The Writer's Handbook* (Macmillan, annual)

or: *The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook* (A & C Black, annual)

Feather, John, *A History of British Publishing* (Routledge, 1988)

Finch, Peter, *The Poetry Business* (Seren, 1994)

Schiffrin, Andre, *The Business of Books* (Verso, 2001)

Ugresic, Dubravka, *Thank You for Not Reading* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2003)

## Periodicals

*Granta*, *London Review of Books*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, *Poetry London*, *Poetry Review*, *TLS*

## Other Information

This module continues into the Summer Term with regular meetings on a Thursday. MIR comes out at the end of September each year and is celebrated with a launch and a series of readings which the course participants are expected to organise as part of the course process.

## Introduction to Playwriting

ENHU124S7

Thursdays

6.00-8.30pm

## Learning Outcomes and Objectives

This module will:

- Provide a coherent and gradated introduction to writing for the dramatic form and thereby enable students to broaden their skills' base.
- Deepen students' awareness of the dramatic form and the playwright's craft.
- Develop students' skills of self-evaluation and constructive analysis of their own dramatic work, and that of others.
- Enable students to develop skills in editing and revising their own playwriting. Having taken this module the successful student will be able to:
- Demonstrate awareness and control of the elements of dramatic writing.
- Discuss and evaluate the work of fellow students and established playwrights in relation to elements of craft.
- Experiment with style and form.
- Solve craft-related problems in their own dramatic work.
- Implement the practice of redrafting and editing.

## Module Description

This module offers students the opportunity to develop both their understanding of and writing skills in playwriting from first principles to final draft. Through weekly workshops the student will also consider the various means of theatrical production and the nature of the business of writing for the stage. The weekly sessions combine presentations by both lecturer and student on aspects of craft, writing exercises and feedback, analyses of canonical and contemporary plays, and ongoing script development. The student will gain a thorough grounding in the fundamental elements of playwriting such as: dramatic structure, character, dialogue, subtext and the manipulation of theatrical space and time. By the end of the module students will have produced two drafts of a short original play script, and written and given a ten minute verbal presentation on an aspect of craft from a contemporary play.

## Assessment

| Assignment          | Description  | Weighting |
|---------------------|--|-----------|
| Original Playscript | Either a complete one act play or part of a full length script, 15-25 pages (formatted to industry standard) | 85%       |
| Essay on craft      | 1,000 words  | 15%       |

## Suggested further reading:

Aristotle, *Poetics*, (Dover Thrift, 1997 or any edition)  
Aykbourn, Alan, *The Crafty Art of Playmaking*, (Palgrave McMillan, 2003)  
Barker, Howard, *Arguments for a Theatre*, (Manchester University Press, 1997)  
Beckett, Samuel, *The Complete Plays*, (Faber)  
Brook, Peter, *The Empty Space*, (Penguin, 1968, or any edition)  
Chekhov, Anton, *The Cherry Orchard*, (Penguin, 2004)  
Churchill, Caryl, *A Number*, (Churchill Plays 4, Nick Hern Books, 2008)  
Edgar, David (ed), *State of Play: Playwrights on Playwriting*, (Faber & Faber, 1999)  
Etchells, Tim, *Certain Fragments*, (Routledge, 1999)  
Kane, Sarah, *Complete Plays*, (Methuen, 2001)  
*The Great Game*, ed. Nick Kent, (Oberon Books, 2009)  
Mamet, David, *A Whore's Profession*, (Faber, 1994)  
Marber, Patrick, *Closer*, (Methuen Drama, 1997)  
O'Casey, Sean, *Juno and the Paycock*, (Faber 1998)  
Pinter, Harold, *the Caretaker*, (Faber 1991, or any edition)  
Shakespeare, William, *Macbeth*, (any edition)  
Sophocles, *the Three Theban Plays*, (Penguin, 1984)  
Teevan, Colin, *How Many Miles to Basra?*, (Oberon Modern Plays, 2006)  
Teevan, Colin, *Missing Persons: Four Tragedies and Roy Keane*, (Oberon, 2006)

## Summer Term

There is no formal teaching in the Summer term. You will receive dissertation supervision and there will be a short series of **craft seminars** focusing on aspects of narrative design, and talks from **visiting speakers**. Previous topics and speakers have included Julia Bell on point of view, Derek Johns from agents AP Watt, and a panel discussion on life post MA.

## Dissertation

For full-time students in year 1; part-time students in year 1 and 2

### Dissertation

ENHU002D7

By appointment

#### Module Aims and Outcomes

- Develop to a professional level the craft of writing in the short story or novel genre
- Develop a greater critical understanding of contemporary literary developments
- Place their own writing in the context of developments in contemporary fiction
- Develop to professional level skill in editing of their own creative work
- Gain a greater practical knowledge and understanding of the markets for fiction

#### Module Description

Students work with their supervisor on the dissertation in one-to-one consultations. Part-time students have a one-hour tutorial in their first year for which they present up to 7500 words, followed by another one-hour tutorial and another 7500 words in their second year. Full-time students have both these tutorials in their final term. These supervision periods all take place during the Summer term and appointments with the tutors are made through the administrator. Students will be required to present the tutor with up to 7,500 words a week in advance of their tutorial.

The Dissertation is normally submitted by the 30 September. The completed Dissertation must include a 3,000 word preface.

**Note on preface:** this is a hybrid form of literary essay/critical self-assessment. Students should discuss lucidly the development of their Dissertation in terms of the literary influences upon it, and describe the personal journey involved in making a work of fiction over the course of the programme. It does require a bibliography of at least six influencing texts.

#### Assessment

| Assignment   | Description  | Weighting |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Dissertation | 15,000 words | 100%      |
| Preface      | 3,000 words  |           |

### **Essential Reading**

There are no set texts for the dissertation.

### **Important Information**

The dissertation can include work that has been through the Writing and Reading Seminar and the Writing Workshop but **must** show evidence of significant development.

Part-time students should normally complete the term one Writing and Reading module before beginning Dissertation supervision.

Full-time students should normally have completed all the modules in the programme (with the exception of the final elements to the Publishing module) before beginning dissertation supervision.

# Coursework Presentation and Plagiarism

## Coursework Presentation

Research essays must conform to the *MHRA Style Guide* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2008), which should be consulted for further explanation. Libraries hold copies of this style guide, and you can buy it in good bookshops (including Waterstones, Gower Street). It can also be downloaded for personal use from:

<http://www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml>

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism, the act of taking somebody else's work and presenting it as your own, is an act of academic dishonesty, and Birkbeck takes it very seriously.

Examples of plagiarism include (but are not restricted to):

- copying the whole or substantial parts of a paper from a source text (e.g. a web site, journal article, book or encyclopaedia), without proper acknowledgement
- paraphrasing another's piece of work closely, with minor changes but with the essential meaning, form and/or progression of ideas maintained
- piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole
- procuring a paper from a company or essay bank (including Internet sites)
- submitting another student's work, with or without that student's knowledge
- submitting a paper written by someone else (e.g. a peer or relative) and passing it off as one's own
- representing a piece of joint or group work as one's own.

