

A Level: English Literature

English

Course Facts & Figures at a glance...

Subject Leader

Miss Sarson

Course Title

AS/A-Level English Literature

QAN Code

A Level: 601/5328/3

Awarding Body

AQA Specification B

English degrees offer opportunities to develop your own interests and enthusiasms (especially a love of reading), as well as time to think about a range of personal, cultural and historical issues

English is a flexible and adaptable subject that opens up a wide range of career choices. Contrary to popular belief, teaching is not the main occupation of English graduates. Many go into general management, research and consultancy and the public services as well as publishing and the creative industries.

If you truly enjoy literature - reading books, plays and poetry, talking about them and writing about them - then welcome aboard. A Level English Literature may just be for you.

At A Level, the study of Literature is very different to your experiences of GCSE. You are required to read a broad range of literary texts and to do so independently. If you do not enjoy reading, you should probably choose a different option. Texts are not read in class; they are analysed, critiqued and discussed. There is no time to read

them. So, if you are not prepared to regularly read independently, then this is not the course for you.

We follow the AQA Specification B course, which is focused on Aspects of Tragedy and Aspects of Political and Social Protest Writing at A Level. You will study a Shakespeare play (currently *Othello*), selected works of poet John Keats and a modern play, currently Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and a classic 20th century novel, *The Kite Runner*. We also study Ibsen's *The Doll's House* and the poetry of William Blake. All of these texts will give you an excellent foundation for further literary study at undergraduate level.

As AQA themselves say in the specification: "Genre study is at the heart of English Literature B and the four broad genres available for study are tragedy, comedy, crime writing and political and social protest writing. Just as meanings of texts are not fixed, neither are definitions of genre, which frequently change and become blurred. The texts offered, therefore, are not necessarily classic examples of established genres and this is reflected in the modifying words 'aspects of' and 'elements of'. Indeed, the course takes into account the fact that writers often subvert the genre in which they are writing. Working with genre involves looking at ways in which authors shape meanings within their texts. It also involves thinking about a wide

range of relevant contexts, some of them to do with the production of the text at the time of its writing, some (where possible) to do with how the text has been received over time and, most of all in this course, contexts to do with how the text can be interpreted by readers now. Looking at texts as generic works involves connecting individual texts with others, as the whole idea of genre is a connective one. And finally, because genres and their qualities are not fixed, this means that interpretation is not fixed, and that multiple interpretations are possible."

The English Department welcomes any students who are passionate about literature and who have the enthusiasm and commitment to really get to the heart of the texts studied. Given the linear nature of the new A Levels, there is much more emphasis on the examined units and so this course will suit students who are able to read and study independently and those who are prepared to engage in meaningful classroom debate and discussion.