

**University of Roehampton  
International Summer School**

**Department of English and Creative Writing****Module Title: Hidden London****Module Code: CRW020N299H****Module Rationale:**

London is an extraordinary city, in which history, culture, and desire collide. It is a city of stories as no other, and has inspired brilliant writing for hundreds of years. This module aims to enable students to situate their creative writing about London in relation to key texts that have shaped the way we think about and experience the city. Each session addresses a specific topic, with one key text at the focus of analysis, discussion and creative assignments and outings.

Students who successfully complete this module will have:

- developed advanced proficiencies in reading and writing skills
- shown a willingness to engage with complex texts and attained the ability to grasp the critical and theoretical frameworks within which they are situated
- understood how more complex literary forms have developed historically and appreciated their relevance to cultural life
- explored the potentiality of these forms in their own creative writing
- developed links between creative and critical texts and their own practice
- explored the relationship between the physical and historical city of London and its literary construction

**Syllabus**

The module will allow students to engage with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction exploring the literary representation of London. Material will be approached thematically, with classic and contemporary texts paired to engage with the changing perceptions and representations of the city. Several related outings will enable students to compare the written and fictional accounts of London with their own experience of the city, and set up a productive dialogue between the two.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

The module relies upon a combination of tutor-led seminars, student-led group work, and individual tutorials. Tutor-led seminars are to introduce key texts and issues and to offer opportunities for informally structured discussion, student-led group work offers opportunities for peer evaluation and discussion of work, and individual tutorials allow students to discuss ideas for written work and to receive feedback on their progress. The module will also feature guided walking tours through specific areas of London which are featured in the course material, to allow students to engage more multi-modally with course content and the achievement of the module learning goals.

## Assessment

- 1) A portfolio of exercises and written work comprising not more than 2,000 words of writing (70%)
- 2) A presentation of the relationship between their work and its creative and critical contexts (30%)

## Hidden London: An Annotated Reading List.

### Primary Texts

Ali, Monica (2004) Brick Lane London: Black Swan

With its gritty Tower Hamlets setting, this sharply observed contemporary novel about the life of an Asian immigrant girl deals cogently with issues of love, cultural difference and the human spirit.

Brophy, Brigid (1956, 2012) The King of a Rainy Country London: Coelacanth

Originally published in 1956, Brophy's "scandalously neglected" novel begins in the rain-drenched Tottenham Court Road, before protagonists Susan and Neale set off on a European coach-tour. A wonderful rediscovery, with some extraordinarily arch and stylish writing.

Defoe, Daniel (1722, 1970) A Journal of the Plague Year London: Penguin

The novel is a fictionalised account of one man's experiences of the year 1665, in which the Great Plague struck the city of London.

Lichtenstein, Rachel (2008) On Brick Lane London: Penguin

Brick Lane today is a place of extremes – a street that's constantly reinventing itself. Blending history and reportage with personal testimony and urban myths, and interspersing these with maps and photography, *On Brick Lane* is a one-of-a-kind chronicle of one of London's most remarkable streets.

Sinclair, Iain, with Lichtenstein, Rachel (2000) Rodinsky's Room London: Granta

Rodinsky's world was that of the East European Jewry, cabalistic speculation, an obsession with language as code and terrible loss. He touched the imagination of artist Rachel Lichtenstein, whose grandparents had left Poland in the thirties. This text weaves together Lichtenstein's quest for Rodinsky -which took her to Poland, to Israel and around Jewish London -with Iain Sinclair's meditations on her journey into her own past, and on the Whitechapel he has reinvented.

Smith, Zadie (2012) NW London: Penguin

From the author of the bestselling *White Teeth*, Zadie Smith's *NW* follows four characters in the north-western corner of London, around Willesden and Kilburn. Leah, Natalie, Felix, and Nathan's intertwining lives are all brought together over the course of one eventful day.

Woolf, Virginia (1925,2000) Mrs Dalloway London: Penguin

On a June morning in 1923, Clarissa Dalloway is preparing for a party and remembering her past. Elsewhere in London, Septimus Smith is suffering from shell-shock and on the brink of madness. Their days interweave and their lives converge as the party reaches its glittering climax. Here, Virginia Woolf perfected the interior monologue and the novel's lyricism and accessibility have made it one of her most popular works.

*Secondary Texts*

- Ackroyd, P. (2000) London The Biography, London: Vintage  
Copies in the Roehampton Library at 942.1/ACK
- Dyos, H.J. and M. Wolff (1973) The Victorian City: Images and Realities, 2 vols, London: Routledge
- Feldman, D. and G. Stedman Jones, eds (1989) Metropolis, London: Histories and Representations since 1800, London: Routledge
- Glinert, E. (2000) A Literary Guide to London, London: Penguin
- Inwood, S. (2000) A History of London, London: Macmillan
- Orwell, George, (1933, 1999) Down and Out in Paris and London
- Parsons, D. (2000) Streetwalking the Metropolis, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Porter, R. (1996) London: A Social History, London: Penguin
- Sandhu, Sukhdev (2003) London Calling: How Black and Asian Writers Imagined a City London: HarperCollins
- Schneer, Jonathan, (2001) London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis, New Haven: Yale University Press
- Thesing, W.B. (1982) The London Muse: Victorian Responses to the City, Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press
- Walkowitz, J. (1992) City of Dreadful Delight, London: Virago
- Weightman, G. and S. Humphries (1984) The Making of Modern London, 1914-1939, London: Sidgwick & Jackson
- Welsh, A., (1971) City of Dickens, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Williams, R. (1973) The Country and the City, London: Chatto & Windus