If you knowingly assist another student to plagiarise (for example, by willingly giving them your own work to copy from), you are committing an examination offence.

## What happens if plagiarism is suspected?

In October 2008, the College is introducing a new three stage policy for dealing with assessment offences. The first stage allows for a very rapid and local determination for first or minor and uncontested offences. Stage two allows for a formal Department investigation, where a student wishes to contest the allegation or penalty, where there is an allegation of a repeat offence or for more serious cases. Stage three involves a centrally convened panel for third and serious offences, dealt with under the code of Student Discipline.

## What if I am worried that I'm not referencing correctly?

Please see your module tutor or contact a member of the learning support team as soon as possible. Ignorance to Birkbeck's commitment to student standards will not be accepted as an excuse in a plagiarism hearing. The following links from Birkbeck's Registry provide some helpful information, but are not intended to replace any guidelines or tuition provided by the academic staff.

## General Guidelines

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support/plagiarism>

## Plagiarism

<http://pps05.cryst.bbk.ac.uk/notice/bkplag.htm> – Written for Birkbeck's Registry.

## Plagiarism FAQ

[http://turnitin.com/research\\_site/e\\_fags.html](http://turnitin.com/research_site/e_fags.html) – Frequently Asked Questions from Turn It In.

# Coursework Submission

Put your student number and the title of the module at the top of the essay, and include the title of the essay or the question as set out on the list of essay topics. Always leave a good left-hand margin in all your written work so that the reader has somewhere to put comments. Typed or computer-written text should be double-spaced. **It is not necessary to put your essay in a folder or plastic sleeve: markers prefer to receive essays simply stapled.** Please note that the word count should include footnotes but exclude bibliography.

Two copies of each piece of assessment should be handed into the School of Arts Office, one in hard format and the other in electronic format. The typed paper copy should be handed in to the School Office or left in the coursework box in the entrance hall of 43 Gordon Square. The electronic version should be submitted via Blackboard, and you should retain a third copy. **In no circumstances should essays be handed to the lecturer or seminar leader.**

You should attach a signed Essay Cover Sheet, containing a declaration that this is your own work, to the hard copy: this is available in the entrance hall or from the School Office. An Essay Cover Sheet is not required for the electronic submission: however, you should put your student number and the title of the module in the document filename. Your student number and module code can be found on your MyBirkbeck profile.

For further information and instructions on how to submit essays using blackboard please see the appendices or visit the ITS Help Desk.

## Return of Coursework

Essays will normally be marked and returned within 4-6 weeks from the stated submission date or the date of handing in, whichever is later. Larger modules and modules with numerous seminar groups, such as core modules, could take longer due to the number of student involved. There may also be a delay if the college is closed or if there are extended holidays during that 4-6 week period. If you feel that you need feedback about your work sooner due to other impending work, please contact the tutor directly to make an appointment to visit within their office hours.

Once an essay has been marked, you will be notified by e-mail. You can then collect your essay from the appropriate pigeonhole during the building opening hours. These pigeonholes are located in the foyer of 43 Gordon Square and are clearly listed for students in alphabetical order.

Some lecturers may choose to mark online and give feedback through the Blackboard portal. If this is the case your hardcopy may not be returned.

**Essays are never sent back to students by post. Please contact your administrator for alternative arrangements.**

**Please do not phone/e-mail to ask whether your essay has been marked and returned unless the marking periods as above have elapsed.**

### **College Assessment Policy**

It may also be useful to familiarise yourself with the official college assessment policy. Please see the following link:

[http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section6/COP\\_AOS.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section6/COP_AOS.pdf)

### **Late Submission of work for assessment**

College policy dictates how Schools will treat work that is due for assessment but is submitted after the published deadline. From 2008/9 any work that is submitted for formal assessment after the published deadline is given two marks: a penalty mark of 50% for postgraduate students, assuming it is of a pass standard, and the 'real' mark that would have been awarded if the work had not been late. Both marks are given to the student on a cover sheet. If the work is not of a pass standard a single mark is given.

If you submit late work that is to be considered for assessment then you should provide written documentation, medical or otherwise, to explain why the work was submitted late. You will need to complete a standard pro-forma and submit it, with documentary evidence as appropriate, to your Tutor or Programme Director. The case will then be considered by the appropriate sub-board or delegated panel.

If no case is made then the penalty mark will stand. If a case is made and accepted then the examination board may allow the 'real' mark to stand.

**Note:** If you are taking an option within another School please note that you will need to adhere to the deadline/ extension policy of the School in which the option course is based. You should submit your essays to the Postgraduate Administrator within English & Humanities, who will forward it on to the relevant administrator in the host department.

### **Please note:**

If you are taking an option within another School please note that you will need to adhere to the deadline/ extension policy of the School in which the option course is based. You should submit your essays to the Postgraduate Administrator within English & Humanities, who will forward it on to the relevant administrator in the host department.

### **Dissertations**

It is particularly important to submit dissertations on the deadline date. This deadline is not negotiable. If missed, the candidate may not be examined in the same year and may have to wait another twelve months before being awarded the degree as MA examination boards meet only once a year, in November. Any difficulty in meeting the dissertation deadline should be brought to the attention of the Course Director at the earliest opportunity.

# Assessment Requirements for the MA Creative Writing Programme

Assessment is based entirely on coursework. To pass the programme, students must complete all the coursework, which includes critical essays, creative pieces and the dissertation, and achieve an overall mark of 50 or above. Coursework should normally be submitted in the first week of the succeeding term. All manuscripts must be typed in Times New Roman and double-spaced.

Students who fail their dissertation are allowed to resubmit once.

## Assessment Weighting

**50% of the overall grade (average of the marks from four modules) includes:**

- 12.5% Writing and Reading Seminar: creative piece and a short critical essay, 5,000 words **in total**.
- 12.5% Contemporary Literature Life Writing: piece of life writing, 4,000 words. Contemporary Literature Genre and Narrative: essay, **or** essay and short creative piece, 4,000 words **in total**.
- 12.5% The Writing Workshop: Creative piece (100%). **5,000 words**.
- 12.5% Option Module: Assessment criteria varies with each option.

