UCL SUMMER SCHOOL

Literary London

Key Information

Module code                  ISSU0011
Taught during                Session One: Monday 29 June - Friday 17 July 2020
Module workload              45 teaching hours plus approximately 100 study hours
Module leader                Alistair Robinson, Alex Grafen
Department                   English Language & Literature, Faculty of Arts & Humanities
Credit                       15 UCL credits, 7.5 ECTS, 4 US
Level                        Level 1, first year undergraduate
Pre-requisites               Standard entry requirements
Assessment                   Presentation (25%), Essay (75%)

Module Overview

This module introduces students to the life and literature of London from the eighteenth century to the present day, from Jonathan Swift to Zadie Smith. As we read some of London’s greatest poems, short stories and novels, we will walk the streets of London, visiting some of the great landmarks and museums, as well as looking into its lesser-known histories.

Week One: A Poetic Introduction to London

- Jonathan Swift (1667-1745): ‘A Description of a City Shower’; ‘A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed’
- John Gay (1685-1732): *Trivia: or, The Art of Walking the Streets of London*
- Mary Robinson (1757-1800): ‘London’s Summer Morning’
- William Blake (1757-1827): ‘London’
- John Keats (1795-1821): ‘On Seeing the Elgin Marbles’
- Thomas Hardy (1840-1928): ‘In the British Museum’

Week Two: Victorian London: Underworlds and Other Worlds

- Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Money* (1840)
- Augusta Webster, ‘A Castaway’ (1870)
- Margaret Harkness, *In Darkest London* (1889)
• Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), and ‘A Scandal in Bohemia’ in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1891)

**Week Three: 20th-century London: Enigmas and Rubrics**

• T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (1922)
• Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark* (1934)
• H. D., ‘The Walls Do Not Fall’ in *Trilogy* (1944)
• Zadie Smith, *NW* (2012)

**Module Aims**

The module aims to give students a broad historical and literary awareness of how London has changed as a city from the early 18th century to the present day, with a particular focus on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Within this broad historical sweep, students will be given the opportunity to engage with particular literary texts at a more rigorous and analytical level. This awareness of the macroscopic and the microscopic, alongside their own physical experiences of living in and engaging with the city, will allow students to explore the city’s social, historical, and architectural foundations and the exciting, invigorating relationships these have had and continue to have with literature and literary form.

**Teaching Methods**

This module will include a range of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, group and individual work. There will be two outcomes: a 2,500 word essay to be submitted on the last Friday of Summer School and an oral presentation, which will be delivered over the course of the three weeks. Instructions for these assignments will be given in advance and students will have the opportunity to meet the Module Leader individually to discuss their titles and the subjects of their presentations during office hours.

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this module, students will:

• Be confident and able to discuss, close read and write about poetry, short stories, novels and art;
• Have produced and delivered oral presentations on an aspect of the course that has particularly engaged them;
• Have a strong sense of how London as a European city has grown, developed and changed over the last 300 years;
• Have visited and physically experienced London in a way that is informed by this growing awareness of the past and the constantly shifting permutations of life in the metropolis;
• Be aware of how literature and particular literary forms have developed in order to relate these shifts in urban experience more effectively.

**Assessment Methods**

• 10-minute presentation (25%)
• 2,500-word essay (75%)
Key Texts

- John Gay, *Trivia* (1716)
- Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Money* (1840)
- Augusta Webster, ‘A Castaway’ (1870)
- Margaret Harkness, *In Darkest London* (1889)
- Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and ‘A Scandal in Bohemia’ (1891)
- Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark* (1934)
- H. D., ‘The Walls Do Not Fall’ (1944)
- Zadie Smith, *NW* (2012)

Module Leaders

Dr Alistair Robinson is a Postdoctoral Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of English Studies, University of London. He holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Cambridge, a master’s degree from the University of Edinburgh, and a PhD from University College London. His work has been published in the Journal of Victorian Culture and the Review of English Studies.

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.