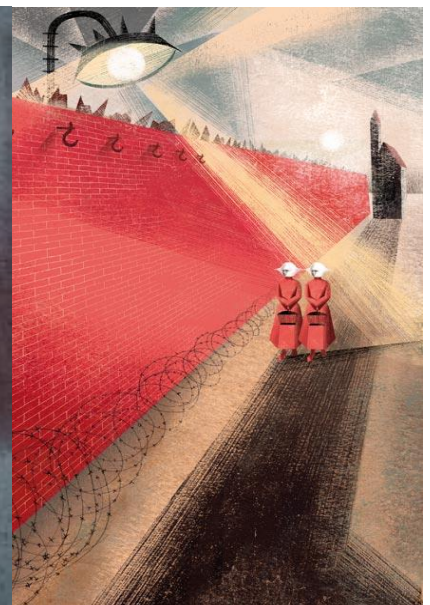
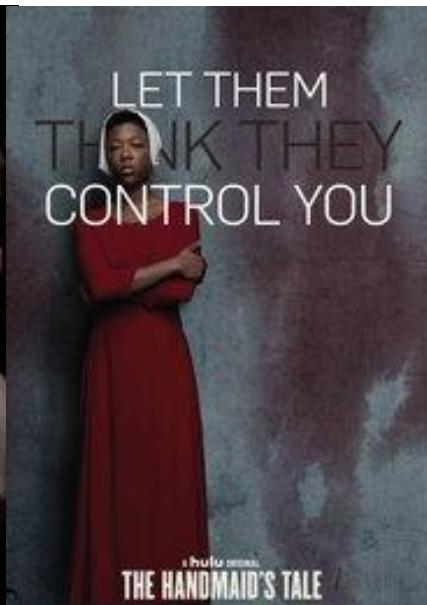




A Level English Literature



Course Handbook 2020 - 2022



Name:

Mission Statement

We are a Catholic College dedicated to the development of the whole person.

To achieve this we will:



- Maintain a Christian environment which is purposeful and fulfilling
- Value all members of the College Community equally
- Promote excellence in teaching and learning
- Have the very highest expectations of all our students
- Offer appropriate choices, guidance, support, and facilities
- Help students to develop as people who strive for the highest possible standards in all aspects of their lives as happy, useful, and successful members of society, and who combine success with service to others in both their personal and working lives.

The English Literature Department seeks to support the mission of the college by:

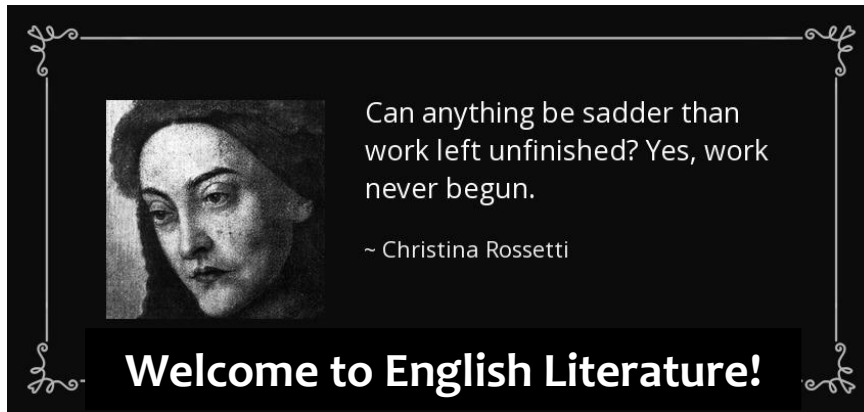
- Introducing you to a wide range of cultures, traditions, ideas and beliefs in Literature, helping you to become tolerant and engage with debate about a range of viewpoints.
- Valuing all your contributions to discussions, debates and encouraging everyone to share their views in class.
- Helping you to write essays which you can be proud of!
- Inspiring in you a love a literature through lessons which are interesting, engaging and of a high standard.
- Supporting you with any areas of the course you are finding difficult.
- Helping you develop as literary critics in your own right, who are able to articulate opinions, analyse texts and share their ideas with confidence.

The Staff

The English Literature department team are:

- ☺ Mr O. Gibson
- ☺ Ms A. Laverty
- ☺ Miss J. Mason
- ☺ Ms R. Wolfreys





Hello and welcome to English Lit at Xavs! We all here in the department hope that this year will inspire you as you develop your love of reading, and your powers of critical analysis.