**50% of the overall grade:**

- Dissertation (18,000 words **in total**)

## Marking Scheme

### Distinction

|      |            |
|------|------------|
| A    | 75% - 100% |
| A -  | 73% - 74%  |
| A -- | 70% - 72%  |

### Merit

|      |           |
|------|-----------|
| AB   | 69%       |
| B++  | 66% - 68% |
| B+   | 63% - 65% |
| B(+) | 60% - 62% |

### Pass

|      |           |
|------|-----------|
| B    | 59%       |
| B(-) | 56% - 58% |
| B-   | 53% - 55% |
| B--  | 50% - 52% |

# Assessment Criteria

## Short Creative Pieces

A **Pass** should show:

- Engagement with the structure and conventions of a particular genre
- Understanding of the relationship between content and form
- Competent use of language
- Awareness of reader/audience

A **Merit** should also show:

- Confident handling of the structure of a particular genre
- Willingness to experiment
- Fresh (i.e. non-clichéd) use of language

A **Distinction** should also show:

- Ambitious and/or original choice of content
- Accomplished handling of chosen form
- Original use of language

## Critical essays on contemporary writing

A **Pass** should show:

- Awareness of the variety and range of contemporary writing
- Ability to analyse the use of language in published writing
- Analysis of the relevant aspects of the 'craft' of writing
- Sustained critical thinking
- Competent use of language

A **Merit** should also show:

- A willingness to approach 'difficult' writing
- Ability to sustain a convincing critical analysis
- Fresh use of language

A **Distinction** should also show:

- Sharp critical insight into what makes a literary work successful against different criteria
- Awareness of critical methods and theories
- Fluent use of critical language

## Dissertation

A **Pass** should show:

- Awareness of the strengths and limitations of the chosen genre and of its 'fitness for purpose'

- Ability to use structure and voice to develop elements of one or more of the following: narrative, theme, character, prosody
- Understanding of the relationship between content and form
- Competent use of fictional, dramatic or poetic techniques
- Awareness of reader/audience
- Commitment to editing
- Appropriate use of research (where relevant)

A **Merit** should also show:

- Ambition in both formal and thematic or narrative scope of the piece
- Development of distinctive writing 'voice'
- Ability to produce fresh (i.e. non-clichéd) passages of writing

A **Distinction** should also show:

- Ability to produce a fully realised, sustained piece of writing
- Originality of use of one or more of the following: language, form, content

## Degree Regulations

### Undergraduate and Postgraduate Study

The majority of Birkbeck's programmes are offered as part of the College's Common Award Scheme (CAS). Programmes will therefore have common regulations, and a common structure. This will help to ensure greater consistency of practice amongst programmes and will also make it possible for you to take modules from Departments across the College which are outside of your normal programme (subject to programme regulations and timetable constraints).

Some areas covered by CAS Regulations include:

- Degree Structure
- Degree Classification
- Module Weighting
- Marking Scheme
- Failure and Re-Assessment
- Plagiarism and Academic Offences
- Mitigating Circumstances.

You are ***strongly*** encouraged to read the information provided below, and at the end of this handbook. Hard copies are available on request in the School Administrative Office at 43 Gordon Square.

Further details on programme regulation and areas of interest are available on the Common Awards Scheme website: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs/cas>

### Research Ethics

All research involving human participants and confidential materials, carried out by students in the School of Arts is subject to an ethics approval process. This is to ensure that the rights of participants and researchers alike are protected at all times,

and to underline our commitment to excellence in research across a wide range of subjects.

If you are undertaking any such research work for a dissertation, project, thesis etc. please complete the form 'Proposal for Ethical Review template' and pass this to your academic supervisor. The proposal will be reviewed and assessed as 'routine' or 'non-routine'. In most cases it is envisaged that such work will be routine, and your supervisor will inform you of the outcome. In a small number of cases, the proposal may be referred to the School's Ethics Committee for further consideration. Again, you will be informed of any outcome.

The proposal form is available through our departmental web pages (current students). If you have any queries, please speak to your supervisor in the first instance.

Further guidelines are available on the MyBirkbeck website at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support/research-ethics>.

# Coursework Guidelines and Stylesheet

References within your essay and the bibliography should be full, consistent and properly presented. **You are expected to consult and follow the MHRA Style Book** where a much fuller discussion of presentation is to be found. It can be downloaded from the Department of English and Humanities website: <http://www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml>.

Essays for options run by departments other than English and Humanities should, however, follow their documentation guidelines.

While minor lapses (e.g. commas out of place, forgetting to mention the translator of a work in the bibliography) may be ignored if they are infrequent, *you will be penalized for sloppy and inaccurate documentation*. While doing your preparatory reading, it is important to take full and accurate references so as to avoid spending a great deal of time hunting back through works to find page numbers etc.

Often MA students underestimate the time it takes to prepare a successful essay. This is not only because of the extent of the reading required, but because constructing a carefully-documented piece, and dealing with a larger body of primary and secondary materials than you are likely to have experienced in writing undergraduate essays, is a time-consuming process. No matter how long you spend on doing the preparatory reading, leave yourself plenty of time to write your piece.

## Presentation

### Editions

Wherever possible, standard editions should be used, especially for passages essential to the argument of the essay. References to the same work should be to the same edition, unless differences between editions are relevant to the argument of the essay.

### Quotations

Quotations must be accurate and should be checked carefully before the essay is submitted.

Prose quotations up to about three lines and verse quotations up to one full line should be incorporated into the body of the text. Longer quotations should be inset, in which case inverted commas are not needed.

Once the source of quotation has been clearly identified in a footnote, quotations from the same text and edition can be identified by page number (or line number, or act, scene and line number etc., as appropriate) in parentheses immediately after the quotations, thus avoiding unnecessary footnotes.

### Footnotes

Footnotes should be succinct; they should not become miniature essays. There are good grounds for restricting footnotes to:

- i) The identification of quotations and other essential documentation.

ii) Undeveloped references to other relevant material: 'see also...'

Documenting footnotes should follow the sequences:

- a) Printed books: author, title (underlined); editor's name (if appropriate, preceded by 'ed.');
- place and date of publication (in parentheses);  
volume  
and/or page number(s).
- b) Periodical articles: author, title of article (within single inverted commas); title of periodical (underlined); volume number; date of publication (in parentheses); page number(s).

### Sample footnotes:

- (1) G. R. Hibbard, *Thomas Nashe: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p.24
- (2) Hibbard, pp. 25-6 [a following reference to the same book]
- (3) John Dryden, *Annus Mirabilis*, lines 25-6 (*Poems*, ed. J. Kinsley, Oxford: OUP, 1958), I, 53
- (4) Lois Whitney, 'English primitavistic theories of epic origins', *MP*, 21 (1924), 337 or *MP*, xxi (1924), 337

### List of Sources

At the end of the essay should be listed all the works, including editions of the texts discussed, that have been consulted in its preparation. The list should be in alphabetical order of author. The conventional sequences are as follows:

**printed books:** author (surname first), title (underlined); editor (if appropriate); number of volumes (if more than one); place of publication [colon] publisher [comma] year of publication

**articles:** author (surname first); title in single inverted commas; title of periodical (underlined); volume number; date (in parentheses); numbers of first and last pages of article.

