



June 2014

Dear Modern Language Plus Student,

I am writing to all students likely to be joining UCL in September. I would like to explain a little about what to expect in the English part of your degree, and to indicate what preparatory reading we want you to have done should you come to us in the autumn.

### **Tutorials**

You will be assigned to a tutor in the English Department, whom you will normally meet twice a term for a half-hour tutorial. In this, your work is discussed, and essays set and commented on. You will write two essays of about 3,000 words each term.

### **Seminars and Lectures**

You will also attend roughly two seminars a week and two lectures for your English courses. Seminars focus on particular texts, and it is expected that you prepare thoroughly for these occasions; each member of a seminar group, which will normally consist of around 20 students, should contribute to the discussion.

During your first two terms your time will be spent following two courses, the Narrative Text course and either the Criticism or the Introduction to Medieval Language and Literature course.

#### **1. Narrative Texts**

In this course you study eight major texts. These are taught in chronological order as set out in the enclosed reading list. There will be weekly lectures and seminars on these texts, on which you will write your tutorial essays. You should have read the whole of *Paradise Lost* before you arrive here, and as many of the other texts as possible; the better you know them, the more interesting and rewarding the work you do on them will be.

#### **2. Introduction to Medieval Language and Literature**

In this course you will be introduced to Middle English in the first term and Old English (sometimes called 'Anglo-Saxon') in the second. The Old English period is approx. 700-1100, the Middle English period approx. 1100-1500. Please obtain, before you arrive, all the books listed in the relevant section on the reading list, beginning with the Benson edition of Chaucer and a copy of *Beowulf & Other Stories* (second edition, 2011, in which we would like you to start with Peter S. Baker's chapter on the Old English language and then the Introduction). You may also find an outline of Modern English grammar (but useful for Old and Middle English and for Criticism) in Gerry Nelson's *Internet Grammar*, at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/>.

### **3. Criticism and Theory**

This course consists of lectures on formal and technical aspects of literature, and on the history and theory of literary criticism. The seminars are opportunities to practise close reading of examples of various genres. On arrival at UCL you already know how to read literary works, but by the time you leave you will be better at it than you are now: the work on this course is intended to make you reflect on your reading, and on that of other readers through time.

#### **Examinations**

Please refer to your home department for details of end of year examinations.

#### **The First Week**

When it is clear that you are coming to us, the UCL Registry will write, probably in September, giving precise details of what to do. What follows below is a general outline of your first days at UCL: more detailed information about these days will come from me and from your home department in September.

On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September the Department will hold an event for all new students. This will enable you to meet your fellow first-year students, and allow me to introduce you to the course and the Department. You will also be addressed by the Head of Department, Professor John Mullan, and the day will end with a party in the Student Common Room. Your home department will give you information about their induction activities separately.

You will meet your English tutor on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September or Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September.

I look forward to meeting you in September.

Yours sincerely



Dr Matthew Beaumont  
Departmental Tutor