Module Description
This module will provide students with an introduction to British Literature with a particular focus on well-known authors from the region, including the Brontës. Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë lived at Haworth Parsonage, only a few miles from Leeds, which will be visited as part of this module.

During the 1840s and 50s they wrote some of the most original and challenging fiction of the Victorian period, which retains its popularity and still inspires criticism, fiction, popular culture, and film adaptations. Other British authors such as Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson and the Lakeland Poets may be included in the curriculum. The School of English at the University of Leeds is one of the top-rated departments in the country and ranks in the top 10 for Research.

Assessment
Assessment for this module will be ongoing and cumulative.
Essay: 50%
Presentations: x2 presentations at 25% each

Module Leader
Dr. Alice Crossley a.c.crossley@leeds.ac.uk
Provisional Timetable

Monday 16th July: Introduction to British literature
Lecture followed by discussion and quiz.
Tour of Brotherton library.
Questions:
- What pre-conceptions might we have of British Literature?
- Why does this course focus on the nineteenth century? What sorts of literature does it offer modern readers?
- What changes were happening in the literary and publishing worlds of the nineteenth century?

Tuesday 17th July: Dickens & Thackeray
Reading excerpts in class.
Discussion of style, political agenda, social context.
Excerpts from Nicholas Nickleby, David Copperfield, an essay from Household Words and an essay from The Roundabout Papers.
Questions:
- What is persuasive about Dickens’s writing?
- What rhetorical tools do both writers use and to what effects?
- How might we compare Dickens’s fictional work with his non-fiction essays?
- What similarities might we see in the work by Dickens and Thackeray?

Suggested further reading:
Peter Ackroyd, Dickens (1990)
John Bowen, Other Dickens: Pickwick to Chuzzlewit (2000)
Philip Collins, Dickens and Education (1963)
Holly Furneaux, Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities (2009)
Juliet John, Dickens’ Villains: Melodrama, Character and Popular Culture (2001)
Lyn Pykett, Charles Dickens (2002)

Wednesday 18th July: Pre-Raphaelites and Poetry
Discussion of the aims and agenda of Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood with reference to The Germ (available as hypertext online).
Reading and discussion of poems by D.G. Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, and A.C. Swinburne.
Trip to the Leeds City Art Gallery with particular focus on the Pre-Raphaelite painting held there (time permitting).
Questions:
- What were the aims of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood?
- How might we define their success or failure with regards to these aims?
- In what ways might we compare painterly strategies with poetic ones?
- Is it significant that the PRB was an all male group?
- Is it useful to consider Swinburne in relation to the Pre-Raphaelites?

Suggested further reading:
Tim Barringer, Reading the Pre-Raphaelites (1999)
Thursday 19th July: Oscar Wilde

Group Poster Presentations.

Reading of The Importance of Being Earnest.

Questions:
- How fluid is morality in Wilde’s plays?
- Who plays the role of the dandy and what does that role bring to the plays?
- How and why are Wilde’s plays comic?
- How does Wilde configure relationships between the sexes and between the generations in his plays?

Suggested further reading:
- Patricia F. Behrendt, Oscar Wilde: Eros and Aesthetics (1991)
- Richard Ellmann, Oscar Wilde (1987)
- Sos Eltis, Revising Wilde: Society and Subversion in the Plays of Oscar Wilde (1996)
- Regenia Gagnier, Idylls of the Market place: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public (1986)
- Josephine Guy and Ian Small, Oscar Wilde’s Profession: Writing and the Culture Industry in the Late Nineteenth Century (2000)
- Kerry Powell, Oscar Wilde and the Theatre of the 1890s (1990)
- Frederick S. Roden, ed., Palgrave Advances in Oscar Wilde Studies (2005)
- Peter Raby, ed., The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde (1997)
- John Stokes, Oscar Wilde: Myths, Miracles and Imitations (1996)

Friday 20th: Field Trip to Haworth and the Brontë Parsonage (inc. walk on the Moors)

Week 1 assessment:
- 1st Assessment: Group Presentation (25%)

The assessment for the second week will be through a group poster presentation given on Day 4, on any text or issue raised in seminars or in preparatory research related to days 1-4 of the module. This will be set up on Day 1 when the module is introduced. There will be some class time devoted to preparation for this task, but it will be necessary for students to spend time on this outside class. The class will be divided into smaller groups and each will create a poster that will act as an aide when presenting back to the class.

Students will need to:
• assess one or more of the critical approaches we have examined and demonstrate how it has shifted their interpretation of a text
• provide a close reading of a passage or poem of their choice
• address one or more of the thematic issues brought to light in class discussions

Each group will need to divide the preparation equally, every member of the group must be involved in the presentation.

B. 2nd Assessment: Essay (50%)

This will be set at the end of week 1, and due at the end of week 2. Students to write an assessed essay or close-reading (max. 2000 words) on one of the following topics:

- Write a close reading of one of the Dickens extracts or one of the poems we have studied this week. Pay close attention to language, rhetoric, metaphor, rhyme, rhythm, syntax and try to link these points into your larger understanding of the function or purpose of the piece.

- ‘…these plays are all surface’ (Neil Sammells, Wilde Style, 2000). Discuss this quotation with reference to either The Importance of Being Earnest or A Woman of No Importance.

- ‘What emerges from Dickens's prose are images of worlds in flux’ (David Pascoe, Selected Journalism, 1997). Discuss this quotation with reference to the Dickens texts read in class.

- How does morality function in Dickens or Wilde?

- Compare the use of the female figure in poems by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti.

- Compare representations of masculinity from two texts that we have studied in class.

Brief lecture.
Reading and discussion of Jane Eyre.
Reading of extracts from Elizabeth Gaskell’s The Life of Charlotte Bronte, and class discussion
Questions:
• Who were the Brontës? How do we differentiate between them? What myths have grown up around them?
• How does CB take us inside Jane Eyre’s childhood consciousness?
• Why and how is Jane different from other children? Why might CB want to construct such a character?
• What might psychoanalytic or biographical approaches bring to the text? What are the drawbacks?
• How does our reading of feminist or post-colonial criticism such as Gilbert and Gubar, or Spivak impact on our understanding of Jane Eyre?
• What role does religion play in the text?
• Why is education an important theme in the novel?
• What is troubling about the relationship between Rochester and Jane?

Tuesday 24th July: Jane Eyre
DVD viewing of Jane Eyre, followed by reviews and discussion.

Wednesday 25th July: Jane Eyre
Individual presentations on Jane Eyre.

Thursday 26th July: Other Brontës
Group split up into smaller sections to read excerpts from other Brontë works, AB’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, EB’s *Wuthering Heights* and EB’s poetry. Discussion of differences and similarities between CB and AB/EB in terms of style and theme.

**Friday 27th July: Field trip**

**Suggested further reading on the Brontës:**
- Rachel K. Carnell, ‘Feminism and the Public Sphere in Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, *Novel* 30:1 (1996), 32-55
- Stevie Davies, *Emily Bronte: The Artist as a Free Woman* (1983)
- Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857)
- Julie Nash and Barbara A. Sues, eds. *New Approaches to the Literary Art of Anne Brontë* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001)

**Week 2 assessment:**

C. 3rd Assessment: Individual Presentations

The assessment for the second week will be through an individual presentation given on Day 7. This will be set up on Day 5 when the Brontës are introduced. There may be some class time devoted to preparation for this task, but it will be necessary for students to spend more time on this outside class. Presentations must be on some aspect of Jane Eyre, although the specific focus of the presentation is up to each student.