

Department of English Language and Literature
MA Programme: English Studies: Literature and Culture
“The Greek Element in Anglophone Literature”

Entry 2019

Entrance Exam Format

The written and oral exams for the Postgraduate Programme which leads to the acquisition of an MA in “The Greek Element in Anglophone Literature” will take place in the School of Philosophy at a time and date to be announced by the Postgraduate Secretary.

During the two-hour exam, candidates will be asked to explore, in essay form, subjects which relate to Anglophone literature and culture, as well as theory and literary criticism. The questions will be based on extracts from critical essays or theoretical texts (Part A) and short literary passages (Part B).

On the basis of their general familiarity with literary movements and periods, theoretical and critical trends in Anglophone, Greek, and European literature, candidates will be asked to write two essays. The first will analyze the main argument or thesis of a given critical essay (Part A) and the second will be a close reading of a short literary extract, both as regards its subject matter and structure, as well as its aesthetic features (Part B). Candidates will be assessed on the basis of their ability to develop a critical argument, their ability to analyze critical essays and literary texts, as well as the quality of their written and spoken English.

Entrance Exam Sample

Answer all questions (parts one and two)

Part One

Choose **one** of the two passages (A or B), and, using examples from literary texts as well as your knowledge of contemporary critical/theoretical movements, develop and comment upon the ideas expressed in the chosen passage. (400-500 words)

A. Further expanding the already large class of Foucauldian apparatuses, I shall call an apparatus literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings. Not only, therefore, prisons, madhouses, the panopticon, schools, confession, factories, disciplines, juridical measures, and so forth (whose connection with power is in a certain sense evident), but also the pen, writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, cigarettes, navigation, computers, cellular telephones and — why not — language itself, which is perhaps the most ancient of apparatuses.

— Giorgio Agamben, “What Is an Apparatus?”

B. Conservative literary critics contend that texts which have come to dominate the canonical lists are there due to their proven quality. Opponents of this view hold that canonical lists merely reflect political, cultural, and economic power relationships. Therefore, attempts to gain a place in the curriculum for the voices of women, minorities, and gay people are in part endeavors to redress political grievances.

— David Linton, "Reading the Metacanoncal Texts"

Part Two

John Keats wrote "Ode on a Grecian Urn" after his visit to the British Museum in 1817 to see the Parthenon Marbles that Lord Elgin had illicitly acquired and then gave to the British government. In the following last stanza of the poem that draws on the form of the ode, "an elaborately formal lyric poem" (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, 1991), the role of the urn acquires an important aesthetic and cultural significance that appears to be unbound by its specific historical framework. Discuss the role of the Greek element in Keats's romantic poem by providing a close reading of the following stanza. (400-500 words)

"Ode on a Grecian Urn"

John Keats

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with breed*
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou says't,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,--that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." [1819, 1820]

*embroidery