

Introducing the M.Phil in Popular Literature, 2017/18.

(Details of Core Course and Option courses appear on subsequent pages.

Please note that both the core and option courses will be updated in 2018/19, and we cannot guarantee that an option course which runs this academic year will still be available then).

Over the last two decades, the study of popular literature in all of its generic forms has been transformed from a niche area of academic interest into one of the most vibrant and rapidly growing areas of critical inquiry within literary studies. It was once the case that what few academic explorations of popular literature there were began with what amounted to a tacit apology for daring to pay serious attention to this kind of ‘trash’ in the first place. Nowadays, the level of student and academic interest in the field is such that the often rather pained justifications of the past are simply no longer necessary (or appropriate). As Tony Bennett and Graham Martin put it in their preface to one of the first major works in the field, *Popular Fiction: Technology, Ideology, Production, Reading* (1990), “There are many good reasons for studying popular fiction. The best, though, is that it matters”. As the first ever postgraduate course in this subject area, Trinity College Dublin’s M. Phil in Popular Literature (which began in 2005) has for over a decade made a valuable contribution to this exciting and rapidly evolving field.

The M.Phil in Popular Literature is therefore first of all informed by the conviction that popular literature represents an appropriate, challenging and intellectually worth-while subject deserving of rigorous academic study. Our approach to the subject is grounded in the belief that in order to fully appreciate the breadth and significance of genre fiction, students must familiarise themselves with the origins and development of popular literature from its beginnings up until the present day. It is for this reason that the historical component of the core course is of paramount importance to this course of study. Popular literature has a long and fascinating history that significantly pre-dates the present day, and one of our intentions is to expose students to as wide a range of popular texts as possible. You will therefore be expected to engage with texts from the eighteenth-century onwards (the period when the idea of a truly “mass” audience first emerged). While we will also be studying more recent (twenty-first century) texts, these will constitute a relatively small percentage of the course material, which also incorporates texts from the Victorian, Edwardian, and early-mid Twentieth century periods.

In addition to the historicising component of the core course, students will be introduced to a wide range of theories and critical approaches related to the academic and critical perceptions of popular fiction. It is also important to emphasise that whilst we will be by necessity be referencing the work of selected cultural studies scholars, this is not a cultural studies MA, nor an MA in Popular Culture. Our primary focus is always on popular *literature*.

The core course traces the history of popular genres such as horror, science fiction, romance, the western, fantasy and detective fiction (to name but a few). We have also integrated specific weeks on topics of importance to the field, such as new and emerging genres, popular

literature from a global perspective, popular taste, the impact that modern technology has had the publishing industry, and popular reading habits. In addition to the core course, students will choose from four specialist options on particular aspects of the popular, each taught by a staff member with research expertise in that area.

This M.Phil will provide an invaluable base for those of you who wish to do further graduate study, but will also appeal to anyone wishing to develop their critical skills and knowledge in relation to this extremely significant aspect of contemporary culture. Members of staff teaching on the course have expertise in areas as varied as Victorian Children's literature, the Irish Gothic, detective fiction, fantasy and Science Fiction, American horror, Victorian Popular Literature, Cyberculture, the dime novel, pulp magazines, and romance, as well as popular literature more broadly.

The School of English has a large and active cohort of research students and is home to five other taught Master's courses. Participants in the M.Phil are part of a long-established and vigorous academic community. A weekly staff/post-graduate research seminar offers a lively forum for debate and the exchange of ideas, and frequently features papers on topics that relate to popular literature studies. Postgraduates of the School of English routinely go on to further research and successful careers, in the academy and other fields.

Dr Bernice M. Murphy and Dr Clare Clarke, Course Directors. (August 18th 2017).

M. Phil in Popular Literature: Core Course Schedule 2017/18

Weeks on the Core Course have been divided into two main themes:

1. Critical approaches to Popular Literature
2. Genre in focus

MICHAELMAS TERM 2017

Week 1: What is Popular Literature?

Tues: Defining Popular Literature; What we do on the M. Phil in Popular Literature (Dr Jarlath Killeen, JK)

Thurs: Exploring academic and critical approaches to Popular Literature I (BM)

Essential readings will be put on Blackboard.

Week 2: Introducing Popular Genres

Tues: Introducing Genre (BM)

(These readings will be posted on Blackboard).

