



FACULTY OF ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CHOICE OF COURSES FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS 2022-2023

The Faculty of English at the University of Cambridge has agreed to take on some Exchange students who meet specific academic conditions and who have chosen their courses according to the following set of rules.

In addition to attending lectures and any faculty class that directly supports a paper, all Exchange students studying English will be taught in supervisions either on their own or, occasionally, as a pair. This means that students are able to follow individual interests when discussing and writing about various texts. It also means that students must arrive in Cambridge with a good grasp of literary study. **Only those who can demonstrate that they have already worked on English Literature as a substantial part of their previous university-level education will be considered for a place on the Exchange programme for English.**

Those who are postgraduates in their home institutions work to the same Exchange programme as undergraduates. Both groups are offered the same range of papers from which they can choose. Postgraduates will also be registered as undergraduate students at the University of Cambridge.

Students who would like to study at the Faculty of English must study at Cambridge for the full academic year.

Although Cambridge does not operate a credit system, the Faculty agreed the following guidelines as equivalent to 60 ECTS credits:

- Each student works on one paper per term from either the Part I or the Part II Tripos with a supervisor, 6-8 supervisions are usual. Therefore, 3 papers must be listed on the learning agreement.
- Students do not sit exams or submit dissertations.
- Students submit 3 x 2,500 word essays per term to the supervisor of that paper. Supervisors grade the essays and include marks for each essay.

The papers available for Exchange students are listed below.

Three papers should be chosen for the academic year and this must be done when submitting the initial application in order to fulfil the Learning Agreement.

Transcripts

At the end of the academic year, students will be issued a transcript by their College listing the Papers taken and grades achieved. The transcript will also include a statement regarding the advised European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits to be awarded.

List of available papers*

A maximum of two Part II optional papers should be chosen. These are marked by an asterix.

Part Ia

Paper 2: [Shakespeare](#)

Part Ib

Paper 5: [English literature and its contexts, 1500-1700](#)

Paper 6: [English literature and its contexts, 1660-1870](#)

Paper 7a: [English literature and its contexts, 1830-1945](#)

Paper 7b: [English literature and its contexts, 1870-present](#)

Part II

Paper 2: [Tragedy](#)

Paper 7: [Early Modern Drama 1588-1642](#) * - optional paper

Paper 8: [Material Renaissance](#)* - optional paper

Paper 9: [Love, Gender, Sexuality 1740-1824](#)* - optional paper

Paper 10: [Special Period of English literature, 1847-1872](#)* - optional paper

Paper 12: [Contemporary writing in English](#)* - optional paper

Paper 13: [Postcolonial and related literatures](#)* - optional paper

Paper 14: [American literature](#)* - optional paper

Paper 15: [Ethical Imagination](#)* - optional paper

Paper 16: [History and theory of literary criticism](#)* - optional paper

Paper 17 - [Lyric](#)* - optional paper

Paper 18: [Literature and visual culture](#)* - optional paper

***Please note:** The list of options is typical of the papers available. The final agreed list of options, however, will not appear until the end of the Easter term 2022 in June.

Part IA, Paper 2 Shakespeare

Shakespeare is manifestly a great writer, perhaps the greatest ever to work with the English language, and his influence on subsequent generations of poets, dramatists and novelists—in England and globally—has been immense. But the scale and quality of this achievement, and the merits of particular parts of it, have been continuously debated by critics ever since Francis Meres, in 1598, praised Shakespeare for 'mightily' enriching the English language, and called him one of the best writers for lyric poetry, comedy and tragedy, as well as one of 'the most passionate among us to bewaile and bemoane the perplexities of Love'. When his friend Ben Jonson proclaimed that Shakespeare was 'not of an age but for all time', he cannot have foreseen the wealth of criticism that would be built up as each succeeding 'age' interpreted and re-assessed the plays for itself. In the theatre, and in screen and other visual media, too, discovery, re-thinking—and argument—have been continuous.

Many of you will have studied some of Shakespeare's plays for 'A' level or equivalent. It is important that you use this opportunity to think beyond the work that you have previously done: examiners will be looking for evidence of fresh engagement with a range of different plays and critical approaches. The Faculty classes you will attend at the start of Easter term, along with the accompanying resources on Moodle, will suggest a variety of thematic and methodological paths of enquiry.

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Part IB, Paper 5 English Literature and its Contexts, 1500-1700

This period, usually referred to as the Renaissance or the early modern period, was a time of boundless literary creativity and extraordinary cultural upheaval. This was the first age of print, when presses spread across Europe and transformed the conditions of writing, creating circumstances in which hack writers, flagrant self-publicists and the first newspaper journalists would flourish. It was an era of travel, mercantile expansion, and empire-building, when writers began to take the globe as their canvas and to translate numerous works from ancient and modern languages. For many, the period is defined by educational transformation; thanks to humanists such as Lorenzo Valla and Desiderius Erasmus, training in eloquent, persuasive speech assumed a new dominance, creating an electric connection between art and life. The unfolding Reformation made this a heyday for poignant spiritual writing and violent religious polemic, with Protestants and Catholics coming to real and textual blows, and sometimes casting Jews and Muslims as more enlightened than their Christian enemies. (Political meltdown often followed hard on the heels of religious clashes). And this was also an age of inquiry, in which writers explored new approaches to the created universe, the human body and the self, sculpting a new philosophy that (as John Donne put it) 'calls all in doubt'.