### Acknowledgements

In footnotes and list of sources the student must make clear acknowledgement of ALL works, reports and sources from the internet used in writing the essay and should not descend to plagiarism or collusion. S/he should carefully note the University of London General Regulations for Internal Students, 9.5:

*Where the regulations for any qualification provide for part of an examination to consist of 'take-away' papers, essays or other work written in a candidate's own time, course-work assessment or any similar form of text, the work submitted by the candidate must be his own, and any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other persons must be duly acknowledged.*

Plagiarism is the quotation, verbatim or virtually verbatim, of other people's work, published or unpublished, without acknowledgement. Plagiarism carries severe

penalties and may even warrant exclusion from the course. If in doubt about the protocols of acknowledgement, ask.

### **Assessment**

All assessed essays are double-marked; a set of comments and a mark are returned to the student. These marks remain provisional until ratified by the external examiner at the Board of Examiners' meeting in November of the following year.

### **Student Support**

Any matters that students want to discuss that are directly related to the content of the MA should be discussed with the appropriate tutor. Staff telephone numbers and email addresses have been provided under contacts.

# Disability Statement

At Birkbeck there are students with a wide range of disabilities including dyslexia, visual or hearing impairments, mobility difficulties, mental health needs, HIV, ME, respiratory conditions etc. Many of them have benefited from the advice and support provided by the College's disability service.

## **The Disability Office**

The College has a Disability Office located on the main corridor of the Malet Street building. We have a Disability Service Manager, Mark Pimm, and a Disability Advisor, Steve Short.

Mark is your first point of referral for disability enquiries at the College whilst Steve is for dyslexia. They can provide advice and support on travel and parking, physical access, the Disabled Students' Allowance, special equipment, personal support, examination arrangements etc. If you have a disability or dyslexia, we recommend you come to our drop in session where we can discuss support and make follow up appointments as necessary. The drop in sessions are between 4pm and 6pm Monday to Friday.

At your first appointment at the Disability Office they will ask you to complete a Confidentiality Consent Form. This allows you to state who in the College can be informed of your disability. Remember, if you wish, we do not need to inform people of the exact nature of your disability, just your disability related needs.

They will also complete an Individual Student Support Agreement form, confirming your support requirements and send this to your School and relevant Departments at the College so they are informed of your needs.

## **Access at Birkbeck**

Birkbeck's main buildings have wheelchair access, accessible lifts and toilets, our reception desks have induction loops for people with hearing impairments and we have large print and tactile signage. Disabled parking, lockers, specialist seating in lectures and seminars and portable induction loops etc can all be arranged by the Disability Office.

### **The Disabled Students' Allowance**

UK and most EU students with disabilities on undergraduate and postgraduate courses are eligible to apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). The DSA usually provides **thousands of pounds worth of support** and all the evidence shows that students who receive it are more likely to complete their courses successfully. The Disability Office can provide further information on the DSA and can assist you in applying to Student Finance England for this support.

## **The Personal Assistance Scheme**

Some students need a personal assistant to provide support on their course, for example a note-taker, sign language interpreter, reader, personal assistant, disability mentor or dyslexia support tutor. Birkbeck uses a specialist agency to recruit Personal Assistants and they can assist you with recruiting, training and paying your personal assistant. Please contact Steve for information on this scheme.

### **Support in your School**

The provision which can be made for students with disabilities by Schools is set out in the Procedures for Students with Disabilities. This is available from the Disability Office and the Disability website (see below).

As mentioned above your School will receive a copy of your Individual Student Support Agreement from the Disability Office. This will make specific recommendations about the support you should receive from the School.

Whilst we anticipate that this support will be provided by the Programme Director, tutors and School Administrator the School of History of Art and Screen Media also has a Student Disability Liaison Officer. If you experience any difficulties or require additional support from the School then they may also be able to assist you. They may be contacted through the School Office or the Disability Office.

### **Support in IT Services and Library Services**

There is a comprehensive range of specialist equipment for students with disabilities in IT Services. This includes software packages for dyslexic students (TextHELP Read and Write and Inspiration), screen reading and character enhancing software for students with visual impairments, specialist scanning software, large monitors, ergonomic mice and keyboards, specialist orthopaedic chairs etc. For advice and assistance please contact Disability IT Support. There is also a range of specialist equipment in the Library including a CCTV reading machine for visually impaired students as well as specialist orthopaedic chairs and writing slopes. The Disability Office refers all students with disabilities to the Library Access Support service who provides a comprehensive range of services for students with disabilities.

### **Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)**

Mature students who experienced problems at school are often unaware that these problems may result from their being dyslexic. Whilst dyslexia cannot be cured, you can learn strategies which make studying significantly easier. If you think you may be dyslexic you should contact Steve, he can screen you and where appropriate refer you to an Educational Psychologist for a dyslexia assessment. These assessments cost £215. Some students can receive assistance in meeting this cost from their employer. In exceptional cases students may receive assistance from the Access to Learning Fund.

### **Examinations**

Students with disabilities and dyslexia may be eligible for special arrangements for examinations e.g. extra time, use of a word processor, amanuensis, enlarged examination papers etc. In order to receive special arrangements a student must provide Medical Evidence of their disability (or an Educational Psychologist's Report if you are dyslexic) to the Disability Office. For School examinations you should contact your Programme Director to request special arrangements at least 2 weeks before the examination. For main College summer examinations you are given the opportunity to declare that you require special provision on your assessment entry form. Students who require provision should then attend an appointment with the Disability Office to discuss and formalise the appropriate arrangements. The closing date for making special examination arrangements in College examinations is the 15<sup>th</sup> March and beyond this date consideration will only be given to emergency cases.

## **The Disability Handbook**

The Disability Handbook provides detailed information on the support available from the College. Copies are available from all main reception areas, the Disability Office and from the College disability web site at:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/disability>

For further information or to make an appointment to see Mark or Steve, please call Steve Short (Disability Advisor) on 020 7631 6336 or email [disability@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bbk.ac.uk).

## **Disability and Student Support Team Contact details:**

### **Mark Pimm**

*Disability Co-ordinator*  
Room G057 Registry  
Birkbeck College  
Malet Street  
London WC1E 7HX  
Telephone: 020 7631 6315  
Email: [m.pimm@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:m.pimm@bbk.ac.uk)

### **Steve Short**

*Disability Administrator*  
Room G057 Registry  
Birkbeck College  
Malet Street  
London WC1E 7HX  
Telephone: 020 7631 6336  
Email: [disability@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bbk.ac.uk)

### **Lisa Mayer**

*Assistant Examinations Officer*  
Telephone: 020 7631 6598  
[l.mayer@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:l.mayer@bbk.ac.uk)

### **The Student Financial Support Office**

Telephone: 020 7631 6362

### **Jackie Barnes**

*Examinations Officer*  
Telephone: 020 7631 6385

### **President of the Student Union**

Telephone: 020 7631 6365  
Email: [president@bcsu.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:president@bcsu.bbk.ac.uk)  
Web address: [www.bbk.ac.uk/su](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su)

# Student Support and Available Resources

## Student Support

### Study Skills Programmes

Every Department within the School of Arts has a provision for student support and the programmes vary as they are targeted at specific degree requirements. Please contact your administrator if you are having **any** difficulties in completing your coursework. There is help available to you at every point in your degree, and we are more than happy to point you in the right direction.