Thurs: Genre Case Study: Horror: *The Shining* by Stephen King (BM)

Week 3: The Origins of Popular Literature

Tues: Eighteenth-Century Chapbooks (Prof. Aileen Douglas)

Thurs: *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole (JK)

Week 4: Popular Taste

Tuesday: *The String of Pearls: A Romance* by Anonymous (JK)

Thursday: *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E.L. James (JK)

Week 5: The Author as Celebrity

Tuesday: *A Bid for Fortune* by Guy Boothby (AB)

Thursday: *The Valley of the Dolls* by Jacqueline Susann (BM)

Week 6: Non-Fiction Popular Literature

Tuesday: True Crime *Extracts to be posted on Blackboard (BM)

Thursday: The Misery Memoir: *A Child Called It* by Dave Pelzer (JK)

Week 7: Study Week [No Classes]

Week 8: Horror

Tuesday: *The Fog* by James Herbert (JK)

Thursday: *World War Z* by Max Brooks (BM)

Week 9: The Thriller

Tuesday: *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown (JK)

Thursday: *Red Dragon* by Thomas Harris (BM)

Week 10: Science Fiction

Tuesday: *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells (AB)

Thursday: *The Windup Girl* by Paolo Bacigalupi (AB)

Week 11: A Popular Christmas

Tuesday: *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum (JK)

Thurs: A Popular Christmas – essential readings to be posted on Blackboard (JK)

Week 12: Exploring Critical Approaches To Popular Literature II: Group Presentations.

Tues: Student Group Presentations (topics and groups will be assigned in week 8)

Thurs: No Class.

Hilary Term 2018

Week 1: The Western and Adventure

Tues: The Western (Prof Stephen Matterson)

- *Shane* by Joe Schafer
- *Hondo* by Louis L'Amour

Thurs: Imperial Adventure (CC)

- *She* by H. Rider Haggard

Week 2: Fantasy

Tues: *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley (AB)

Thurs: Urban Fantasy: *The Rook* by Daniel O'Malley (BM)

Week 3: Utopian and Dystopian Visions

Tuesday: *News from Nowhere* by William Norris (CC)

Thursday: *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (BM)

Week 4: British and American Detective Fiction

Tuesday: Golden Age British Detective Fiction: *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* by Agatha Christie (CC)

Thursday: American Hard-Boiled Fiction, *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett (CC)

Week 5: Middlebrow

Tues: Middlebrow Fiction: *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier (BM)

Thurs: *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodie Picoult (AB)

Week 6: Magazines and Periodicals

Tuesday: Victorian Periodicals (CC)

- *The Strand* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle, (1891-2)

Tues: Victorian Periodicals (CC)

- *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle, (1891-2)

Thursday: Digital Newspaper and periodical databases – practical class (CC)

Week 7: Study Week NO CLASSES

Week 8: The Serial

Tues: *The Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens (JK)

Thurs: Sensation fiction: *The Woman in White* by Wilkie (CC)

Week 9: Popular Romance and Chick-Lit

Tues: The Popular Romance (JK): (all by Nora Roberts), *Untamed*; *Carolina Moon*; *Hidden Riches*

Thurs: Chick-Lit (JK):

- *P.S. I Love You* by Cecelia Ahearn
- *The Secret Dreamworld of a Shopaholic* by Sophie Kinsella
- *Jemima J.* by Jane Green.

Week 10: Global Popular Literature

Tuesday: Scandi-Noir: *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson (CC)

Thursday: *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (BM)

Week 11: New and Emerging Genres in Popular Literature

Tues: Domestic Noir: *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkins (CC)

Thurs: Cli-Fi: *The Ship* by Antonia Honeywell (BM)

Week 12: The Future of Popular Literature *

Tues: Amazon, E-Readers and 'Genrefication' (BM)

Thursday: Student-led Reflection and end-of-core course discussion.

M.Phil Option Courses

Michaelmas Term Option Courses (2017)

(A) EN7027: The Victorian Child (shared with students from the Children's Literature M.Phil).

(B) EN7022: Cyberculture/Popular Culture (shared with students from the Digital Humanities M.Phil).

