

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

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| Name, title and level of final qualification(s) | BA Creative Writing and English (Level 6) |
| Name and title of any exit qualification(s) | Dip HE; Cert HE |
| Is the programme offered with a Foundation Year? | Yes |
| Awarding Body | University of London |
| Teaching Institution(s) | Birkbeck, University of London |
| Home School/other teaching departments | School of Creative Arts, Culture and Communication |
| Location of delivery | Central London |
| Language of delivery and assessment | English |
| Mode of study, length of study and normal start month | Full-time - 3 years: Part-time - 4 years Full-time with Foundation Year - 4 years Part-time with Foundation Year - 6 years September |
| Professional, statutory or regulatory body | Not applicable |
| QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England | English – Creative Writing |
| UCAS code | 4J93; 4J94 (with FY) |
| Birkbeck Course Code | UUBACWEN_C (full-time, 3 years) UBACWREN_C (part-time, 4 years) UUBFCWEN_C (full-time with FY, 4 years) UBFCWREN_C (part-time with FY, 6 years) |
| HECoS Code | 100046 100320 |
| Start date of programme | September 2015 |
| Date of programme approval | Spring 2015 |
| Date of last programme amendment approval | November 2022 |
| Valid for academic year and cohorts | 2023-24 |
| Date of last revision to document | 08/08/22 |

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

UCAS tariff: 96-128 points

The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a tariff calculator for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

A-levels: CCC-ABB

Course aims

Have you always wanted to be a writer? Have you got a story to tell but you don't know how to unlock it? Do you want to learn how to read as a literary critic and as a writer?

The BA Creative Writing and English is a unique and exciting programme of study that gives you the opportunity to explore a range of disciplines, from prose fiction to poetry, scriptwriting to creative non-fiction.

Alongside honing your craft as a creative writer, you will also develop your knowledge and understanding of a wide range of literary writing in English, from earliest times to the present day. The degree culminates in the opportunity to develop an extended piece of creative-critical writing that will prepare you for post-graduate study and life as a writer beyond the university.

You'll be studying in the heart of literary London, in a building that was once home to Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group. You will study with leading academics and celebrated, published authors across the fields of fiction, poetry and drama.

We also offer a four-year, part-time, evening study BA Creative Writing and English.

Aims

- Enable students to develop their skills as writers of fiction, poetry, and drama with published specialists.
- Deepen students' awareness of form and elements of the writer's craft.
- Develop students' skills of self-evaluation and constructive analysis of their own work and the work of others.
- Provide students with a broad and balanced understanding of the practices of reading and researching through literary criticism, theory and creative writing.
- Offer a balanced degree programme enabling students to engage imaginatively in the reading and analysing of literary texts from all periods from Anglo-Saxon to the present; to develop independent critical judgement; and to write lucid, logical and well-structured prose while also developing their own creative work.
- Offer students the opportunity to undertake and complete a creative-critical writing project.
- Enable students to develop skills in editing and revising their own critical and creative writing.
- Enable students to engage imaginatively in the analysis and interpretation of texts as well as develop their own practices as writers.
- Develop students' independent critical judgement, helping them attain understanding of the histories, conventions, and processes of various writing genres, and to present lucid, logical, and well-structured work.
- Produce well-rounded students capable of independently evaluating and engaging creatively and critically with the current literary scene.

Distinctive Features

- The compulsory modules that make up half the degree programme provide students with a strong foundation in key literary concepts and skills, explored from diverse perspectives and energising modes of study.
- The expansive, multi-disciplinary approach to the study of writing (fiction, poetry, drama, screenwriting, creative non-fiction) with a choice of optional elective modules.
- The second half of the degree enables students to develop their own specialist interests with research-led option modules delivered by a department ranked 2nd in the country in the Research Excellence Framework.
- The Joint Honours degree offers students the opportunity to understand their own creative writing within a literary tradition
- Students are supported by a Personal Tutor throughout the course, providing individual consultation to help address specific skills development, offer academic consultation when choosing options and dissertation topics, and provide a familiar point of contact for pastoral issues.
- Students benefit from a range of written and verbal feedback on their work, tailored to help them improve their skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the course.
- Students can apply to take part in a competitive Industry Placement module where they spend a term working in an arts-related organisation or arts-related role.
- Employers highly value the analytical, critical and communication skills an English degree provides and the imaginative flair that typifies the best creative writing.
- The degree also provides ideal preparation for postgraduate study in the fields of Creative Writing and English Literature.