### Skills for Study

Organised by the Student Union, classes will be available on Essay Writing Skills and Exam Techniques. Details will be advertised on notice boards throughout the college. For more information, see their website at [www.bbk.ac.uk/su](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su).

### English Language and Study Skills

English Language and Study Skills courses are available, see the website at: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/ce/subjects/academicwriting/enggenstud>

## Birkbeck College Resources

### Birkbeck Library

The College Library (<http://www.bbk.ac/lib/>) has a solid and growing core of books, journals and reference. It is primarily an undergraduate library, but through a careful acquisitions policy we try to provide general resources for MA students (although we cannot hope that the library covers all areas of interest and work). The College Library has a 'tied Xerox' system and 'short loan' collection to equip you with copies of a number of central core texts.

The long opening hours allow you to borrow books after classes. There is an e-mail enquiry, reservation and renewal service, an on-line catalogue and bibliographical service (including Art Index on CD-ROM).

The College Library also runs an inter-library loan service to enable you to obtain copies of books and articles not held in its own collections. As it can take a couple of weeks to obtain copies of requested materials, you are advised to plan ahead in your general reading and essay preparation so as to make use of this facility. Please note a charge of £1 will be made for each satisfied inter-library loan request.

Should you have any questions about library provision, please contact the Department's Library Liaison Representative or the Department's Subject Librarian.

The Library has a separate periodicals, A/V and "Reading Room Collection". The latter consists of photocopies of articles and essential books which have been placed there at a lecturer's request and are for reference use only within the Library.

Information about the layout, collections and services, the Library catalogue and access to the Library's extensive range of electronic resources is via the Library web site <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/> It is very important to familiarise yourself with this site. Detailed information about the Library's resources can be found in the online Subject Guide.

### **Birkbeck eLibrary**

As well as its physical holdings, the Library has a comprehensive range of e-resources including bibliographic databases (which tell you what has been written on a topic), and electronic journals. Most of the electronic resources can be accessed from outside the College using your IT Services username and password. If you did not receive this upon enrolment, please ask for them at IT Services reception (Malet Street).

The LAMP Service (**LibrAry Materials by Post**) is a subscription based service which enables you to have books and photocopies of articles posted to your home address. You may find it particularly useful if you are not able to visit the library frequently. Birkbeck students with disabilities may be able to join the service for free on the recommendation of the College Disability Officer, Mark Pimm. If you think you may be eligible for free membership, please first contact Mark Pimm in the Disability Office.

The College Library also runs an interlibrary loan service to enable you to obtain copies of books and articles not held in its own collections. As it can take a couple of weeks to obtain copies of requested materials, you are advised to plan ahead in your general reading and essay preparation so as to make use of this facility. Please note: a charge of £1 will be made for each interlibrary loan request received and there is a limit of 10 requests in progress at any one time.

An introduction to the Library and bibliographical skills is timetabled at the start of your course at which you will meet the Subject Librarian who looks after the collection. They will introduce you to the Library and its electronic resources. In addition, the Library has an online tutorial called LIFE (Library Induction for Everyone) which is always available: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/life/> which has a module in it on 'Researching a topic'.

### **Senate House Library**

Postgraduate students in the Department are also entitled to use the main University of London Library on the 4th floor of Senate House where there is a large collection of Journals.

## **Other Resources and Organisations**

### **Birkbeck Student Union**

You are automatically a member of the Birkbeck Students' Union, the University of London Union and NUS upon taking up the offer of a place to study at Birkbeck. NUS cards are available online (NUS Extra) or from the Union Office, Malet Street. Application can be made to become a member of the International Students' Association by completing a form that can also be obtained from their shop.

**Location and Telephone:** Offices on the 4th Floor of the extension building in Malet Street. General Union Office is in Room 456, Tel: 020 7631 6335. Enquiries: [administrator@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:administrator@bcu.ac.uk) . Visit the website at <http://www.birkbeckunion.org/> .

### **Counselling**

The Students' Union offers counselling free of charge.

### **Birkbeck Evening Nursery**

Birkbeck College has an Evening Nursery, which is available for students and current members of staff and accepts children aged 2-10 years. In exceptional circumstances, children up to 12 will be accepted. However, Nursery Staff reserve the right not to accept older children if they are disruptive. Full details, including opening times, may be found at: [www.bbk.ac.uk/pers/nursery](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/pers/nursery).

### **Career Development**

Most students are interested in developing their careers, either within their current field of work or in a completely new direction. **The Specialist Institutions' Careers Service [SICS]**, part of The Careers Group, University of London, offers great expertise and experience in working with students and graduates of all ages and at all stages of career development. And it's Birkbeck's next-door neighbour!

During term-time they offer an Early Evening Advisory Service specifically and exclusively for evening students and a Drop-In Advice Service, which is always very popular with the Birkbeck students.

Longer Advisory Interviews can be arranged if necessary - for complete career beginners, for people wanting a practice job interview, and for every stage and situation in between.

They also offer Psychometric Testing and Personality Assessment Workshops, Employer Presentations, Computer-based Career Guidance Programs, Insight Career Courses as well as invaluable information on Course Funding.