(A) THE VICTORIAN CHILD

Module Co-ordinator: Dr Jarlath Killeen

Teaching Staff: JK

ECTS Credits: 15

Teaching Hours: 2 per week

Course Summary: This course will study in detail the idea of the child in Victorian culture, both through texts about children and texts for children, especially focusing on the fiction of the so-called 'Golden Age' of children's literature. We will ask why the child became a figure of such importance for the Victorians, what particular attributes they assigned to her, what function she served in society. Particular attention will be played to questions about the innocence of children, childhood and sexuality, power relations between adults and children, colonialism, gender, religion, history. The course will also facilitate an examination of the issues surrounding the academic study of children's literature, and its relation to the 'adult' canon. We will be considering the various texts individually but also as comprising a recommended reading list for children.

Week One: Introduction.

Week Two: Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1837-9).

Week Three: Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857).

Week Four: R. M. Ballantyne, *The Coral Island* (1858).

Week Five: Charles Kingsley, *The Water Babies* (1863).

Week Six: Christina Rossetti, 'Goblin Market' (1862).

Week Seven: Study Week

Week Eight: Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

Week Nine: George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin* (1870-71).

Week Ten: Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (1881-2).

Week Eleven: Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince and other stories* (1888), and *A House of Pomegranates* (1891).

Week Twelve: J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan and Wendy* (1911).

Assessment: Students will be required to submit 1 essay of 5,000 words exploring some aspect of the course in detail.

(B) CYBERCULTURE/POPULAR CULTURE

Module Co-ordinator: Professor Brenda Silver

Teaching Staff: BS

ECTS Credits: 15

Teaching Hours: 2 per week

Course Summary: This course will use a wide range of print texts, electronic texts, and films to interrogate the intersections of cyberculture, popular culture, and postmodern critique. Taking as our starting point the question how or whether the new media have changed our understanding of popular culture, we will look at genres such as cyberpunk, hyperfiction, fan fiction, computer games and their narrative off-shoots (graphic novels; machinima), as well as novels and films that illustrate the process of remediation: the cycling of different media through one another. Topics we will consider include the representations and cultural meanings of the cyborg and sentient systems, the prevalence of techno-orientalism, the creative potential of transformative play and transformative works, the eversion of the virtual into the real, and the role of the internet in the creation of a new form of "folk" culture.

Primary Texts

William Gibson, *Burning Chrome* (1986) ["Johnny Mnemonic" and "Burning Chrome"]
Pat Cadigan, "Rock On," in Bruce Sterling, ed., *Mirrorshades* (1986)
William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1984)
Kathy Acker, extracts from *Empire of the Senseless* (1988)
James Tiptree, Jr., "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (1973)
Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth-Century" (1990)
Shelley Jackson, *Patchwork Girl, by Mary/Shelley & Herself*. (1995; CD)
Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) [Recommended]
Ridley Scott, Dir., *Blade Runner* (1982; Director's Cut, 1992)
Scott Bukatman, *Blade Runner* (1997)
Mamoru Oshii, Dir., *Ghost in the Shell* (1995)
Shirow Masamune, *Ghost in the Shell* (1987; 2004)
Neal Stephenson, *Snow Crash* (1992)
Adventure. (http://www.rickadams.org/adventure/e_downloads.html)
Tom Tykwer, Dir., *Run Lola Run* (1998)
Andy and Lana Wachowski, Dir. *The Matrix* (1999)
Jonathan Nolan, dir. *Westworld*, Episode 1 (2016).
Alex Garland, Dir., *Ex Machina* (2015)
Fan fictions
Critical essays

Week One: Introduction: Mapping the Terrain

Week Two: Cyberpunk_1

Week Three: Cyberpunk_2: *Neuromancer*

Week Four: Cyborgs and Cyborg Texts

Week Five: *Blade Runner*

Week Six: *Ghost in the Shell*

Week Seven: Study Week

Week Eight: *Snow Crash*

Week Nine: Cyber Fandom: Transformative Works

Week Ten: Computer Games: Story and/or Play and/or Art

Week Eleven: Remediation: Computer Games, Fiction, and Film [*Run Lola Run*; *The Matrix*]

Week Twelve: Sentient Systems: *Ex Machina*; *Westworld*, episode 1.

Assessment: Students will be required to submit 1 essay of 5,000 words exploring some aspect of the course in detail.

