Sample Programme Synopsis: Understanding Britain

**Week One: Landscape, Nature and Romanticism:** This week focuses on the evolution of the English landscape and language and on the ways Romantic poets related to nature and place – especially their involvement with the Lake District. Students read the writings of William Wordsworth and John Ruskin, whose homes, Dove Cottage and Brantwood, we visit.

**Week Two: Industrialisation: Political Change and the Novel:** This week concentrates on the emergence of Britain, and especially Lancashire, as an industrial powerhouse, and the descriptions and criticisms by writers and artists of the time, such as the nineteenth-century author Elizabeth Gaskell. Our visit to Quarry Bank Mill in Manchester helps students to engage with the literature and social theory included in this week.

**Week Three: The Great War: Memory and Reconstruction:** This week traces some of the effects of the First World War on British culture through an exploration of historical articles and literature about the war. This week focuses on some of the influential war poets of the era, including Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. This enables students to think about how different perspectives on the war have formed, both while it was occurring and through the memorialisation process.

**Week Four: Post-colonial Britain: Identity and Place:** This week engages with the transformation of Britain since the 1950s and the rise of new multi-cultural communities, new language communities, and new forms of popular culture. The lectures for this week finish with a workshop from a local poet, and we consider the role of poetry in expressing political protest or asserting identity.

**Socials** Each week social activities are planned in and around Lancaster and the University campus. These include afternoon tea at a vintage tea-room, a cricket lesson, typical British ‘pub-quiz’, a tour of Lancaster castle and surrounding historical pubs, and a final pot-luck dinner. There are also scheduled weekend trips (to Chester, the Lakes), which offer an opportunity to see more of England. These can also be tailored to include places which are of interest to this year’s students – let us know where you would like to go!

**Assessment** A variety of coursework assignments and an exam will mean students experience the different assessment methods typical of British universities.

**Field Trips** Weekly field trips include Wordsworth’s house at Grasmere, Ruskin’s house at Coniston, a restored cotton mill, Manchester City Centre, the Imperial War Museum at Salford Quays, and Pier Head and Albert Dock in Liverpool.

**Film Screenings** Each week a relevant film screening will accompany the reading; these will be shown during timetabled hours.