**For more information and opening times visit the SICS website at:**  
<http://www.careers.lon.ac.uk/sics> .

# Contact Details

| <b>Administrative Contacts</b>                            |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Shabna Begum  | MA Cultural & Critical Studies<br>MA Modern & Contemporary Literature<br>MA Renaissance Studies<br>MA Victorian Studies<br>MA Medical Humanities<br>MA Medieval Cultures | 0203 073 8376<br><a href="mailto:shabna.begum@bbk.ac.uk">shabna.begum@bbk.ac.uk</a>  |
| Penny Luker-Brown   | Mphil/PhD programme<br>MA Creative Producing<br>MA Children's Literature   | 0203 073 8374  |
| <b>Anne-Marie Taylor</b>                                  | <b>MA Creative Writing</b><br>MFA Theatre Directing<br>MA Text and Performance<br>MA Shakespeare and Performance   | <b>0203 073 8372</b><br><b><a href="mailto:a.taylor@bbk.ac.uk">a.taylor@bbk.ac.uk</a></b><br><b>Room G22, 43 Gordon Square</b> |
| <b>Academic Contacts</b><br><i>MA Programme Directors</i> |  |  |
| Michael Rosen   | MA Children's Literature   | <a href="mailto:m.rosen@bbk.ac.uk">m.rosen@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| Andrew McKinnon   | MA Creative Producing  | <a href="mailto:a.mckinnon@bbk.ac.uk">a.mckinnon@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| <b>Russell Celyn-Jones</b>                                | <b>MA Creative Writing</b>   | <b><a href="mailto:r.jones@bbk.ac.uk">r.jones@bbk.ac.uk</a></b><br>0203 073 8223   |
| Dr Esther Leslie  | MA Cultural & Critical Studies   | <a href="mailto:e.leslie@bbk.ac.uk">e.leslie@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| Dr Joanne Winning   | MA Medical Humanities  | <a href="mailto:j.winning@bbk.ac.uk">j.winning@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| Dr Isabel Davis   | MA Medieval Cultures   | <a href="mailto:i.davis@bbk.ac.uk">i.davis@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| Dr Roger Luckhurst  | MA Modern & Contemporary Literature  | <a href="mailto:r.luckhurst@bbk.ac.uk">r.luckhurst@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| Dr Anthony Bale   | MA Renaissance Studies   | <a href="mailto:a.bale@bbk.ac.uk">a.bale@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| Dr Michael Dobson   | MA Shakespeare and Performance   | <a href="mailto:m.dobson@bbk.ac.uk">m.dobson@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| Dr Aoife Monks  | MA Text and Performance  | <a href="mailto:a.monks@bbk.ac.uk">a.monks@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| Rob Swain   | MFA Theatre Directing  | <a href="mailto:r.swain@bbk.ac.uk">r.swain@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| Dr Ana Parjeo-Vadillo                                     | MA Victorian Studies   | <a href="mailto:a.parejovadillo@bbk.ac.uk">a.parejovadillo@bbk.ac.uk</a>   |
| <b>MA Creative Writing Tutors</b>                         |  |  |
| Julia Bell  | Senior Lecturer  | 205a, 43 Gordon Square<br><a href="mailto:jh.bell@bbk.ac.uk">jh.bell@bbk.ac.uk</a><br>0203 073 8217                            |
| Toby Litt   | Lecturer   | 307, 43 Gordon Square<br><a href="mailto:t.litt@bbk.ac.uk">t.litt@bbk.ac.uk</a><br>0203 073 8210                               |
| Colin Teevan  | Lecturer   | 309a, 43 Gordon Square<br><a href="mailto:c.teevan@bbk.ac.uk">c.teevan@bbk.ac.uk</a><br>0203 073 8227                          |

## Appendix A: Term Dates and Deadlines

| Autumn Term   |                  | Spring Term                                   |                  | Summer Term                                |                  |
|---|------------------|---|------------------|--|------------------|
| Monday 3 October 2011 to Friday 16 December 2011  |                  | Monday 9 January 2012 to Monday 19 March 2012 |                  | Monday 23 April 2012 to Monday 2 July 2012 |                  |
| Week 1  | <b>3-Oct-11</b>  | Week 1  | <b>9-Jan-12</b>  | Week 1                                     | <b>23-Apr-12</b> |
| Week 2  | <b>10-Oct-11</b> | Week 2  | <b>16-Jan-12</b> | Week 2                                     | <b>30-Apr-12</b> |
| Week 3  | <b>17-Oct-11</b> | Week 3  | <b>23-Jan-12</b> | Week 3                                     | <b>7-May-12</b>  |
| Week 4  | <b>24-Oct-11</b> | Week 4  | <b>30-Jan-12</b> | Week 4                                     | <b>14-May-12</b> |
| Week 5  | <b>31-Oct-11</b> | Week 5  | <b>6-Feb-12</b>  | Week 5                                     | <b>21-May-12</b> |
| Week 6  | <b>7-Nov-11</b>  | Week 6  | <b>13-Feb-12</b> | Week 6                                     | <b>28-May-12</b> |
| Week 7  | <b>14-Nov-11</b> | Week 7  | <b>20-Feb-12</b> | Week 7                                     | <b>4-Jun-12</b>  |
| Week 8  | <b>21-Nov-11</b> | Week 8  | <b>27-Feb-12</b> | Week 8                                     | <b>11-Jun-12</b> |
| Week 9  | <b>28-Nov-11</b> | Week 9  | <b>5-Mar-12</b>  | Week 9                                     | <b>18-Jun-12</b> |
| Week 10   | <b>5-Dec-11</b>  | Week 10                                       | <b>12-Mar-12</b> | Week 10                                    | <b>25-Jun-12</b> |
| Week 11   | <b>12-Dec-11</b> | Week 11                                       | <b>19-Mar-12</b> | Week 11                                    | <b>2-Jul-12</b>  |
| (Calculated by week beginning on Monday)<br><b>Autumn/Spring Term: Week 6 is Reading Week</b><br><b>Summer Term: Week 7 is Reading Week (due to Bank Holiday Closures)</b><br>Please see <a href="http://bbk.ac.uk/about_us/termdates">http://bbk.ac.uk/about_us/termdates</a> for full term dates and holiday closure. |                  |   |                  |  |                  |

| Autumn Term   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Induction for all new MA Students</b>              | <b>Wednesday 28 September 2010</b>    |
| Launch Party for <i>Mechanics' Institute Review 7</i> | Thursday 29 September 2010            |
| Writing & Reading Seminar begins                      | Wednesday 5 October 2010              |
| Contemporary Literature Modules begin                 | Week beginning 3 October 2010         |
| <b>READING WEEK NO CLASSES</b>                        | <b>Week beginning 7 November 2010</b> |

| Spring Term                    |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>DEADLINE FOR COURSEWORK</b> | <b>Monday 9 January 2011</b>           |
| Option Modules begin           | Week beginning 9 January 2011          |
| Writing Workshop begins        | Wednesday 11 January 2011              |
| <b>READING WEEK NO CLASSES</b> | <b>Week beginning 13 February 2011</b> |

| Summer Term                    |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>DEADLINE FOR COURSEWORK</b> | <b>23 April 2011</b> |

| Dissertation Deadline   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Full-time and year 2 part-time students: 30 September 2012</b><br><b>Year 1 part-time students: Last working day of September 2013</b> |  |

## Appendix B: Extracurricular opportunities



Get Involved!

<http://www.writershub.net>

The Birkbeck Writers Hub is an exciting new interactive web portal which aims to provide a platform for high-quality new writing, a forum for the exchange of ideas, a library of resources for writers and a site for the dissemination of knowledge and good practice from the Birkbeck Writing Programme.

This site is managed by Project Director, Julia Bell, and Managing Editor, James Vincent, and maintained and edited by a rotating group of Birkbeck students, alumni and staff.

We are always looking for people to contribute reviews, blogs, stories, poems and suggest ideas for features and interviews. We also need volunteers to help manage and develop the site, and to join the editorial committee and we have an ongoing intern programme.

