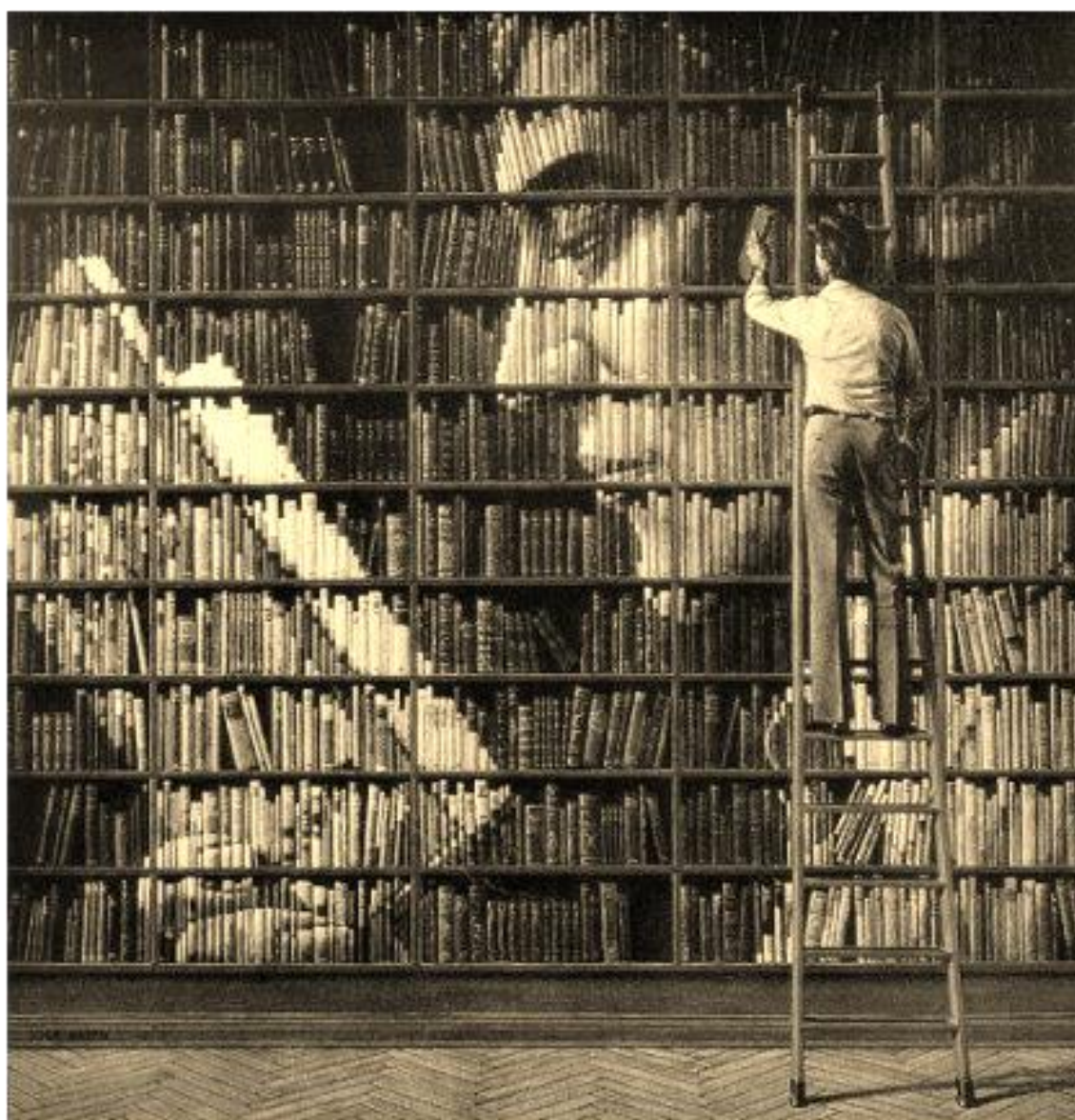


**BCENG:  
UNDERSTANDING LITERATURE**

Michaelmas Term 2017



**Course Director:** Dr Pádraic Whyte (whytepa@tcd.ie)

What do we understand by the term 'literature'? How do we go about interpreting literary works of the past and the present? Drawing upon the expertise of the School of English across a wide range of literatures in English, this course will offer to students from outside the discipline an opportunity to develop as informed and alert readers, as well as the chance to study a diverse group of stimulating texts. The course is organised thematically. The current theme is 'appetites', with two sub-headings: 'love and desire' and 'hunger, addiction and need'. How do texts of different dates and genres expose, explore, construct or indeed satisfy human appetites? What can they tell us about changing views of appetites for (for example) sex, love or food – as sin, as fundamental to personhood, as thwarted or facilitated by social forces? And how can tracing the theme of appetites help us to understand the particular skills of different authors, on the one hand, and the different approaches available to readers, on the other?

### **Learning outcomes**

By the end of this course, students should

- have read a range of stimulating and historically significant literary texts
- be able to articulate why the authors and texts covered are important and influential
- be able to demonstrate an understanding of the main literary genres covered in the course
- have some familiarity with the historical, cultural, and political circumstances under which the texts were written
- be able to offer an extended and reasonably complex account of the treatment of a theme in at least one of the texts
- be able to locate and use relevant secondary sources in support of a critical argument
- write fluent and informed essays about the texts and topics covered in the course
- and be able to think beyond the limitations of 'learning outcomes' and become empowered citizens.

## Course schedule

The course is delivered through twice-weekly lectures or classes given by members of the School of English in weeks 1-6 and 8-12 of Michaelmas Term. Attendance at all classes/lectures is compulsory and a record of attendance will be kept.

Week 1	Course outline and practical matters (Pádraic Whyte) Introductory lecture (Pádraic Whyte)
Week 2	D. H. Lawrence, short stories (Margaret Robson) D. H. Lawrence, short stories (Margaret Robson)
