UCL SUMMER SCHOOL

British Literature and the Birth of Mass Media: Victorian Periodical to Modernist Magazine

Key Information

Module code \( \text{ISSU0087} \)
Taught during Session Two: Monday 22 July - Friday 9 August 2019
Module workload 45 teaching hours plus approximately 100 study hours
Module leaders Alistair Robinson and Alex Grafen
Department Department of English
Credit 15 UCL credits, 7.5 ECTS, 4 US
Level Level 1, first year undergraduate
Pre-requisites Standard entry requirements
Assessment Oral presentation (25%), Essay (75%)

Module Overview

One of the first forms of mass media, the power of the periodical was tremendous. It shaped readerships, politics, morality, and some of our best-loved works of fiction. With a focus on literary magazines, this module allows students to engage with literature in its original published form and to work with original artefacts. In the first week, students will be given the intellectual and practical tools needed to handle and interpret physical and digitised periodicals through a series of seminars and workshops. Students will then have two weeks of seminars, workshops and excursions based around Victorian and Modernist periodicals, discovering familiar names in new contexts.

Week One: Handling and Understanding Periodicals

- In the first week students will be introduced to the periodical form and the impact that it has had on shaping readerships, fiction and political movements.
- They will be given a broad historical overview of periodical publication from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century.
- A workshop led by the module leader will introduce students to digital collections. It will detail what resources are available and how to navigate them.
- Through workshops held at UCL and the British Library students will learn how to handle physical copies of periodicals.

Week Two: Entertaining the Millions

- The Victorian period saw a surge in popular print and a growth in working and middle-class readerships. With a focus on serialised fiction, this week will familiarise student with different readerships and the
periodicals established to cater for them. These include Reynolds’s Miscellany, Household Words, All the Year Round, and the Strand Magazine.

- Students will be encouraged to examine novels in their original serialised context and to think about how the pressures of weekly or monthly publication shaped the novel writing process. Together we will examine Condition-of-England novels by Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell, sensation fiction by Wilkie Collins, and detective fiction by Arthur Conan Doyle.
- This week also gives an overview of nineteenth century printing technologies, and how these influenced the shape, style and feel of periodical publications.

Week Three: Aesthetic Endeavours

- The late nineteenth century saw both the continued rise of mass-market publishing, and the flourishing of little magazines. These magazines claimed to hold out a space for art in the face of commercial interests.
- Week 3 will help students to judge those claims by introducing them to several of the key fin de siècle and modernist little magazines, and giving them the opportunity to study short stories by Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf, manifestos by Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound, and Joyce’s Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, all in the form in which they were first published.
- Students will become attuned to ways of understanding how text and image can work together on the same page. It will look particularly at the artwork of Aubrey Beardsley, Anne Estelle Rice and Wyndham Lewis.
- This week carries on from the previous week as it explores how a changing market and technology for printing affected form and contents of the literature being published.

Module Aims
This module aims to familiarise students with periodical cultures from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In doing so it seeks to equip them with new research and archival skills, and new ways of understanding core texts and literary movements. By the end of the course students will have a well-developed understanding of one of the most important innovations in mass media and how it shaped literary history. This is a truly interdisciplinary module that brings the academic disciplines of English Literature, Social and Cultural History, History of Art and the History of the Book together. In doing so it will enable students to approach their future studies from new angles, and allow them to explore other disciplines with more confidence.

Teaching Methods
Teaching will include: lectures by world-class scholars on periodical culture on areas of their expertise; workshops by archival experts, where students learn to handle original periodicals and navigate digital and physical archives; seminars where students discuss and analyse periodical literature in its context; expeditions to key sites connected with the writers and publications under discussion. Reading lists will be available online via the UCL library site. Students will be directed towards class materials, further support and discussion forums on UCL’s virtual learning environment Moodle.

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this module, students will:

- Understand the importance of the periodical form, and be able to handle physical and digital periodical collections.
- Have a working knowledge of the history of periodical publishing from the seventeenth through to the twenty-first century.
- Have looked in detail at canonical texts by Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens and James Joyce in their original periodical contexts.
- Have acquired the skills to carry out individual research into periodical cultures
• Be familiar with some of the major trends in modern scholarship on periodical literature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

Assessment Methods
• 10-minute presentation (25%)
• 2,500 word essay (75%)

Key Texts
1. Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*
2. Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*
3. Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White*
5. Wyndham Lewis, ‘Manifesto’
6. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
7. Katherine Mansfield, ‘Epilogue’
8. Virginia Woolf, ‘On Being Ill’

Module Leaders
Alistair Robinson teaches in the English Department at UCL where he has taught courses on Narrative Texts, Criticism and Analysis, and various seminars on nineteenth century literature. His research focus is on nineteenth century literature and social history. His most recent publication is ‘Vagrant, Convict, Cannibal Chief: Abel Magwitch and the Culture of Cannibalism in Great Expectations’ (2017), which was published in the Journal of Victorian Culture.

Alex Grafen teaches Narrative Texts on UCL’s BA English. His research looks at the Whitechapel Boys, a loose collection of artists and poets from the Jewish East End active in the early twentieth century. He is also one of the organisers of the Literary London Reading Group.