Email Julia Bell if you're interested in finding out more: [jh.bell@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:jh.bell@bbk.ac.uk)



MACW students are eligible to take part in writLOUD, a monthly readings event showcasing both new authors from Birkbeck's Creative Writing courses and established writers, organised in conjunction with Oxfam.

Writers in a range of forms – including the short story, novel, poetry, life writing – read their work aloud to a friendly and supportive audience of students, related-industry professionals and the literature-loving public in the informal and convivial setting of RADA's foyer bar. Each writLOUD event features 3-4 students from Birkbeck's Creative Writing courses and a well-known author. Previous guest writers include Jonathan Coe, Zoë Fairbairns, Rich Hall, Hari Kunzru, Benjamin Markovits, Richard Milward, Blake Morrison, Nii Parkes, Kate Pullinger, Helen Simpson and Erica Wagner.

Podcasts of the readings and biographies of the writers are published on the writLOUD website: [www.bbk.ac.uk/writloud](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/writloud).

# Appendix C: Getting Started with Blackboard

For further help, please contact the ITS helpdesk in the Malet Street building or visit <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/elearning/blackboard/> for more training options.

## Logging in and getting started

All modules within the School of Arts will be using Blackboard for coursework submission. The information below can be found at the following link and is located within your MyBirkbeck page: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/ble>

- [Login to the BLE](#): you will need your ITS username and password, a computer with a connection to the internet and a web browser such as Internet Explorer or Firefox.
  - If you are having login problems, please change or recover your password via the online form (allow one hour after completing this form, and then log in to the BLE again). If this hasn't resolved the problem please contact the ITS Helpdesk.
  - Check your web browser at: ([http://www.cqu.edu.au/blackboard/students/your\\_computer.htm](http://www.cqu.edu.au/blackboard/students/your_computer.htm)) if you're having problems: Blackboard usually works successfully with any web browser, but you can use this link to check that your browser is Blackboard-ready.
- Download our Guide for new users at: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/ble/ble\\_guide.pdf](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/ble/ble_guide.pdf)
- **There is an online tutorial which is accessed via your MyBirkbeck page.**

## Contact ITS

If you want more information, then check our support [Wiki](#) (also accessed via the BLE Support Tab) [http://wiki.bbk.ac.uk/bb/Welcome\\_to\\_Blackboard\\_Support](http://wiki.bbk.ac.uk/bb/Welcome_to_Blackboard_Support)

If you need some assistance, please email ITS Blackboard Support ([blackboard@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:blackboard@bbk.ac.uk)) or visit the ITS help desk.

# Appendix D: Programme Structures and Regulations - Postgraduate

## Birkbeck, University of London Common Awards Scheme Postgraduate Programmes

### Introduction

1. The majority of Birkbeck's postgraduate programmes are offered as part of the College's Common Awards Scheme. Programmes within the Scheme have common regulations, and a common structure, and this makes it possible for you to take modules from other programmes across the College (subject to programme regulations and timetable constraints).
2. This paper gives a brief introduction to the Common Awards Scheme. Further details on regulations and policies that form the Common Awards Scheme can be accessed via: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules>

### Structure of Programmes

3. All programmes offered as part of the Common Awards Scheme consist of modules, each of which are "credit-rated". In order to achieve your award you will need to gain at least the following, and meet the requirements outlined in your programme specification:

| Qualification            | Credits needed | Min at upper level | Max at lower level   | Birkbeck common awards schemes |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Masters Degree           | 180            | 150 level 7        | 30 level 6 (not included in calculation of classification) | 4 modules plus dissertation    |
| Postgraduate Diploma     | 120            | 90 level 7         | 30 level 6 (not included in calculation of classification) | 4 modules                      |
| Postgraduate Certificate | 60             | 60 level 7         | n/a  | 2 modules                      |

4. The Common Awards Scheme offers, for postgraduate programmes, half modules (15 credits), modules (30 credits), double modules (60 credits), or exceptionally triple modules (90 credits) and quadruple modules (120 credits – normally for MRes dissertations)
5. The detailed requirements for each programme are published in the relevant programme specification. Each module on a programme is designated as one of the following:
  - core** the module must be taken and passed to allow the student to complete the degree
  - compulsory** the module must be taken, and Programme Regulations must stipulate the minimum assessment that must be *attempted*
  - option** students may choose a stipulated number of modules from a range made available to them. Option modules are clearly identified in Programme Regulations.
  - elective** students may replace an option module with modules from another programme, subject to approval of Programme Directors, availability of places and timetable requirements.

Modules may also be designated as **pre-requisite** modules, meaning they must be taken and passed to allow for progression to a specified follow-up module.

### Degree Classification

6. Postgraduate awards may be made with Merit or Distinction. Distinctions are normally awarded to students who achieve an average result of 70% or more, including a mark of 70 or over in their dissertation, for all level 7 modules on their programme. A Merit is normally awarded to students who achieve an average result of 60% or more, but less than 70% for all level 7 modules. Level 6 modules included as part of the programme are not included in the calculation for degree classification for postgraduate programmes.

### Failure and Re-assessment of a Module

7. The Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study outline how an examination board should treat a failed module when considering progression and awards. However, each examination board is responsible for judging, within these regulations, whether a fail can be “compensated” (ie whether you can be awarded credit for that module even if you have not actually passed), whether you will need to re-take the module (see paragraph 8) or whether you will be able to attempt a re-assessment (see paragraph 9)
8. For any module on a postgraduate programme, if you fail to pass at the first attempt then any subsequent attempt will either be a “re-take” or a “re-assessment”. A re-take requires attendance at the module’s lectures and seminars as well as another attempt at the assessment, whereas “re-assessment” is where a student attempts only the failed element(s) of a failed module. The decision on whether you will be offered a re-take or re-assessment will be made by your sub-board of examiners.
9. A Sub-board of Examiners may offer an alternative form of assessment for failed elements as part of a re-assessment regime.
10. The timing of any re-assessment will be at the discretion of the Sub-board of Examiners; this will normally be either at the next normal assessment opportunity or in some instances before the beginning of the next academic year.
11. You will normally be offered two attempts at passing a module (the original attempt plus one further attempt which will either be a re-assessment or a re-take). After this, if the module has not been passed it will be classed either as a “compensated fail” (see 12) or a fail. In some cases this will mean that it will not be possible for you to gain the award that you have registered for; in such cases, your registration will normally be terminated.
12. If your module result is between 40 and 49% your Sub-board of Examiners may award a “compensated fail”. This will mean that you retain the module result, but are awarded credit for that module. An MA or MSc may be awarded to a student carrying no more than 30 credits as compensated fail. A core module may not be treated as a compensated fail; core modules must be passed in order to gain the award. The awards of MRes, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate do not normally permit the inclusion of compensated fail results in the calculation of classification

#### **Common Award Scheme Policies**

1. As part of the introduction of the Common Awards Scheme, the College has implemented a number of College-wide policies. The full policies can be seen at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules>  
Some brief details on key policies are included here:

#### **Late Submission of work for assessment**

2. College policy dictates how Schools will treat work that is due for assessment but is submitted after the published deadline. Any work that is submitted for formal assessment after the published deadline is given two marks: a penalty mark of 50% for postgraduate students, assuming it is of a pass standard, and the ‘real’ mark that would have been awarded if the work had not been late. Both marks are given to the student on a cover sheet. If the work is not of a pass standard a single mark is given.
3. If you submit late work that is to be considered for assessment then you should provide written documentation, medical or otherwise, to explain why the work was submitted late. You will need to complete a standard pro-forma and submit it, with documentary evidence as appropriate, to your Tutor or Programme Director. The case will then be considered by the appropriate sub-board or delegated panel.
4. If no case is made then the penalty mark will stand. If the case is made and accepted then the examination board may allow the ‘real’ mark to stand.