Where did writing come from in this period? The early Tudors moved to consolidate the power of the monarch, and many writers (including Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey under Henry VIII and Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser under Elizabeth I) were courtiers or would-be courtiers. Such writers frequently circulated their works in handwritten copies, rather than seeking to see them printed; manuscript was also a favoured medium for female poets such as Hester Pulter and Katherine Philips, and for the transmission of lewd or politically subversive texts. The professional theatres that opened in London in the second half of the sixteenth century soon swirled with a galaxy of talented writers, including Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, John Webster and Thomas Middleton before the civil war closures, and Aphra Behn, William Wycherley, George Etherege and William Congreve when they reopened in 1660. (Shakespeare also falls within this paper's range; although in the

examination you cannot devote an answer exclusively to him, it is well worth making comparisons with his works as you read for this paper). The new world of urban print led to the emergence of a new popular literature: the raucous proto-rap of John Skelton, the wild experimentation of Thomas Nashe, the feminist pamphleteering of Jane Anger and Rachel Speght, and the political treatises of Levellers, Diggers and Ranters. Some of the period's bestsellers emerged from the church, or (so they claimed) from divine inspiration: the poems of George Herbert, the masterpiece that is John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the sermons and meditations of celebrated divines. But you may also find yourself reading works of political or moral philosophy, broadside ballads, treatises on cross-dressing or the criminal underworld, emblem books, travel narratives and science fiction. The world lies all before you.

This paper takes into its purview all writing produced in Britain and Ireland, in whatever language (including Latin and the Celtic languages), and Anglophone writing wherever in the world it was produced. The poetry of William Dunbar in Scots and George Buchanan in Latin, or the American poetry of Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor, fall within the scope of the paper, as do works in translation (such as Mary Sidney's *Garnier*, John Florio's *Montaigne*, Thomas Shelton's *Cervantes*, Thomas Urquhart's *Rabelais*, Lucy Hutchinson's *Lucretius*) and works in other languages, when used for comparative purposes. Literature that deals with questions of cultural difference and empire ranges from Thomas More's *Utopia* at the start of the period to Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* at the end, via works such as Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and *View of the Present State of Ireland*, Walter Raleigh's *Discoverie of Guiana*, Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, the travel narratives collected by Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas, Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World* and Elkanah Settle's *The Empress of Morocco*. Texts that address questions of social exclusion and disability include Copland's *Hye Way to the Spyttell Hous*, Isabella Whitney's *Wyll and Testament*, the collaborative *Witch of Edmonton*, Abiezer Coppe's *Fiery Flying Roule* and Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. Gender identity and sexuality is a concern of numerous texts, including Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*, Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*, the anonymous *Swetnam the Woman-Hater, Arraigned by Women*, Mary Wroth's *Urania*, the female autobiographical writings gathered in the anthology *Her Own Life*, and the poetry of Katherine Philips. A rich body of material and visual evidence, and a vast quantity of non-fictional writing, can be used to shed further light on the intersection between textual representations and quotidian experience. The archive of searchable text in *Early English Books Online* represents a wonderful resource for such explorations. Recent critical writing on this period has been exceptionally lively, and has frequently turned on the question of the relationship between texts and history. The 'new historicism' of the 1980s made a powerful impact here, but other critical formations—deconstruction, feminism, queer theory, psychoanalysis, materialism—have made prominent contributions. The introductory lecture series will provide you with a broad overview of contexts and key critical interventions.

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Part IB, Paper 6 English Literature and its Contexts 1660-1870

This is a huge, rich and various period of literature, that stretches from the later works of Milton to the death of Dickens. It defies any simple categorisation, and this reading list is indicative but by no means exhaustive of its many possibilities. You will want to work out with your supervisor a coherent plan of study that allows you to make or discover connections between different texts and authors. Certain topics may, for instance, suggest themselves that extend significantly in time. The powerful influence of *Paradise Lost* runs

right through the eighteenth century until at least the Romantics; Restoration comedy may be compared with the later drama of Sheridan and Goldsmith; shifting relations between, and valuations of, the personal and the public are intensely at stake throughout the 'long 18th century', as the explosion of print culture transforms the nature of readership; the apprehension and representation of the natural world is central to much remarkable writing (and art); the novel develops – or simply mutates? – from Defoe, Richardson and Fielding to Austen, Melville, George Eliot, and Dickens; 19th-century poetry draws on and reshapes the legacy of Romantic lyric; and in this period of many 'Revolutions' (1688, financial, agrarian, American, French, industrial, the American Civil War), literature's relation to opposition, protest, emancipation and radical critique is a rich field of study. These are only some examples of many. On the other hand, it may be equally valuable to focus your study on a few relatively brief periods of time, to gain a properly complex sense of how literature is informed by its cultural moment, or how contemporary works may speak to or against one another.

In seeking help from criticism, bear in mind that comment by writers in the period may be as illuminating as that by modern critics. Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Arnold and Ruskin are among those who write extensively on other writers, on literature, or on the arts. The responses of contemporaries (look out for convenient anthologies, e.g. the *Critical Heritage* series) can be critically suggestive as well as historically informative. For the first half of the period, *Johnson's Dictionary* (1755) is there to be consulted alongside the *OED*.