This year is going to mean a lot of hard work, and our former students have told us to warn you that “English Lit isn’t easy” and “you’ve got to spend lots of time on this subject.” However, we hope that you will enjoy the work set by your teachers, and will be enthusiastic about becoming an independent student, an intelligent reader and a literary critic who can be proud of their achievements.

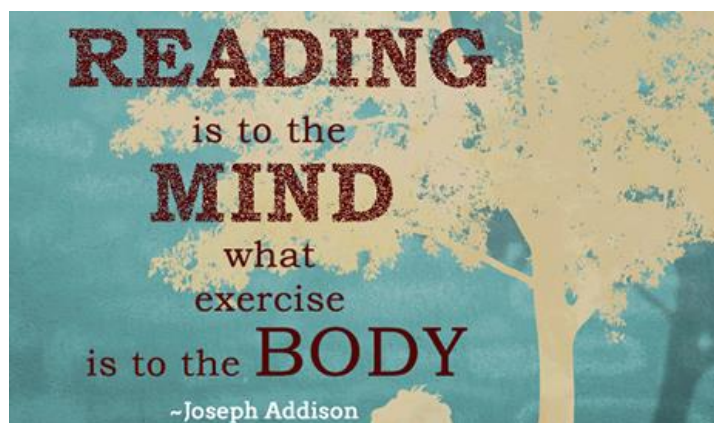
It is really important that you make a good start and establish a routine of work outside of lessons that you keep up throughout the year. You will be set regular tasks which must be completed on time and to the best of your abilities but English Literature is about so much more than that! This year is the time to really enjoy being a dedicated student and taking pride in your folder of work.

The texts that we will be studying must be read before we start discussing them in class and therefore it is essential that you meet the reading deadlines set by your teacher.

Don’t be surprised or alarmed if you find the pace and intensity of the first few months of the A Level course quite a shock to your system compared, perhaps, to the two year GCSE course you completed last year – you will find that if you organize your time carefully you will be able to cope, and will enjoy the lessons and discussions much more.

If you are struggling, then help is at hand. Of course you can ask your teacher for help but you can email englishlit@xaverian.ac.uk to ask for help or drop in to our Support Sessions – your teacher will give you details of when these will be.

Don’t struggle in silence – we’re here to help if you seek our support!



Dear fellow students...

Congratulations on choosing A-level English Literature, it is definitely one of the better A-level subjects, in my humble opinion. Whether you've had a passion for reading ever since your Dad read you Roald Dahl when you were six, or you picked up English Literature last week to fill your timetable, the subject can be anything you make it.

You may choose to read the synopsis of your books on Wikipedia, commit to memory a few chapters from York notes, then scribble everything you can remember on your exam script, in which case you'll hate English Literature. People have done it before you and people will do it after you, and a handful of them will come out with an A, but they won't come out with anything else... These students won't learn how to analyse points of view, put forward a solid argument or learn to look at the world through the eyes of another.

I read once that "studying English is as much about finding the right questions as being able to find the right answers". If you immerse yourself in the subject, you'll learn how to think rather than just how to get an A. If you commit yourself to the discipline, you'll learn how to argue and not just memorise two points of view. If you put your passion behind the journey, you'll actually enjoy the ride.

What is asked of your time may seem laughable, but I'd encourage you to do all the reading, keep a reading log and start revising when you're advised to. A-levels don't just test intelligence, they challenge your character, your commitment to your studies and your ability to work hard. They put on trial your priorities and time management skills. Whether you choose to have a job, take part in hobbies or train to climb Mount Everest whilst you're doing your A-levels, the challenge remains the same – to choose carefully what you can manage and what you can't, giving everything you do your greatest efforts and commitment. It involves blood, sweat and tears, but so do all great things in life.

If you fall down, don't quit! Get up and do the extra reading, re-submit the coursework, re-sit the exam – all anyone is asking of you is that you commit your efforts and passion into the pursuits you sign up for.

In his poem *The Vision*, Pete Greig writes, "Give up the game of minimum integrity and reach for the stars". This pretty much sums up the advice I want to give to you for your next two years at Xaverian. You're a talented and gifted person so nurture your gifts and I wish you all the best not just in your studies, but also in your friendships, your activities and your journey.

