

Sophister Module Description Template 2021-22

Full Name: Literature after Darwin

Short Name: Literature after Darwin

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Dr Seán Hewitt, shewitt@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester Taught: HT

Year: SS

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Discuss a variety of post-Darwinian literary texts and the ways in which they respond to scientific thought.
- Explore the implications of class, gender and empire in literary depictions of scientific study.
- Employ a range of interdisciplinary methodologies in the study of literature and science.
- Examine a range of primary scientific texts and explore the wide-ranging cultural implications of scientific discourse.
- Discuss the emergence of modernism in the wake of Darwinism.

Learning Aims:

- This option explores the complex relationships between literature and science in the wake of the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859). Exploring poetry and prose, and a wide range of scientific texts, we will survey the far-reaching upheavals of Darwinian and post-Darwinian culture. In seminar discussions, we will pay close attention to the ways in which scientific knowledge informs and alters literary works, disrupting religious, spiritual and ethical norms. From natural history to energy physics, botany to psychology, and from anthropology to various 'pseudo-sciences', we will explore a broad spectrum of writers who worked to create new literary modes in the wake of Darwinism. Working across disciplines, this module invites students to explore the influence of scientific modernity on the development of modernism in British and Irish literature, all the while considering gender, empire, history and nationhood.

The primary module texts will be accompanied by directed critical reading (provided on Blackboard).

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 2
- Name/Type of Component(s): **1 x short essay; 1 x long essay**

- Word Count of Component(s): 2000 words; 4000 words
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 30%; 70%

Preliminary Reading List:

- Week 1: Introduction: Darwin's Heresy and its Consequences: William Paley, *Natural Theology* (1802) [extracts]; Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (1859) [extracts] and *The Descent of Man* (1871) [extracts]
- Week 2: Philip Henry Gosse, *A Year at the Shore* (1865)
- Week 3: Gerard Manley Hopkins, selected poems and prose
- Week 4: Vernon Lee, *Hauntings: Fantastic Stories* (1890)
- Week 5: Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (1878)
- Week 6: Emily Lawless, *The Book of Gilly* (1906)
- Week 7: Reading Week
- Week 8: W.B. Yeats, selected poetry and prose
- Week 9: D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (1915)
- Week 10: W.H. Hudson, *A Hind in Richmond Park* (1922)
- Week 11: Virginia Woolf, selected prose
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- **Preliminary background bibliography:**
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- Beer, Gillian, *Darwin's Plots*, 3rd edition (Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Beer, Gillian, *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter* (Oxford University Press, 1996)
- Childs, Donald, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- Christie, John, and Sally Shuttleworth, eds., *Nature Transfigured: Science and Literature, 1700-1900* (Manchester University Press, 1989)
- Gates, Barbara T., *Kindred Nature: Victorian and Edwardian Women Embrace the Living World* (Chicago University Press, 1998)
- Gaycken, Oliver, *Devices of Curiosity: Early Cinema and Popular Science* (Oxford University Press, 2015)
- King, Amy C., *The Divine in the Commonplace: Reverent Natural History and the Novel in Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2019)
- MacDuffie, Allen, *Victorian Literature, Energy, and the Ecological Imagination* (Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- Mahood, M.M. *The Poet as Botanist* (Cambridge University Press, 2008)
- Moses, Omri, *Out of Character: Modernism, Vitalism, Psychic Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014)
- Oppenheim, Janet, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1985)
- Ruse, Michael, *Darwinism and its Discontents* (Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- Schmitt, Cannon, *Darwin and the Memory of the Human: Evolution, Savages, and South America* (Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Sultzbach, Kelly, *Ecocriticism in the Modernist Imagination* (Cambridge University Press, 2016)

Please note:

- **Curricular information is subject to change.**
- **Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.**