It would be wise to assume that the title of this paper indicates the scope and focus of the examination. The first two words perhaps need no further gloss whereas 'and its contexts' might. Although no specific contexts are prescribed the examination – and this applies equally to portfolios as well as to exam scripts – seeks to ascertain the extent to which a term's work on this period paper has equipped candidates to read the literature published within its date markers in whatever contexts they deem to be useful, interesting or enlightening. One might, for example, read *Mansfield Park* in the context of Austen's other novels, or in the context of the passion for creating landscaped grounds, or in the context of the country house poem, or in the context of slavery and abolition, or in the context of a specific narrative technique (say free indirect discourse), or in the context of regency theatre, or even, say, in the context of our contemporary philosophical discussion of objecthood and its uses of the *techné* of naming (say places or dwellings). Crabbe's poetry, for example, might be considered in the context of the representation of pastoral in other media, say painting or drama. Richardson's novels might be understood in the context of contemporary moral philosophy, say the work of Shaftesbury or Hume. In general, it would be wise to assume that examiners – of portfolios as of exam scripts – reward evidence of having spent a full eight weeks in the company of the literature of this period. Three very polished essays on three single works are likely to have a hard time displaying such evidence, even if the qualities of 'polish' attract their just rewards. This should not be taken to indicate that sustained and critically intelligent and informed attention to a single text – even a single line of verse – fails to impress examiners. The thing to bear in mind here is the shape, focus and reach of the overall submission.

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Part 1B, Paper 7A English Literature and its Contexts, 1830-1945

This paper is designed to enable students to read as wide a range as possible of the World literatures which fall within its scope, and to study them in the light of the period's diverse social and intellectual lives. Most students will already have read quite widely in the writing

of this period; many will have clear lines of interest they wish to pursue; all should be able, in consultation with their Directors of Studies, to work out challenging and stimulating programmes of work.

It is, of course, impossible in any meaningful sense to 'cover' this period—or even half of it—in the course of a term; and there is no monolithic truth about it which students are required to learn. One of the great strengths of Cambridge English, with its flexible supervision system and its wide range of lectures, is the opportunity it offers for very different kinds of work: this is certainly true of English Literature and its Contexts 1830-1945. The volume of the literature published within this period means that the paper offers considerable scope for different individual combinations of authors and programmes of work.

Students may choose to work for the paper in a number of different ways. The kinds of work which may be appropriate include, for example: consideration of critical and theoretical questions raised by the writing of the period; comparisons between authors; the study of particular literary movements or genres; close critical analysis of an individual author's work; exploration of a variety of literary responses to particular issues or events, which may range from the highly specific (e.g. anti Catholicism in early Victorian England; the suffragette movement; the American Civil War; the Spanish Civil War) to the more general (e.g. the Victorian idea of home; gender and identity politics; ideas of empire, race, and ethnicity in the period; the growth of consumerism); study of the relationship between literature and other arts in the period; study of the relationship between British literature and other literatures in English; study of the relationship between the literature of this period and that of earlier periods.

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Part 1B, Paper 7B English Literature and its Contexts, 1870 to the present

This paper is designed to enable students to read as wide a range as possible of the World literatures which fall within its scope, and to study them in the light of the period's diverse social and intellectual lives. Most students will already have read quite widely in the writing of this period; many will have clear lines of interest they wish to pursue; all should be able, in consultation with their Directors of Studies, to work out challenging and stimulating programmes of work.

It is, of course, impossible in any meaningful sense to 'cover' this period – or even half of it – in the course of a term; and there is no monolithic truth about it which students are required to learn. One of the great strengths of Cambridge English, with its flexible supervision system and its wide range of lectures, is the opportunity it offers for very different kinds of work: this is certainly true of English Literature and its Contexts 1870-Present Day. The volume of literature published within this period means that the paper offers considerable scope for different individual combinations of authors and programmes of work.

Students may choose to work for the paper in a number of different ways. The kinds of work which may be appropriate include, for example: consideration of critical and theoretical questions raised by the writing of the period; comparisons between authors; the study of particular literary movements or genres; close critical analysis of an individual author's work; exploration of a variety of literary responses to particular issues or events, which may range from the highly specific (e.g. the suffragette movement; the Spanish Civil War) to the more

general (e.g. Victorian Decadence; gender and identity politics; ideas of empire, race, and ethnicity in the period; the growth of consumerism); study of the relationship between literature and other arts in the period; study of the relationship between British literature and other literatures in English; study of the relationship between the literature of this period and that of earlier periods.

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Part 2, Paper 2 Tragedy

Tragedy is a mode of writing that addresses the most painful and perplexing dimensions of human experience. The Tragedy paper invites you to locate the Shakespearean masterpieces of this kind in the context of European and global tragic practice, and in relation to classical Greek tragedy in particular. To this extent it is a drama paper.

But because the adjective 'tragic' may legitimately attach itself to a literary genre, to a philosophic or religious orientation, to a psychology, even to a way of life (or of death), sharp boundaries cannot be drawn around it. Having laid a foundation in Greek and Shakespearean practice, students are invited to explore the conceptual amplitude of the paper in whatever directions their interests and skills lead them. The remit of the paper is world-wide, including work in translation as well as written in English. If Euripides and *King Lear* feature in your preparation, so might *Chusingura* (Bunraku/Kabuki), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, Mahasweta Devi's *Rudali* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Questions raised by the paper about gender, ethnicity, sexuality, violence, colonialism, slavery, exile, politics and authority invite comparative and critical discussion.

