

Sophister Module Description Template 2026-27

Full Name: ENU 11004: Early Modern Literature – Themes, Texts and Contexts: 1500–1660

Short Name: Early Modern Literature

Lecturer Name(s) and Email Address(es): Ema Vyroubalova (VYROUBAE@tcd.ie) and Mark Sweetnam (Mark.Sweetnam@tcd.ie)

ECTS Weighting: 5 ECTS

Semester Taught MT/HT: HT

Year JF/SF/JS/SS: JF

Module Content:

This module provides an introduction to early modern English literature and the social, cultural, and intellectual contexts that shaped it. It begins with an introductory lecture, outlining the chronology of the period and the major themes that will be addressed in the following weeks – the concept of renaissance, the Protestant reformation, the discovery of the so-called New World, and the English revolution. The course covers a range of genres, from across the whole period of 1500-1660, and features a number of lectures on major canonical authors combined with broader thematic concerns, which trace the development of early modern literature.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module, students will:

- Develop an understanding of the range of literary genres written, read, and performed in early modern England, with a focus on the different modes of production and dissemination of various types of texts
- Become conscious of the shaping impact of major historical events and socio-political developments on the texts covered
- Be able to identify a variety of intertextual connections between the different writers and writings covered on the module
- Be alert to the changes undergone by the English language across the c.160-year period covered by the module
- Be able to apply the knowledge gained from the texts and lectures to the interpretation of other early modern texts as well as texts from other historical periods

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 1
- Name/Type of Component(s): 1 Essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 1,500-2,000 words
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 100%

Preliminary Reading List:

- William Tyndale: The Obedience of a Christian Man
- Thomas More: Utopia
- Francis Bacon: New Atlantis
- William Shakespeare: Hamlet
- Christopher Marlowe: Doctor Faustus
- Ben Jonson: The Alchemist
- Thomas Wyatt, Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Mary Wroth, William Shakespeare: selected sonnets
- Edmund Spenser: The Faerie Queene, Book 1
- John Milton: Paradise Lost, Book 1
- Margaret Cavendish: The Blazing World and selected poems

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.