Becci Raine

Former English Literature Student



What did they say?

At the end of the year, we asked our students what advice they would give you as you embark upon the English Literature course...

Don't take it for granted – Literature is a course thriving with chances to grow academically and as a person. Make the most of it and give it your all.

Listen to your teacher -you get much more out of the subject than just a grade!

Don't be scared of it being hard! The more difficult, the more fun!

If you are unsure about the slightest thing, seek subject support straight away.

Take lots of notes (you'll need them!) and do more independent study on the texts.

Try hard from the beginning of the year. Don't be afraid to give your opinion!

Start revising before you think you need to and reread the books so you know them inside out.

Read the books early on!
Don't just watch the films!

Don't mess around and **STAY ORGANISED!** Don't leave the reading to the last minute!

Read the books beforehand at least twice and always use the resources on the intranet.



Subject Support and Guidance in the English Literature Department

At Xaverian, we hope that you will enjoy your studies and achieve your highest potential. However, we know that sometimes problems arise in various areas of the subject which may block your ability to reach that potential. In order to help you we have a strong and varied support system in place that we hope will provide you with all the help you need.

What sort of things can I expect to get help with?

- ☺ Help with assignments – try to bring something for us to read whenever you attend support.
- ☺ Better understanding of a particular text.
- ☺ Putting your thoughts and ideas into words.
- ☺ Understanding literary terms and concepts.
- ☺ Essay planning and writing.
- ☺ Revision skills and exam techniques – we are happy to go through practice essays with you and advise you on how to achieve higher marks.
- ☺ Anything else you are struggling with – all you need to do is ask!

So what do I do if I think I need help?

The first point of call is always to **let your subject teacher know** you need help. If we don't know, we can't help! They will advise you what steps should be taken to gain the support you need. You may also be advised to attend subject support by your teachers if you are underperforming in your assignments.

What support is available?

- ☺ If you would like **support from your class teacher**, speak to them about **arranging a one-to-one** support session.
- ☺ You can **email** englishlit@xaverian.ac.uk with any queries you may have, or to arrange a support session if we can't answer your question via email.
- ☺ If you need help with proofreading essays or assignments before handing them in, **Learning Skills** staff are great at providing this support. All you have to do is ask!

*Asking for help
is a sign of strength.*



A Level English Literature

The Edexcel A Level English Literature course has 4 units (Components), covering the 3 key areas of English Literature (Poetry, Drama and Prose).

COMPONENT 1: Drama

Worth 30% of total mark – 2 hour 15 minutes exam

In this unit you will read and study and answer essay questions on two plays.

- ★ Shakespeare's *Othello*
- ★ Tennessee Williams – *A Streetcar Named Desire*

You can take all texts into the exam but they must be clean copies, free from annotations, notes and highlighting.

COMPONENT 2: Prose

Worth 20% of the total mark – 1 hour 15 minutes exam

In this unit you will read and study two novels:

- ★ 'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley
- ★ 'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood

You will sit an examination on the theme of "Science and Literature" in which you will compare these novels. You can take both novels into the exam but they must be clean copies, free from annotations, notes and highlighting.

COMPONENT 3: Poetry

Worth 30% of the total mark - 2 hour 15 minutes exam

In this unit you will read and study:

- ★ A collection of poems by Christina Rossetti
- ★ 'Poems of The Decade' a collection of 20 poems of the 21st Century

In the final exam you will write an essay on Rossetti and be asked to compare one of the contemporary poems with an unseen poem.

COMPONENT 4: Coursework

Worth 20% of the total mark.

In this unit you will write a 2500-3000 word essay, comparing 2 texts linked by writer, theme or movement. You will be guided in the study of one text in class and will be given a choice of comparative texts to study independently.



Course overview

YEAR ONE

Autumn Term

- ★ A Level Induction
- ★ Poems of The Decade
- ★ 'A Streetcar Named Desire'

Spring Term

- ★ 'A Streetcar Named Desire'
- ★ 'Othello'

Summer Term

- ★ Revision
- ★ End of year exams
- ★ Coursework

YEAR TWO

Autumn Term

- ★ Coursework
- ★ Prose

Spring Term

- ★ Drama Revision
- ★ Christina Rossetti
- ★ Poems of The Decade

Summer Term

- ★ Revision

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO ACHIEVE A TOP GRADE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE?