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Part II, Paper 5 Chaucer

Chaucer is at once one of the greatest and the most accessible of English poets. His two major works, *Troilus and Criseyde* and the *Canterbury Tales*, show him as a master of narrative and of a stylistic variety which has few rivals. His minor works focus on themes of particular interest in present-day criticism—the nature of poetic authority, the 'anxiety of influence', the cultural formations embodied in the literary landscape, gender-stereotyping and attitudes to women, the workings of dreams and the imagination. The first and most important aim of this paper is the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of Chaucer's works, and an understanding of their most important themes and literary strategies. Its scope also embraces study of his sources and literary analogues, comparison with the work of his contemporaries, both English and continental, and reflection on his 'afterlife' as an influence on later writers.

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Part II, Paper 7 Early Modern Drama 1588-1642

The dates of this paper are determined by the great efflorescence of English Renaissance drama, beginning with what is traditionally seen as its launch (Kyd's Spanish Tragedy and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*) and ending with the closing of the theatres in 1642. The decades covered were marked by energetic dramatic activity on the one hand, and by significant changes in the social and political fabric and momentous shifts in several related fields of thought on the other. The drama of the period, unsurprisingly, is instinct with the sense of incipient transformations. Focusing on a delimited period will allow students to grasp the

combination of continuity and change that characterise early modern theatrical culture.

The drama of this period is remarkable for the range of genres it produces: revenge tragedy, city comedy, plays about the court and satirical drama, masques and entertainments, tragicomedies, domestic tragedy, topical drama, providentialist plays. This paper will aim to make this variety visible and available for study, and to help students develop a sense of the nature and development of dramatic genres and their relation to other, non-dramatic, genres, such as satire, ballads, judgement tales, sermons and philosophical writing. Authors who might be the subject of particular study include Kyd, Marlowe, Dekker, Jonson, Chapman, Middleton, Webster, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ford and Shirley. The period's playwrights dramatised the environments which seemed to them to be the most prominent or culturally constitutive, whether in a formative, liberating or repressive sense: the court; the city; the law-court; the household; the theatre itself. And they engaged with evolving ideas about the self, the state and the family, about religion, faith and science, knowledge and ways of knowing—all potentially fruitful topics for detailed study within this paper. Gender and sexuality are recurrent concerns: from plays about cross-dressing (such as Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*) to such anti-patriarchal comedies as John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize: Or, The Tamer Tamed*. As the voyages of exploration led into the beginnings of empire, theatre responded with plays ranging from Marlowe's *Dido and Tamburlaine* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to Fletcher's *The Sea Voyage* and *The Island Princess* (set in the East Indies) and Massinger's *The Renegado*. Questions of race, ethnicity and non-Christian belief figure in such works as Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Day, Rowley and Wilkins, *The Travels of Three English Brothers* (Catholics, Persians, Turks, a Jew). The vitality of court masque in relation to empire and cultural difference—from Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness* through his *Irish Masque* and *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*—should not be overlooked. Finally, this was a period which saw the emergence of female playwrights and play translators, including Mary Herbert, Elizabeth Cary (*The Tragedy of Mariam*) and Lady Mary Wroth (*Love's Victory*).

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Part II, Paper 8 Material Renaissance

Renaissance writers thought hard about the material natures of the things they wrote and the things about which they wrote. The advent and rapid evolution of print, alongside a thriving manuscript culture, saw new meanings generated and sought – by authors, printers, and readers – in the materiality of literary texts. Developments in materials, clothing, technology, the visual arts, and cultures of trade and collecting – developments in the ways things could mean – are witnessed and played with in literary texts and – in the case of plays, songs, and other forms – in their performances. Words, texts, writing, and the readerly treatment of writing are all habitually construed in terms of matter: a piece of writing, in the common Ciceronian-Erasman formulation, comprises matter (*res*) and words (*verba*); or, in an alternative formulation from Aristotelian poetics, is verbal matter in literary form. These, then, are the three main areas of focus for this paper: the materials in texts and in their performances; the material text; and the text as material. The paper aims to foster student work informed by and attuned to some of the best current scholarship on early modern literature, fully engaged with the theoretical thinking and methodological paradigms that sustain it, and drawn into a more mutually productive dialogue with staff in a Faculty which has helped to develop this field, and continues to develop it. Your work for this paper should fall within the years 1530-1680 – a period roughly bookended by Holbein's second period in England (producing 'The Ambassadors' in 1533) and by the deaths of John

Milton (1674) and Lucy Hutchinson (1681). Work on Shakespeare is allowed, but the examination sets a limit of no more than one third of your script as a whole on Shakespeare.

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Part II, Paper 9: Love, Gender, Sexuality 1740-1824

The paper is intended to be hospitable to and to foster work on writing within this period which explores one or more of the following:

- Expressions and representations of love, a term here understood to extend to desire, intimacy, seduction, courtship, same-sex relationship, familial bonds, and/or sexual relations; the impact which love has on conceptions of personal identity, and on the experience of personal identity; the relation (if any) of loving to knowing or to closeness; the tensions involved in mediating such matters in language.
- Representations which place particular behaviours, social roles, race- or class-based categories, or qualities of mind or body in significant relation to facts or assumptions about gender.
- Cultural constructions which bear on gender and sexuality, how these interact with lived experience, and how the arts of writing may reflect, refract, challenge or evade such constructions. Social conventions, legal arrangements, racial stereotypes, and religious beliefs and practices are some of the factors that may be involved in such constructions.
- An author's gender and what is at stake in its consideration, e.g. with regard to the circumstances of literary production and reception, notions of feminine or masculine style, the politics of publication, and gender-inflected opportunities and constraints as these appear to affect the writing.
- The relation of particular writings in the period to more general theorizations of love and desire and/or the conceptualization of gender (e.g. by Plato, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Stendhal, Sigmund Freud, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Susan Lanser, Judith Butler, bell hooks ...)