For Foundation Year – see school of Arts Foundation Year specification.

Course structure

| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credit | Comp Core/ Option | Likely teaching term(s) |
|----------------------------|-------------|--|--------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Full-time – 3 years | | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | | |
| 4 | AREN256S4 | Storytelling: Narrative Archetypes, Forms and Techniques | 30 | Comp | T1-T2 |
| 4 | AREN286S4 | Introduction to Playwriting & Poetry | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 4 | ENHU007S4 | Writing London | 30 | Comp | T2 |
| 4 | AREN288S4 | Writing for Film and TV | 30 | Comp | T3 |
| 4 | AREN208Z4 | Doing English | 0 | Comp | T1 & T2 |
| Year 2 | | | | | |
| 5 | ENHU009S5 | The Novel: Writing the Modern World | 30 | Comp | T1 & T2 |
| 5 | AREN005S5 | Narrative Methods | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 5 | AREN204S5 | Either Screenwriting Workshop 1: Essentials of Stage and Screen Or | 30 | Option | T1 & T2 |
| 5 | AREN041S5 | Poetry Workshop 1 | 30 | Option | |
| 5 | | Option from range of approved modules within field of English Literature | 30 | Option | T3 |

| Year 3 | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|---|---|--------|-----------|
| 6 | AREN267S6 | Dissertation in Creative Writing and English | 30 | Comp | T1-T2 &T3 |
| 6 | AREN221S6 | The Creative-Critical Seam | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 6 | AREN179S6 | Either Scriptwriting Workshop 2: Writing for the Contemporary Stage Or | 30 | Option | T1 |
| | AREN143S6 | Poetry Workshop 2: The Open Page | 30 | Option | T1 |
| 6 | | Option from range of approved modules within field of English Literature | 30 (may comprise 2 x 15 credit modules) | Option | T2 |
| Part-time – 4 years | | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | | |
| 4 | AREN256S4 | Storytelling: Narrative Archetypes, Forms and Techniques | 30 | Comp | T1-T2 |
| 4 | | Introduction to Playwriting & Poetry | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 4 | ENHU007S4 | Writing London | 30 | Comp | T2 |
| 4 | AREN208Z4 | Doing English | 0 | Comp | T1 & T2 |
| Year 2 | | | | | |
| 5 | ENHU009S5 | The Novel: Writing the Modern World | 30 | Comp | T1 & T2 |
| 5 | AREN005S5 | Narrative Methods | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 4 | AREN288S4 | Writing for Film and TV | 30 | Comp | T3 |
| Year 3 | | | | | |
| 6 | AREN221S6 | The Creative-Critical Seam | 30 | Comp | T1 |
| 5 | AREN204S5 | Either Screenwriting Workshop 1: Essentials of Stage and Screen Or | 30 | Option | T1 & T2 |
| 5 | AREN041S5 | Poetry Workshop 1 | 30 | Option | |
| 5 | | Option from range of approved modules within field of English Literature | 30 | Option | T3 |
| Year 4 | | | | | |
| 6 | AREN267S6 | Dissertation in Creative Writing and English: Creative piece + critical preface | 30 | Comp | T1-T2 &T3 |
| 6 | AREN179S6 | Either Scriptwriting Workshop 2: Writing for the Contemporary Stage Or | 30 | Option | T1 |
| | AREN143S6 | Poetry Workshop 2: The Open Page | 30 | Option | T1 |
| 6 | | Option from range of approved modules within field of English Literature | 30 (may comprise of 2 x 15 credit modules) | Option | T2 |

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| <i>Core:</i> | <i>Module must be taken and passed by student</i> |
| <i>Compulsory:</i> | <i>Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)</i> |
| <i>Option:</i> | <i>Student can choose to take this module</i> |

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

Teaching on the programme is varied. Modules at Levels 4 and 5 are typically taught by lectures, seminars, and workshops. Modules at Level 6 are usually taught in seminar groups as well as through individual supervision sessions for the Dissertation. Some modules include one-to-one tutorials by arrangement (for example to discuss essay feedback). You may also encounter other forms of teaching - e.g. language work – depending on the options you choose.

Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare. Workshops based on more hands-on exercises that allow you practice skills such as close reading and critical analysis.

Other important modes of learning include: note-taking, textual analysis, private study, library and archival research, use of internet sources, as well completion of the assessed work.

Teaching is varied and interactive, and takes the form of lecturer-led sessions on elements of craft, workshopping of students' creative work, class and home exercises, student readings, individual and group work. It also includes:

- Plenary lectures to year groups to allow for general exposition of craft elements and instruction therein, as well as to disseminate course-related information and to foster a sense of community amongst students.
- Branch-off workshops following lectures, encouraging student participation in general discussion and the use of weekly student presentations. This encourages development of communication skills in small groups and promotes exploration of material presented in the lecture.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

Assessment for Creative Writing modules is 100% coursework.

Assessment methods used on English Literature modules include commentaries, essays, and take-home examinations, as well as a wide range of exercises designed to evaluate different abilities and prepare students to the range of genres, lengths, and writing skills required in the twenty-first-century workplace.

A Dissertation combining creative and critical writing is a compulsory requirement of both the full-time and part-time BA Creative Writing and English in the final year.

There are one-to-one tutorials by arrangement, particularly when students are preparing and receiving feedback on essays; and one-to-one supervision of final year project

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

SUBJECT SPECIFIC

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate control of elements of the writer's craft in their own work.
- Use language more confidently, precisely, and imaginatively.
- Discuss and evaluate the work of fellow students and established writers in relation to elements of craft.
- Experiment with style and form.
- Utilise critical skills in the close reading and analysis of creative texts.

INTELLECTUAL

By the end of the course, students will have gained:

- Knowledge and understanding of the various forms and genres of creative writing and the different techniques and processes they employ.
- Greater confidence and fluency in their own writing.
- Skills in researching relevant fields of knowledge and developing drafts of their work.
- Knowledge and understanding of contemporary writers and writing.
- An awareness of the contemporary marketplace and its relationship to creative writing.

PRACTICAL

By the end of the course, students will have developed:

- A portfolio of creative work (with which the student can pursue publication or entrance onto higher-level creative writing programmes, such as the MA Creative Writing at Birkbeck).
- The ability to sustain and evaluate creative projects.
- Creative writing skills, including the ability to edit and revise, to apply technique and critical analysis to the development of a piece of work in one or more genres.
- Research skills, including the ability to gather, sift, and organise material independently and critically, and to present it in the form of an essay, report, dissertation, presentation or written creative piece.
- Relevant IT skills; the use of libraries and electronic sources of information, online discussion groups, web-based research.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL

By the end of the course, students will have gained:

- A richer knowledge of the field of creative writing, and an informed critical and creative approach to the subject area.
- The ability to act as a reflective, self-directed learner, recognizing and employing a range of strategies to support independent learning, including an awareness of strengths/weaknesses.
- The ability to respond more effectively to the work of others; to participate in workshop or small group discussion by listening and contributing ideas in a sensitive and informed manner.
- The ability to accept and evaluate constructive criticism on their own work; to participate in workshop or small group discussion by listening to feedback of fellow students and lecturers.
- The ability to communicate in public and in working groups with expressive clarity and sophistication.

Careers and further study

You will find BA Creative Writing and English graduates in the following kinds of roles:

Publishing, agenting, writing, teaching, performing arts, advertising, public relations, game design, education, law, the civil service and business roles.

Birkbeck's BA Creative Writing and English graduates will complete with a set of valuable attributes, for example:

- A deepened awareness of literary forms and a practical understanding of the writer's craft
- The ability to use language more confidently, precisely, and imaginatively
- Skills in evaluating and assessing creative and critical writing across a range of forms
- Skills in the planning and time-management of independent creative and critical writing
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English
- Research skills
- Skills in evaluating and assessing various types of information
- The ability to convey your ideas and build an argument
- The ability to analyse and process complex ideas
- Independent research skills

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment

called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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