Some of skills you need to access higher grades - these will take time to develop over the two years.

ACADEMIC VOICE

It is crucial that you write in a way that evaluates the methods that the writers use and do so in a way that is individual and engaging. You will be taught some of the ways of doing this but you will need to practice so that your voice becomes enthusiastic and confident in the way you discuss texts.

ARGUMENT STRUCTURE

One of the important skills you need is to construct your essays so that a point of view is persuasively developed and your writing moves fluently from point to point, exploring different points of view before reaching a conclusion that says something interesting and convincing about the question you have been set. You will be given techniques and advice for doing this but once again it will take time for you to develop this.

LITERARY CRITIC

To be effective at this you need to understand that texts can be read or interpreted in a variety of ways. The meanings of texts are not just effected by the historical and cultural context of the way the text has been written but also the theoretical and ideological perspective of the reader. You will need to apply perspectives such as feminism, Freudian and Post-Colonialism to explore the variety of meanings in a text.

WIDER READING

The most successful students are those who read widely. But it is important that you challenge yourself and read texts that are challenging and, sometimes deliberately, hard as they are trying to do new things in interesting ways. Be open minded. For each of the texts you study, you will be given a reading list. Try to read at least one from each list and think about how that text compares with the one you are studying.

Stretch and Challenge! “What more can I do?”

We know that this year some of you will develop a great love of English Literature, and the work we set will just be the springboard for your own forays into the world of literature and literary criticism. College should be a place where you stretch and challenge yourself to achieve your highest potential, and to write the greatest pieces of work you have ever produced. Take pride in your work and don't be afraid to do more!

For this reason we have set up a “Stretch and Challenge” folder on the Intranet, full of interesting materials and ideas for further study. You may already be thinking about applying for English at university next year and this folder contains reading lists, articles you may encounter on a university course and lots of information about what it means to be a truly outstanding English Literature Student.

Our tips for additional learning and research for those students who really want to challenge themselves in English Literature:

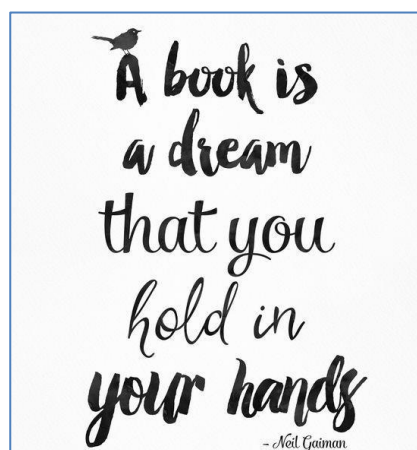
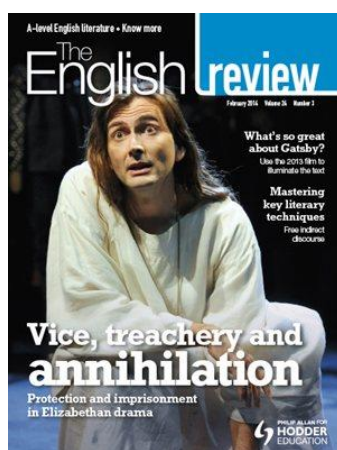
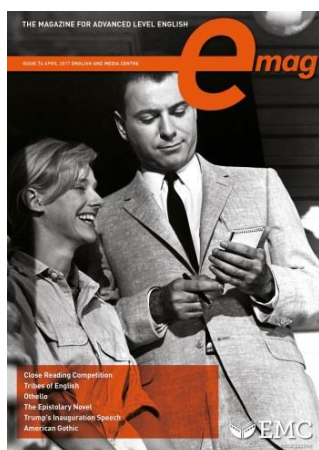
- ★ Read some of the articles in the Stretch and Challenge Folder on the Intranet.
- ★ Print, read and highlight some of the additional articles provided in the Intranet folders dedicated to the texts you are studying.
- ★ Why not write up some extra essays or analysis? Any extra written work you do WILL benefit you in the long run.
- ★ Visit the Library! All Literature students should be familiar with the library and its wealth of texts. Read widely and not just about the texts we are studying. Pick up a copy of “The English Review” or “emagazine” and delve into the wonderful world of literary criticism.
- ★ Visit emagazine and The English Review online.

