

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK
National University of Ireland, Cork

MA in ENGLISH
2025-2026

**MODERNITIES: LITERATURE, THEORY AND
CULTURE FROM THE ROMANTICS TO THE
PRESENT**



MODERNITIES: LITERATURE, THEORY AND CULTURE FROM THE ROMANTICS TO THE PRESENT

This MA introduces students to the advanced study of American, British and Irish literature and other cultural forms, from the eighteenth century to the present day, as well as to a selection of theoretical works pertaining to the concept of 'modernity'. Under the guidance of leading scholars in their fields, students will encounter some of the most influential contemporary critical and theoretical models currently being applied to the notions of modernity and modernisation, and apply the ideas raised by these theories to a rich variety of works from the 1700s to the twenty-first century. Students will also have the opportunity to be introduced to literary and theoretical texts that track Ireland's historical and cultural experience of modernism, from the eighteenth century to the current day. Texts studied range historically from the writings of the great Irish satirist Jonathan Swift, those of such canonical Romantics as P.B. and Mary Shelley, influential modernist works by James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Virginia Woolf and Samuel Beckett, to innovative recent and contemporary poets, novelists, dramatists, and filmmakers. Among theorists of modernity, students can expect to explore the thought of significant nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thinkers, including Nietzsche and Freud, and to examine twentieth/twenty-first-century cultural theory in such fields as feminism and postcolonialism. The encounter with these thinkers and movements will aid the student in debating and developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of the broader culture in this era.

Staff

The members of academic staff teaching on this MA are all actively engaged in research and have national and international reputations in a range of relevant fields. Full details of their areas of expertise and a list of their publications can be accessed via the Department of English website: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/english/>

Programme Structure

The MA in English (Modernities) consists of two parts: (Part 1) a taught course; and (Part 2) a dissertation.

The MA involves a combination of seminars, consultation, presentations, and directed study, as well as associated reading. Part 1 is examined by means of continuous assessment, in the form of written assignments and seminar participation. In Part 2 you will carry out independent research for your dissertation in close consultation with your supervisor(s).

Students take **90** credits, as follows:

Part 1 (50 credits)

In Part 1 of the MA, the following two modules are mandatory:

EN6009 Contemporary Literary Research: Skills, Methods, and Strategies (10 credits)
EN6028 Theories of Modernity (10 credits)

The remaining 30 credits in Part 1 are comprised through choosing three of the following modules:

EN6024 Ireland and Modernity (10 credits)
EN6025 Literary and Cultural Modernisms (10 credits)
EN6026 Postmodernism (10 credits)
EN6027 Romanticism and Modernity (10 credits)

With the agreement of the relevant MA coordinator(s) you may substitute one non-mandatory module for one from MA in English: Medieval to Renaissance Literature. (NB This option does *not* include modules from the MA in Creative Writing.)

For further details, visit the UCC Book of Modules and enter the relevant module codes:
<https://ucc-ie-public.courseleaf.com/modules/>

Module Requirements

EN6009 is examined as outlined in the module description.

The remaining modules are each examined as follows: Continuous Assessment 200 marks (1 x 3,000-word assignment: 180 marks; Preparation, Attendance, and Participation: 20 marks).

Part 2 (40 credits)

EN6017 Dissertation (40 credits)

Following the taught course, you will write a 15,000–17,000-word thesis, on a topic agreed by you and your supervisor(s) and the MA coordinator(s). You must complete the modules in Part 1 to move on to the dissertation. Dissertations are to be submitted by the last Friday in September.

For further details, see the description in the Book of Modules.

Marking Scale

First Honours:	70+
Second Honours, Grade I:	60-69
Second Honours, Grade II:	50-59
Pass:	40-50

Modules Reading List

EN6028 Theories of Modernity

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, chs 1-6, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, extracts (Canvas); and 'On the Use and Abuse of History for Life', from *Untimely Meditations*; available on Canvas and at:

<https://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/330T/350kPEENietzscheAbuseTableAll.pdf>

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (1985), 243-261; available through Boole electronic resources via JStor.

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, extracts and Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa' (Canvas)

Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', available on Canvas and at:

<http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf>

Paul Gilroy, 'The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity', from *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Introduction (Canvas)

Val Plumwood, 'The Concept of a Cultural Landscape: Nature, Culture, and Agency in the Land'; available as a photocopy.

Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics' (Canvas)

Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race & Class*, extracts (Canvas)

Timothy Clark, *The Value of Ecocriticism*, Introduction (Canvas)

Kelly Elizabeth Sultzbach, *Ecocriticism in the Modernist Imagination*, Introduction (Canvas)

Wallace Stevens, 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird' (Canvas)

H.D., 'Eurydice' (Canvas)

Claude McKay, 'Joy in the Woods' (Canvas)

Donna Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto'; available as a photocopy.