#### **Assessment Offences**

5. The College Policy on Assessment Offences incorporates the College policy on plagiarism.
6. The policy describes two stages in the process for dealing with assessment offences (which include plagiarism, collusion, examination offences and other offences). The first stage allows for a formal school investigation into the alleged offence. Stage 2 involves a centrally convened panel for more serious offences, dealt with under the Code of Student Discipline.
7. The College treats all assessment offences seriously. It makes strenuous efforts to detect plagiarism, including using web-based software that can provide clear evidence. If you are in any doubt as to what constitutes acceptable conduct you should consult your personal tutor or another member of academic staff. The College has a wide range of sanctions that it may apply in cases of plagiarism, including the termination of a student’s registration in the most serious cases.

## Mitigating Circumstances

8. The College Policy on Mitigating Circumstances determines how Sub-boards of Examiners will treat assessment that has been affected by adverse circumstances. Mitigating Circumstances are defined as unforeseen, unpreventable circumstances that significantly disrupt your performance in assessment. This should not be confused with long term issues such as medical conditions, for which the College can make adjustments before assessment (for guidance on how arrangements can be made in these cases please see the College's Procedures for Dealing with Special Examination Arrangements).
9. A Mitigating Circumstances claim should be submitted if valid detrimental circumstances result in:
  - a) the late or non-submission of assessment;
  - b) non-attendance at examination(s);
  - c) poor performance in assessment.
10. For a claim to be accepted you must produce independent documentary evidence to show that the circumstances:
  - a) have detrimentally affected your performance or will do so, with respect to 9a, 9b and 9c above;
  - b) were unforeseen;
  - c) were out of your control and could not have been prevented;
  - d) relate directly to the timing of the assessment affected.
11. Documentation should be presented, wherever possible, on the official headed paper of the issuing body, and should normally include the dates of the period in which the circumstances applied. Copies of documentary evidence will not normally be accepted. If you need an original document for another purpose, you should bring the original into the Departmental Office so that a copy can be made by a member of College staff. (Where a photocopy is made by a member of staff they should indicate on the copy that they have seen the original).
12. Discussing your claim with a member of staff does not constitute a submission of a claim of mitigating circumstances.
13. You are encouraged to submit your claim for mitigating circumstances in advance and at the earliest opportunity. The final deadline for submission of a claim is normally 1 week after the final examination unless otherwise stated by your Department. Where possible, claims should be submitted using the standard College Mitigating Circumstances claim form (available from your Departmental office) which should be submitted in accordance with the procedure for submission published by your Department. Claims should always be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.
14. You should be aware that individual marks will almost never be changed in the light of mitigating circumstances. Assessment is designed to test your achievement rather than your potential; it is not normally possible to gauge what you would have achieved had mitigating circumstances not arisen. Where mitigating circumstances are accepted, and it is judged by an Sub-board of Examiners that these circumstances were sufficiently severe to have affected your performance in assessment the usual response will be to offer you another opportunity for assessment without penalty, at the next available opportunity.
15. Guidance on what may constitute acceptable mitigating circumstances is available as an appendix to the policy, available from <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules> or your Departmental office; you should note that this is not an exhaustive list, and that each case will be treated on its merits by the relevant sub-board or delegated body.
16. You should note that decisions on mitigating circumstances are the responsibility of the sub-board for your programme. Where you are taking an elective or other module offered by another department or school, any application for mitigating circumstances should be to your "home" department.

## Break-in-Studies Policy

17. The Common Awards Scheme regulations allow you to suspend studies for a maximum of two years in total during your programme of study. This may be for one period of two years or for non-consecutive shorter periods (see 18) that add up to a total of two years or less.
18. Any break-in-studies on a postgraduate programme would normally be for a minimum of one year; breaks may also be permitted for a period of one or two terms, dependent on the structure of the programme.
19. Any application for a break-in-studies should be made in writing to your programme director or personal tutor. If you are applying for an approved break-in-studies, you should give details of the length of the proposed break and the reasons for the application.

20. You will not be liable for fees while on an approved break-in-studies. If you have attended for part of a term you will normally be liable for the fees due in that term, unless there are mitigating circumstances.
21. If you are on a break-in-studies you will not have access to the Library or ITS unless you make an application and pay the appropriate fee to use these facilities. Applications must be made directly to the Library and/or ITS.
22. If you do not re-enrol after having completed two years of break-in-studies you will be deemed to have withdrawn from your programme. If you wish to resume your programme after having been withdrawn, you will normally be required to re-apply for admission.

**Other Policies**

22. In addition to the policies above, other College academic-related policies include:
  - Accredited Prior Learning
  - Termination of Registration
  - Procedures for Dealing with Special Examination Arrangements
  - Suspension of Regulations
  - The Operation of Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners
  - The Role of External & Intercollegiate Examiners
  - Marking and Moderation
  - Feedback on AssessmentTo see these policies, please see the Common Awards Scheme website:  
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules>
23. The College also operates a Procedure for Appeals Against Decisions of Boards of Examiners; this is also available from this website.

May 2011

# Appendix E: Campus Map

[www.bbk.ac.uk/maps](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/maps)



-  Birkbeck buildings
-  Stations (rail/tube)
-  Stations (tube)
-  Major landmarks and other buildings of interest

- 1 Birkbeck main building, Torrington Square
- 2 Clore Management Centre
- 3 Senate House (North Block) (access via Gower Street)
- 4 25-26 Russell Square
- 5 30 Russell Square
- 6 10-16 Gower Street
- 7 4 Gower Street
- 8 Evening Nursery
- 9 32 Torrington Square
- 10 South Wing UCL
- 11 Gordon House
- 12 32 Tavistock Square
- 13 39-47 Gordon Square
- 14 7 Bedford Square

- 15 Knowledge Lab, 23-29 Emerald Street
- 16 The Wolfson Institute for Brain Development and Function in the Henry Wellcome Building
- 17 Egmont House