The interest of these topics is hardly limited to the period 1740-1824, but candidates should give due attention in their preparation to the historical specificity of this period. This is the time in which women writers became influential, numerous, and widely read, while still finding their status contested as equivocal or marginal. Coincidentally or not, this period also saw the rise of 'sensibility' or 'sentiment' both as concept and experience; a variety of works urgently explore its relation to the roots of morality, to sexual attraction, to personal integrity, to gender norms, to political and existential disaffection, and to mental instability. The equality, independence, and emancipation of women became highly visible ideas, provoking not only various forms of reactionary response but also subtler explorations of where such emancipation might lead, and of the compatibility of close relationship with personal independence. Power-relations between the sexes were inevitably implicated in broader conceptions of power and dependency in a period when trade was increasingly acknowledged to be the instrument of empire. The complex relation between desire and fantasy extended from overtly sexual representations to ways of imagining the foreign, the remote, the exotic, and the primitive. Gender-political concerns fed into, and were in turn influenced by, wider political controversies about authority, liberty and subordination – as when, for instance, women writers entered into the campaign for the abolition of slavery. This is also the period in which sexually frank discourse was confronted by both a growing emphasis on codes of modesty and genteel decency, and an increasing expectation of mutual affection and respect in intimate relations. This double tension had complicated

consequences in the areas of courtship and seduction, and for norms both of masculinity and femininity. Heteronormative assumptions were loosened by subcultures which valorised same-sex relations, whether this was the world of molly-houses or the cherishing of close female friendships. One effect of the rise of decency was arguably to transform bawdy's perennial challenge to restraint into more radically perverse and transgressive modes, sometimes associated with the Gothic or with the grotesque. Meanwhile, protocols for the expression and communication of love were maintained with a degree of self-consciousness not easy to reconcile with expectations of sincerity and strong feeling. Comedy became an especially significant mode in this context. A wide-reaching culture of public performance stood in problematic relation to the conceptualisation of desire and attachment as personal or private matters, intensifying the difficulty of fitting language to desire. One response was to invoke love as radical alternative to the socio-political realm, evading or transcending its dissatisfactions by valorizing private intimacy, or through the power of imagination or fantasy, or as the love of nature, or as an ideal emotion that went beyond any immediate object.

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Part II, Paper 10 Special Period of English Literature, 1847-1872

The paper is designed to enable candidates to explore literary and other writing of the middle years of Queen Victoria's reign – from the publication of *Vanity Fair* and *The Princess* to that of *Middlemarch*; from the revolutions of 1848 to the Franco-Prussian War; from the end of the 'hungry forties' to the introduction of universal elementary education.

Its emphasis, like that of other period papers, is on the study of literature within its historical context. Students will have the opportunity to gain a more detailed understanding of the main movements and controversies of the period than is possible in work for Part I: they will also be able to explore their own areas of interest within it.

The British Empire extended its global reach in these years. Related processes of emigration, settlement, and conquest, produced new Anglophone literatures, and new literary forms. Fashionable principles of personal liberty, 'self-help', and *laissez faire*, existed in open contradiction with the imperial functions of subjection, rule, and racial domination. Slave holding was abolished in the British Empire in 1833, but its legacy lived on through the harsh system of indenture that replaced it, and in political crises, notably the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865. The Irish Famine (1846-50), the suppression of the Indian Rebellion in 1857-8, and the treatment of indigenous populations, presented further challenges to the idea of Empire as a civilising mission. Modern conceptions of social class were also emerging in this period, sometimes in sympathy with broader ideas of emancipation, sometimes in tension with them. Despite the apparent failure of Chartism in the 1840s, debates over the extension of the electoral franchise and over access to institutions continued up to the 1870s and beyond.

The paper offers an opportunity to address not just literature in relation to events, but also cultural movements and topical questions: 'The Condition of England Question', 'The Woman Question', Realism, Naturalism, medievalism, and Pre-Raphaelitism (among others). Similarly, the paper offers great scope for interdisciplinary study, aimed at the literary significance of developments in (for example) science, engineering, political economy, art,

law, theology, and medicine. The paper's historical remit can be understood in these terms, but it equally engages the way that literary forms interact with their social context. While many of these questions were approached creatively in novels, plays, and poems, the period also witnessed a proliferation of non-fiction, in lectures, sermons, essays, histories, letters, diaries, memoirs, and newspapers.

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Part II, Paper 12 Contemporary Writing

The aim of this paper is to encourage students towards the detailed analysis and evaluation of contemporary English-language literature. Many students are drawn to this paper because they have already read widely or inspiringly within contemporary literature, and therefore have clear lines of interest that they wish to pursue. Others arrive at it because they have realized, to their surprise, that the period they have lived through is the period whose literature they have read least of. All should be able – in consultation with their Directors of Studies, and building on the seminars and lectures offered by the Faculty – to devise challenging, various and stimulating schemes of work.