Accessing emagazine online:

Go to: www.englishandmedia.co.uk/emag-login
Direct access from college computers. At home enter username & password
Username = xavemagazine
Password = english

Accessing *The English Review* online:

Go to the college intranet/LRC/ click on Philip Allan link – you should go directly through to the English Review website – from there you can search for what you are interested in.



WIDER READING LIST

If you want to step up your reading to ensure you are examining some of the greatest works of English Literature these might be good places to start.

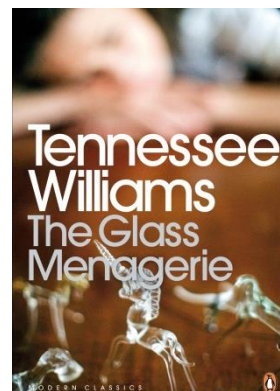
Modern Classics

- 📖 *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh
- 📖 *Atonement* or *Birdsong* by Ian McEwan
- 📖 *Go Tell it on the Mountain* by James Baldwin
- 📖 *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller
- 📖 *Half a Yellow Sun* or *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- 📖 *To Kill a Mocking Bird* by Harper Lee
- 📖 *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D.Salinger
- 📖 *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- 📖 *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro
- 📖 *1984* by George Orwell
- 📖 *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker
- 📖 *Fight Club* by Chuck Palahniuk
- 📖 *Lord of the Flies* – William Golding
- 📖 *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey
- 📖 *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver
- 📖 *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt
- 📖 *The Commitments* by Roddy Doyle
- 📖 *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe
- 📖 *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley
- 📖 *The Diary of Anne Frank*
- 📖 *The Long Goodbye* by Raymond Chandler
- 📖 *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
- 📖 *We Need to Talk About Kevin* by Lionel Shriver
- 📖 *The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides
- 📖 *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon
- 📖 *A Clockwork Orange* – Anthony Burgess
- 📖 *Portnoy's Complaint* – Philip Roth
- 📖 *The New York Trilogy* – Paul Auster
- 📖 *The Bell Jar* - Sylvia Plath



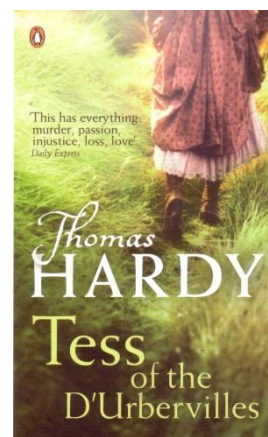
Drama

- 📖 Anything by Shakespeare!
- 📖 *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams
- 📖 *The Homecoming* or *The Caretaker* by Harold Pinter
- 📖 *A View From the Bridge* or *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller
- 📖 *Hérons* by Simon Stephens
- 📖 *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde
- 📖 *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov
- 📖 *A Doll's House* by Ibsen
- 📖 *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles
- 📖 *Medea* by Euripides



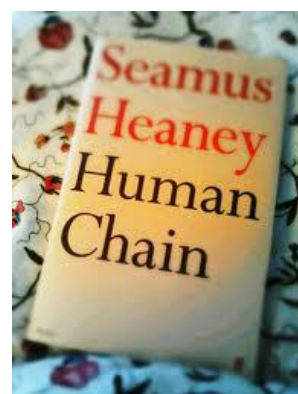
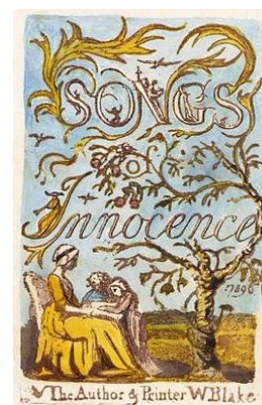
Poetry

- 📖 Sylvia Plath
- 📖 Ted Hughes
- 📖 Wilfred Owen
- 📖 Charlotte Delbo
- 📖 U.A. Fanthorpe
- 📖 Robert Frost
- 📖 William Blake
- 📖 Seamus Heaney
- 📖 T.S. Eliot



Prose – “The Classics”

- 📖 *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
- 📖 *Emma* by Jane Austen
- 📖 *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte
- 📖 *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
- 📖 *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- 📖 *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins
- 📖 *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy
- 📖 *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Arthur Conan Doyle
- 📖 *The War of the Worlds* by H.G.Wells
- 📖 *Dracula* by Bram Stoker



READING
gives us
SOMEPLACE
to go when
we have to
STAY where
we are