

English Literature & Creative Writing

Example 10 hr bespoke programme for a pre-degree student

Module 1: Inspiration vs Instructions

- ▶ What do we mean when we talk about ‘inspiration’?
- ▶ What determines poetic form? Imagist Poetry and Concrete Poetry in the 20th century.
- ▶ What are the rules for good writing? Using inspiration in poetic form.

Pre-tutorial preparation—*independent learning to help you get ahead*

1. Choose a text that you have read recently that inspired you and be ready to talk about it.
2. Read the poetic manifestos by the imagists and the concrete poets alongside their poems.

Formal submission—*your tutor will give written feedback on each submission*

Close reading of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* with an essay question to be agreed with your tutor.

Module 2: Fantasy vs Reality

- ▶ How do writers represent real life? Street scenes and realism in modern writing.
- ▶ The methods and priorities of prose description: comparison of Dickens, Woolf, and Smith
- ▶ What is the relationship between fantasy and reality?

Pre-tutorial preparation

1. Read the extracts from Charles Dickens, Virginia Woolf, and Zadie Smith. Write a short prose piece in the style of one of these authors, responding to a street scene.
2. Read and compare the opening chapters by C. S. Lewis and Philip Pullman.

Formal submission

Lewis and Pullman have found inspiration in everyday Oxford. Choose an intriguing object from a city you know, plan how you would use this as a gateway to a fantastic adventure and write the first page.

Module 3: Past vs Future

- ▶ How do contemporary writers use historical events and texts? Adaptation and anachronism.
- ▶ Does the future inspire writers or terrify them? Stories set in the near future to comment on contemporary anxieties and problems.
- ▶ The flash fiction form: Atwood and Miéville

Pre-tutorial preparation

1. Read the three extracts which paraphrase a scene from Homer’s *Iliad*. How and why do you think contemporary writers changed Homer?
2. Read the flash fiction by China Miéville and Margaret Atwood. How do these writers use a vision of the future to comment on the present?

Formal submission

Plan and write a short story (flash fiction) inspired by an urgent contemporary issue.