Among the many issues and ideas which might be addressed while working for this paper are: The Anthropocene; contemporariness; avant-gardism and experiment; postmodernism; post-postmodernism; late modernism; hysterical realism; terrorism; cybernetics; trauma and violence; machinism; environmentalism; notions of crisis and disaster; paranoia; post-dramatic theatre; mutations in memoir and autobiography; non-standard Englishes; sincerity and irony; film; land-art; architecture and the built environment; film scripts; song lyrics; mixed-genre works; technology and literature; the influence of the internet on literariness; parody and pastiche; the fate of genre; innovative poetics; metafiction; magic realism; narcissistic narrative; post-colonialism; the afterlives of empire; hybridity; gender and sexuality; racial and ethnic identities; interrelations between critical theory and literary practice; regionalism; and site-specific performance.

The scope of the paper is indicated by its title: it embraces all contemporary literature, falling within the date boundaries, written in English (e.g. American, Australian, Canadian, Caribbean, English, Indian, Irish, Scottish, South African, Welsh, etc.) irrespective of the nationality of the author. It excludes translated works and all works written in a language other than English. Candidates who choose to write on an author whose career began before the prescribed start date for any given year (1999 in Tripos 2016, 2000 in Tripos 2017, etc.) will be required to focus their main attention on their work since the appropriate start-date. There will be no prescribed texts.

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Part II, Paper 13 Postcolonial and Related Literatures

This paper is about Empire and its consequences. It is at its broadest concerned with the ways in which imperialism and resistance to it has made the modern world. More specifically, the paper asks students to read and write about literary and cultural works from and about those parts of the world that were, or are still, under colonial rule. Reading these texts, and thinking about their contexts, leads us to examine the reasons Europeans sought territory and resources abroad in the first place. It interrogates the ways Europeans justified

this enterprise to themselves and to those they encountered; it examines the often violent mechanisms by which imperialism functions; and it seeks to understand the consequences it has for the colonised. In particular, reading from the perspective of the colonised generates insights into literary, cultural and political issues that would not otherwise be available. These questions are profoundly important in relation to what we read and how we read it. Topics and issues of central concern to the paper include the nature and status of the English language in varying linguistic, cultural and political situations, orality and textuality, colonialism and postcolonial conditions, gender, sexuality, nation formation and cultural nationalism, ethnicity, caste, identity, migration, exile and settlement, geography, landscape and space, new aesthetics and poetics. Although these issues will naturally be studied in the first instance in relation to particular texts and authors and their cultures, students will be encouraged to develop comparative approaches across the field as a whole.

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Part 2, Paper 14 American Literature

This paper offers students the opportunity to engage in detailed study of American Literature with particular reference to the period 1820 to the present day. In this extraordinarily exciting and significant era, the United States became a world power, American literature achieved a global stature and reach, and the nation contributed a vital new stream to the English language itself. In the process, a huge range of writers sought to understand and express the republican and democratic ideals espoused in the founding of the United States; an equally rich and vigorous literature has charged the nation with betraying those ideals, for example in its treatment of indigenous peoples, its embrace of slavery, its labour relations, and environmental destruction. It is also a period in which mass migration has continually enriched American literature -- and challenged it -- and the popular culture of the United States has become globally influential. The literary, cultural and political ramifications of these changes continue to be fiercely debated: this list invites you to start exploring texts, topics and ideas for yourselves.

An early start on the 'books to start with' in the summer preceding the Part II year is strongly recommended; this reading should be supplemented with selective study of other American writing.

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Part 2, Paper 15 The Ethical Imagination

This paper offers students an intellectual space in which to consider texts that are, in one sense or another, works of ethical reflection. Justice and fairness, citizenship and participation, the politics of self-description (national, racial, and sexual), conceptions of the good society, ideas of virtue, analyses of pleasure, conceptions of human nature and its possibilities (good or bad): writings which, however variously, contemplate any or all of these issues are in focus here. But texts preoccupied with more abstract concerns find a place here too, be they metaphysical arguments, sorties into epistemology as it bears upon ethics, descriptions of the phenomenology of Being, or studies of language in its value-creating aspect. Paper 15 asks students to consider, in the most absolute sense, what we value and why, but also, crucially, how we express and experience this textually; how we argue and persuade in the ethical sphere; how works mediate and record processes of

thinking; above all, perhaps, how writers use the equivocations and subterfuges of language to accommodate themselves to diverse, sometimes contradictory commitments.

As this description may suggest, the paper provides generous opportunities for those wishing to venture into moral philosophy. It is certainly possible to concentrate on evaluating different types of argument; to explore, for example, the challenges that Hobbes, in his capacity as a social contract theorist, or Mill, in his capacity as a utilitarian, must overcome. However, aside from posing such abstract questions, Paper 15 also encourages an examination of the contingencies and idiosyncrasies that mark out each given writer's acts of thinking as specifically individual and personal. Students are invited to apply techniques of practical criticism to these works of argumentative prose in order to examine the irreducibly particular, situated voices which variously underpin them. The paper also makes room, thirdly, for comparative and historical work: it is possible to pursue analyses of clusters of texts from within a relatively confined period of time, or to juxtapose works from utterly different epochs, in either case with a view to drawing comparative evaluations. Fourthly, and pursuant to that emphasis on the comparative, the paper encourages the study of writings that either contribute to or invite social or cultural critique – writings, that is, which either draw attention to, or themselves tellingly manifest, different kinds of cultural and social occlusion.