Max More 'The Philosophy of Transhumanism' in *The Transhumanist Reader*, ed. by Max More and Natasha Vita-More (Oxford: Wiley, 2013), pp. 3-17; available as a photocopy.

Various 'Transhumanist Declaration', in *The Transhumanist Reader*, pp. 54-55; available as a photocopy.

Max More 'A Letter to Mother Nature', in *The Transhumanist Reader*, pp. 49-50; available as a photocopy.

EN6025 Literary and Cultural Modernisms

Avant-garde manifestos (Canvas)

Selected poetry by Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Richard Aldington and H.D (Canvas)

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

D.H. Lawrence, 'England, My England' (Canvas)

William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*

James Joyce, episodes from *Ulysses* (Canvas)

George Bernard Shaw, *The Philanderer*

William Golding, *The Inheritors*

Gordon Craig, extract from *On the Art of Theatre* (Canvas)

EN6027 Romanticism and Modernity

Mary Wollstonecraft, extracts from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Canvas)

J. J. Rousseau, extracts from *Emile* (Canvas)

Edmund Burke, extracts from *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (Canvas)

William Wordsworth, extract from *The Prelude*, Book 1 (Canvas)

Charlotte Smith, 'Sonnet Written at the Church-yard at Middleton in Sussex'; 'Sonnet: On Being Cautioned ...'; 'Sonnet: To the Moon'; extract from *Beachy Head* (Canvas)

Dorothy Wordsworth, 'Floating Island'; 'Address to a Child during a Boisterous Winter Evening' (Canvas)

Anna Barbauld: 'Inscription for an Ice House'; 'To a Little Invisible Being'; 'A Summer Evening's Meditation' (Canvas)

Mary Robinson: 'The Summer Day'; 'The Wintry Day' (Canvas)

Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*

P.B. Shelley, 'The Triumph of Life', available as a photocopy.

Byron, *Childe Harold*, canto 3, available as a photocopy.

Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*

EN6026 Postmodernism

Jorge Luis Borges, John Barth, Donald Barthelme, selected stories (Canvas)

Postmodernism and trauma materials (Canvas)

Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*

Jenny Offill, *Weather*

Antonin Artaud, *Spurt of Blood*

Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*

Agha Shahid Ali, selected poetry (Canvas)

Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini, dir., *American Splendor*

EN6024 Ireland and Modernity

Theories, selected texts (Canvas)

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

Lady Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl*

Gerald Griffin, 'The Brown Man' (Canvas)

William Maginn, 'The Man in the Bell' (Canvas)

Sheridan Le Fanu, 'Carmilla' (Canvas)

James Joyce, 'The Dead' (Canvas)

Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Back Drawing-Room', 'The Demon Lover', 'Mysterious Kôr' (Canvas)

Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days*

Flann O'Brien, *The Third Policeman*

Anna Burns, *Milkman*

Melatu Uche Okorie, *This Hostel Life*

You will also require a copy of the *MHRA Style Guide*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013) or the *MLA Handbook*, 9th edn (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2021) to present your essays and dissertation in one of the Department's preferred styles. The *MHRA Style Guide* can be downloaded for free:

<http://www.mhra.org.uk/style>

You may also find useful an up-to-date English usage guide, e.g., *Fowler's Concise Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, ed. by Jeremy Butterfield, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), although the internet is of course a convenient tool to consult in this respect.

A valuable reference work, covering traditional terminology and literary theory, is *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, ed. by Chris Baldick, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Semester 1 Week beginning	Monday 3.00-5.00 ORB 1.65	Thursday 3.00-5.00 ORB 1.65
08 Sept	No class	Introductory Meeting (LJ)/staff
	EN6028 Theories of Modernity	
15 Sept	Nietzsche (AD)	Freud (GA)
22 Sept	Beauvoir and Cixous (CÓG)	Intersectionality (MC)
29 Sept	Postcolonialism (DS)	The Black Atlantic (LJ)
6 Oct	Ecocriticism (MOC)	Extinction Studies (SB)
13 Oct	Preliminary Thesis Discussion (LJ)/staff	The AI Revolution (GA)
20 Oct	Directed Study Week	
	EN6025 Literary and Cultural Modernisms	
27 Oct	Holiday	Modernism and the Avant-garde; Pound and H.D. (LJ)
3 Nov	Gordon Craig; Modernist theatre practice (AE)	Aldington, selected poems, Lawrence 'England, My England': Modernism and the First World War (LJ)
10 Nov	Eliot, selected poetry and critical prose/postcolonial modernism (LJ)	William Golding, <i>The Inheritors</i> (SB)
17 Nov	Shaw, <i>The Philanderer</i> (AE)	Joyce, selections from <i>Ulysses</i> (HL)
24 Nov	Faulkner, <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> (LJ)	Woolf, <i>To the Lighthouse</i> (LJ)
1 Dec	Study Period	
8 Dec	Christmas Recess	