Week 3	'Alysoun' and 'Advice to Women' from <i>The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript</i> (Mark Faulkner) Alysoun' and 'Advice to Women' from <i>The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript</i> (Mark Faulkner)
Week 4	Robert Louis Stevenson, <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> (Margaret Robson) Robert Louis Stevenson, <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> (Margaret Robson)
Week 5	Jonathan Swift, <i>A Modest Proposal</i> (Darrell Jones) Jonathan Swift, <i>A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed</i> (Darrell Jones)
Week 6	<b>Public holiday -- no class on Monday</b> Quiz I (Pádraic Whyte)
Week 7	<b>Study week: no classes</b>
Week 8	Don DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> (Margaret Robson) Don DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i> (Margaret Robson)
Week 9	Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i> (Danielle Magnusson) Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i> (Danielle Magnusson)

Week 10	Siobhan Dowd, <i>A Swift Pure Cry</i> (Pádraic Whyte) Siobhan Dowd, <i>A Swift Pure Cry</i> (Pádraic Whyte)
Week 11	Patrick Kavanagh, <i>The Great Hunger</i> (Margaret Robson) Patrick Kavanagh, <i>The Great Hunger</i> (Margaret Robson)
Week 12	Quiz II (Pádraic Whyte) Essay preparation session (Pádraic Whyte)

### **Assessment**

The course will be assessed as follows:

- quiz I (20%), taken in week 6, Thursday class
- quiz II (20%), taken in week 12, Monday class
- essay, c. 2500 words (60%), to be submitted in Week One of Hilary Term 2017.

**\*Students must complete all elements of the course on time in order to pass\***

The quizzes will ask factual questions about the assigned texts and are designed to reward students for keeping up with the weekly readings. Topics for the essay will be based on material covered in the lectures. For the essay, students will need to be clear about the difference between scholarly citation, collaboration, paraphrase and plagiarism. These will be outlined and clarified in the course handbook and in the essay preparation session in Wk 12.

### **Contact**

All questions about enrollment, credits, timetabling, and administration should be directed to the Broad Curriculum Office Email: [bccourse@tcd.ie](mailto:bccourse@tcd.ie); phone: 896-3881.

Queries about the content of the course should be addressed to Dr. Pádraic Whyte, Arts Building Room 4083 ([whytepa@tcd.ie](mailto:whytepa@tcd.ie)).

### **Credit weighting**

This course is worth 5 ECTS credits.