Work for this paper can therefore take multiple forms. Many candidates choose to focus on a selection of individual thinkers, or to study one or two particular periods, but it is also possible to organise one's reading according to thematic clusters. Period- or topic-based groupings might include the following illustrative (but not prescriptive) examples:

- the 'virtue ethics' tradition [Aristotle, Murdoch, MacIntyre, Foot, Nussbaum]
- culture, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism [Aurelius, Kant, Arnold, Appiah, Parekh]
- sovereignty [Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Burke, Wollstonecraft]
- the ethics of labour [Marx, Ruskin, Arendt]
- participation and the public sphere [Cicero, Rousseau, Habermas, Geuss, Honneth]
- Christian morals [St Paul, Aquinas, Calvin, Joseph Butler, Weil, Anscombe]
- irony and indirection [Plato, Erasmus, Mandeville, Kierkegaard, Carlyle]
- justice [Godwin, Rawls, O'Neill, Sen]
- pleasure [Lucretius, Mill, Sidgwick, Williams]
- liberty, recognition and respect since 1939 [Sartre, de Beauvoir, Popper, Berlin, Judith Butler, West]
- confessional and autobiographical writing [Augustine, Montaigne, Pascal, Newman, Rose]
- animal life and the human/animal boundary [Nietzsche, Freud, Midgley, Singer]
- the Scottish Enlightenment [Hutcheson, Hume, Ferguson, Smith]
- violence, coercion, freedom of expression [Girard, Gandhi, Foucault, Fanon, Langton]
- pragmatism and moral phenomenology [James, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Rorty, Taylor]

The reading list offers suggested reading for all of the authors named here and many others besides. Exams are set so as to accommodate a wide range of interests and approaches but the list below is divided between those writings most commonly studied for the paper and which frequently provide the basis for exam questions (section A) and other works that might be consulted for comparative purposes (section B). Section C then suggests some historical and thematic studies that may be of interest.

This paper takes its place in the English Tripos, first and foremost, because, in encompassing all kinds of argumentative writing on ethical and political subjects, it keeps in play a once prevalent, now sometimes forgotten definition of literature and 'letters'. That definition puts testimonies of belief and conviction, polemics, cultural commentary, meditations, and sheer struggles faithfully to record the intricacies of human thinking at the heart of the subject. (Indeed, for many years this paper was called 'The English Moralists' in recognition of the fact that the English language has been home to an influential concentration of such writings, from Bacon's *Essays* to Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*.) Paper 15 is 'literary', too, in its determination to apply practical criticism and an insistence on the particularity of the written word to the texts studied here. But literature has other applications besides in this context. In the first place, any number of plays, poems and novels, together with life-writing in its manifold variations, may lay claim to being forms of ethical reflection and, as such, command a place in work done for this paper. Consider, for example, writings by Thomas More, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, John Bunyan, Pope, Mary Hays, Wordsworth, Austen, Shelley, Dickens, Eliot (both George and T. S.), Hardy, Henry James, Elizabeth Robins, Orwell, Iris Murdoch, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Tom Stoppard, Denise Riley, and Sindiwe Magona. Secondly, the idea of exemplarity and the question of the various forms it may take are central to this subject. Section C therefore includes a list of secondary works which, in diverse ways, explore literary-philosophical relations.

It may be helpful to repeat, finally, that the subject of Paper 15 is works of ethical reflection *per se*. It is not concerned, specifically, with the needs and obligations of literary *criticism*, that is, with the question of what vocabulary and ideas literary criticism has needed historically, and needs now, in order to articulate culturally appropriate responses to works of literature. Those considerations are pursued in Paper 16, and whilst Paper 16 does draw on philosophical and cultural criticism, in doing so it is led by the imperatives of literary critical practice.

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Part 2, Paper 16 History and Theory of Literary Criticism

This paper offers students the opportunity to explore a wide range of topics in the history and theory of literary criticism, while at the same time allowing them to be highly selective and to pursue particular interests within this field. The range of the paper is, indeed, very wide: it includes English and non-English authors, critics, and theorists of criticism from antiquity to the present day. The following list of topics and authors, and the detailed reading lists that follow, are meant illustrative of the kinds of work that would be appropriate for this paper: they are by no means either prescriptive or exhaustive: Classical theories of art and poetry (Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Longinus); Renaissance poetics and criticism (Boccaccio, Castelvetro, Scaliger, Sidney, Puttenham); Neo-classical criticism (Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Reynolds); philosophical aesthetics (Shaftesbury, Burke, Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Croce, Rancière, Badiou); Biblical exegesis (Augustine, Aquinas, Alter, Budick); Romantic and Victorian ideas of art and literature (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Hazlitt, Arnold, Nietzsche, James, Wilde, Pater); 'practical criticism' and American New Criticism (Richards, Eliot, Leavis, Brooks, Wimsatt, Ransom, Tate, Brooks, Empson); recent 'author-critics' (Auden, Hill, Heaney); structuralism and deconstruction (Saussure, Jakobson, Barthes, Derrida, de Man, Hartman); Marxism (Lukacs, Benjamin, Williams, Adorno, Althusser, Lyotard, Jameson, Moretti); feminism, gender studies and queer theory (Woolf, Kristeva, Cixous, Irigaray, Showalter, Mitchell, Butler); psychoanalysis (Freud, Lacan, Kristeva, Zizek); post-colonial criticism (Said, Gates, Spivak, Bhabha, Ahmad); ecocriticism (Buell, Morton); and affect theory (Sedgwick, Ngai).

Each student, in consultation with a supervisor, needs to develop their own programme of study in relation to this guidance. No one pattern or concentration is prescribed: some students may range across wide periods and/or different types of critical writing; others may benefit from a tighter chronological or thematic focus. The exam paper will be set so as to accommodate both of these approaches.