Semester 2 Week beginning	Monday 3.00-5.00 ORB 1.65	Tuesday 2.00-4.00 ORB 1.65	Thursday 3.00-5.00 ORB 1.65
EN6027 Romanticism and Modernity			EN6024 Ireland and Modernity
12 Jan	Burke, <i>A Philosophical Enquiry</i> ; William Wordsworth, <i>The Prelude</i> , bk 1 (CÓG)	Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i> ; Rousseau, <i>Emile</i> (CÓG)	Theories (HL)
19 Jan	Anna Barbauld, Dorothy Wordsworth selected poetry (CÓG)	Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, selected poetry (CÓG)	Jonathan Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> (CÓG)
26 Jan	Austen, <i>Mansfield Park</i> (CÓG)	P.B. Shelley, 'The Triumph of Life' (GA)	Lady Morgan, <i>The Wild Irish Girl</i> (CC)
2 Feb	Holiday	Byron, <i>Childe Harold</i> , canto 3 (GA)	Gerald Griffin, William Maginn, Sheridan Le Fanu selected short fiction (CC)
9 Feb	Mary Shelley, <i>The Last Man</i> (GA)	No class	James Joyce, 'The Dead' (HL)
16 Feb	Directed Study Week		
	EN6026 Postmodernism		EN6024, cont.
23 Feb	Introduction to Postmodernism: Borges, Barth, Barthelme, short fiction (AG)	Postmodernism and Trauma (AG)	Elizabeth Bowen, selected short fiction (CC)
2 Mar	Vonnegut, <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> (AG)	Jenny Offill, <i>Weather</i> (AG)	Samuel Beckett, <i>Happy Days</i> (AE)
9 Mar	Postcolonial Postmodernism; Agha Shahid Ali, selected poetry (DS)	Antonin Artaud, <i>Spurt of Blood</i> (AE)	Flann O'Brien, <i>The Third Policeman</i> (HL)
16 Mar	Holiday	Salman Rushdie, <i>Midnight's Children</i> , extracts (DS)	Anna Burns, <i>Milkman</i> (MOC)
23 Mar	<i>American Splendor</i> , dir. Berman and Pulcini (AG)	Beckett, <i>Endgame</i> (AE)	Melatu Uche Okorie, <i>This Hostel Life</i> (MOC)
30 Mar	dissertation presentations	dissertation presentations	dissertation presentations
6 Apr	Easter Recess		

13 Apr	Easter Recess		
20 Apr	Study Review Period		

Key to staff	
GA	Prof. Graham Allen
SB	Dr Sarah Bezan
CC	Prof. Claire Connolly
MC	Dr Miranda Corcoran
AD	Prof. Alex Davis
AE	Dr Anne Etienne
AG	Dr Alan Gibbs
LJ	Prof. Lee Jenkins
HL	Dr Heather Laird
MOC	Dr Maureen O'Connor
CÓG	Dr Cliona Ó Gallchoir
DS	Dr Danny Shanahan

Essay Schedule and Deadlines

Essay 1. EN6028 Theories of Modernity

Titles available: week beginning 13 Oct. 2025; essay due: **tbc**.

Essay 3. EN6025 Literary and Cultural Modernisms

Titles available: week beginning 24 Nov. 2025; essay due: **tbc**

Essay 2. EN6027 Romanticism and Modernity

Titles available: week beginning 9 Feb. 2026; essay due: **tbc**

Essay 5. EN6026 Postmodernism

Titles available: week beginning 6 Apr. 2026; essay due: **tbc**.

Essay 4. EN6024 Ireland and Modernity

Titles available: week beginning 6 Apr. 2026; essay due: **tbc**.

Submission of Written Work

Each essay should be approximately 3,000 words in length; typed (word-processed); and double-spaced. All essays should be presented in accordance with the conventions of either the *MHR4 Style Guide*, 3rd edn or *MLA Handbook*, 9th edn. Method of submission is online through Canvas. All applications for extensions should be addressed to the MA coordinator. An extension without loss of marks will normally only be allowed where there is relevant medical certification or written evidence of other extenuating circumstances.

Plagiarism

Plagiarised work will be treated according to the School of English's policy and UCC's regulations in this regard. Please be especially careful in using sources from the internet. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, the rules for referencing, or which referencing system to use, please feel free to consult the programme staff or the Department's Plagiarism Officer, Prof. Graham Allen.

For further information, please contact the programme coordinator, Prof. Lee Jenkins:
[*l.jenkins@ucc.ie*](mailto:l.jenkins@ucc.ie)

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