Hilary Term Option Courses (2018)

Two option courses will be offered in Hilary Term 2018. Please note that as in MT, options will only run if three or more students are enrolled. We reserve the right to cancel a module if student numbers are not sufficient.

(A) EN7108: Nineteenth-Century Detective Fiction: The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes
(B) EN7046: The American Nightmare: Horror in Film and Fiction

<p>(A) NINETEENTH-CENTURY DETECTIVE FICTION: THE RIVALS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES</p> <p>Module Co-ordinator: Dr Clare Clarke Teaching Staff: CC ECTS Credits: 15 Teaching Hours: 2 per week</p>
<p>Texts, contexts, theory Week One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christopher Pittard, "Victorian Detective Fiction: An Introduction." http://www.crimeculture.com/Contents/VictorianCrime.html; • Andrew Radford, "Victorian Detective Fiction." <i>Literature Compass</i> 5.6 (2008): 1179-96 [copies on blackboard]; • Ronald R. Thomas, "Detection in the Victorian Novel." <i>The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel</i>. Ed. Deirdre David. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001 (179-191) [copies on blackboard] <p>Detective Beginnings Week Two: Edgar Allan Poe, The C. Auguste Dupin Stories (1841-5) – "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), "The Purloined Letter" (1844), "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (1842-3)</p> <p>Week Three: The police and the press: Charles Dickens, "The Modern Science of Thief-Taking" <i>Household Words</i> (1850) "A Detective Police Party" <i>Household Words</i> (1850)</p> <p>Week Four: Detective fever: Wilkie Collins, <i>The Moonstone</i> (1868)</p> <p>Mothers of the mystery genre Week Five: Mary Elizabeth Braddon, <i>Lady Audley's Secret</i> (1862) Week Six: Anna Katherine Green, <i>The Leavenworth Case</i> (1878) Week Seven: Study Week</p> <p>Sherlock and rivals Week Eight: Fergus Hume, <i>The Mystery of a Hansom Cab</i> (1887)</p>

Week Nine: Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1891-92)

Rise of the rogue

Week Ten: Guy Boothby, *A Prince of Swindlers* (1897)

Week Eleven: E. W. Hornung, *Raffles: The Amateur Cracksman* (1899)

Week Twelve: essay consultations

Assessment: Students will be required to submit 1 essay of 5,000 words exploring some aspect of the course in detail.

(B) THE AMERICAN NIGHTMARE: HORROR IN FICTION AND FILM

Module Co-ordinator: Dr Bernice M. Murphy

Teaching Staff: BM

ECTS Credits: 15

Teaching Hours: 2 per week

"The United States has given birth to most of our century's dreams, and to a good many of its nightmares." (J.G. Ballard)

Course Summary: This module introduces students to key tropes and trends in late twentieth and early 21st century American horror, with reference to both literary and filmic texts. We will be paying particular attention to the social, cultural and economic contexts associated with each text. PDFs of selected critical reading will be posted on BB throughout Hilary Term.

Week One: The Monsters Next Door: *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson (1954) and *The Body Snatchers* by Jack Finney (1955).

Week Two: Cosmic Horrors: H.P. Lovecraft and his Influence. 'The Horror at Red Hook', 'The Call of Cthulhu' and 'The Shadow Over Innsmouth'. *The Ballad of Black Tom* by Victor Lavalle.

Week Three: Bad Places: *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson (1959). [We'll also be discussing more recent haunted house films such as *Paranormal Activity*, *The Conjuring* and *Insidious*. Try to watch at least one of these films before class].

Week Four: Good Country People: *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (F, 1974)

Week Five: Girl Trouble: *The Exorcist* by William Peter Blatty (1971) and *Carrie* by Stephen King (1974)

Week Six: Dismembering the Slasher Movie: *Halloween* (F, 1978)

Week Seven: Study Week

Week Eight: American Zombies: *Dawn of the Dead* (F: 1978)

Week Nine: The New American Outlaw: *Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer* (F: 1986) **Week Ten:** The Quiet Apocalypse: *Bird Box* by Josh Malerman (2014)

Week Eleven: Fears for the Internet Age: Creepypasta, online horror and The Slender Man Mythos.

Week Twelve: American Horror in the Age of Trump: *Get Out* (F: 2017) and *The Purge: Election Year* (2016).

Assessment: Students will be required to submit 1 essay of 5,000 words exploring some aspect of the course in detail.