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Part II, Paper 17 Lyric

This paper gives you an opportunity to think hard about particular lyric poems and poets, and about the long history of lyric poetry. It invites you to consider how lyric poetry has been theorised and criticised and to develop your own thinking about lyric. And it gives you the chance to test your ideas in readings of poems. The examination has a simple format – a single series of essay questions. The bulk of your work should focus on lyric in English, and there are no limits to its chronological, geographical, or cultural range. You can discuss lyric from Sappho to Claudia Rankine, via Li Bai, Mary Sidney, John Keats, and C. P. Cavafy; you can work on folk song, religious song, art song, and pop song; you can think about the lyrics of the oppressed and the lyrics of the culturally dominant; most crucially, you can ponder the nature of comparisons between different lyric poets, situations, and traditions, and the use of the term 'lyric' to organise such comparisons.

'Lyric' is a vexed term. It postdates the origins of the kind of poetry it names by several centuries, and has oscillated through literary history between pointing to one or other narrow and specific kind of poetry and being used as a catch-all for many different kinds of poetry. There are things that might be called 'lyric' poems – typically short and sung or song-like poems – in many different literatures (Persian and Chinese, to give just two examples) that have interacted at one point or another with literature in English. But the simplest genealogy of modern English – and indeed European – lyric starts with the ancient Greek lyric poets. Their poems were known as melic poems at first (Greek *melos*, part, member, song) and were experienced for the most part as sung performances rather than as written texts. But as an apparatus of literary textuality evolved with the libraries, editors, educators, and critics of later antiquity, a new name was invented to point at this quasi-musical kind of shorter poem in its new incarnation on the page: lyric (from Greek *lyra*, lyre).

There were many different kinds of lyric poem (like hymns, paeans, epithalamia), some sung by choruses and some by solo singers. However, the term did not include certain other kinds of non-dramatic and non-narrative poetry, like elegy (another vexed term), iambus (poetry of vituperation), and epitaph. The term *lyric* was taken over by the Roman poets (Horace foremost) and then used throughout the middle ages to point at ancient lyric poems, at the same time as new, vernacular kinds of poetry were being developed (like carols, troubadour songs, and sonnets) which would only find themselves being called lyric poems when the term was later revived and extended, a process that began in fits and starts in the sixteenth century and continues to this day. We are now happy to refer as 'lyric poems' to many different kinds of poem that might or might not have been so named in their day: classical melic, elegiac, and other shorter kinds; medieval ballads, sonnets, and *canzone*; early modern songs, sonnets, and devotional poems; eighteenth-century and Romantic odes, elegies, and ballads; shorter and song-like poems from ancient and modern non-Western literatures; and so on. All of the poetry that *might* meaningfully be called lyric falls within the bounds of this paper – including almost all modern poetry and song. There

are no limits of language or culture on the poetry you might wish to consider in work for this paper. But it is important to think about what it might mean to call a poem or song a lyric, and this paper invites and rewards that thinking.

Definitions of lyric are many and hard to reconcile or synthesise. You should garner and compare them and think about what you think lyric has meant and should mean. Features that are usually pointed to include relative shortness (relative, though: 1,000 lines is short in comparison to an epic poem); relative foregrounding of poetic form and patterning of sound (the vestiges of lyric's musical and oral origins); and a tendency to do things other than tell stories (though many lyrics do this). Definitions that insist that lyrics are expressive of something about the poet, or are overheard rather than addressed, or are in a single voice, tell us much about some lyric poems, and about how some people at some times have thought about poetry; but they do not work for those celebrated lyrics that introduce multiple voices, say nothing about the poet, or are clearly addressed to a particular recipient. The aim of this paper is not to delimit lyric, but it is to think about it, and to think about what its various definitions might tell us.

Certain themes and features of lyric poetry will be central to your work for this paper as they are central to current and recent work in the field of lyric studies. These include: questions of address (including apostrophe); the nature of poetic voice; lyric's relation to other genres and modes; time and memory in lyric; lyric and gender; popular and 'folk' lyric and song; deixis, tenses, and other special features of the language of lyric poems; materiality (of language, of poems); persona and impersonality; ethnicity; intertextuality; lyric in sequences, collections, and anthologies; musicality; verse form; performance; orality and literacy; the 'lyrical' in non-Western cultures of the past and the present; lyric in society. This list is not meant to be exhaustive.

Faculty teaching for the paper includes, as well as lectures, a set of classes during which you will work together with other students taking the paper on a course of reading and discussion, introducing you to a broad range of ideas about lyric and examples of lyric practice. You will also have the usual 4-6 individual supervisions and you should talk to your Director of Studies about whom you would like to work with. Those of us organising and teaching the paper recommend a mixed approach – perhaps 3-4 supervisions with a single supervisor who will help you organise your approach and, when it comes to it, revise, and then perhaps 2 or 3 supervisions with one or two other supervisors, to give you a chance to work on other periods or cultures, or to test your ideas against a different particular expertise.

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Part 2, Paper 18 Visual Culture

The paper offers students with an interest in visual culture the opportunity to study the relationship of writing to the seen world and to the discourses of art. It examines the values and meanings invested in appearances, in particular styles and in the practices of art through exploring the methodologies of visual analysis. It also invites detailed study of the early studio era of Hollywood, in relation to cinematic genre and technique.

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