Creative Writing
Undergraduate Degrees
2023
Welcome

Creative Writing at Lancaster has a long and distinguished history, dating back to 1970 when we were one of the very first to teach the subject in the UK, and we have since continued to lead developments in the field. Our Creative Writing tutors are practicing authors, many of them award-winning, who will not only help you to develop your writing but will also advise you on professional development, including how to approach publishers and agents. Many of our graduates go on to publish and broadcast their work, in some cases winning national and international awards.

We cover all of the core genres (poetry, prose, short fiction, drama, scriptwriting), as well as offering training in writing for new media.

You will study Creative Writing alongside another subject (English Literature, English Language, Film, Theatre, or Fine Art) and this will feed into and enrich your writing. You will be taught through lectures, seminars and workshops, some delivered by our Visiting Distinguished Professors such as the Pulitzer prize-winning poet Paul Muldoon and the celebrated graphic novelist Mary Talbot, and some by invited professionals in broadcasting or the publishing industry.

The Department offers a rich, creative environment in which to undertake your studies by supporting a wide range of extra-curricular activities for its students. Members of staff lead reading groups, give public readings and lectures, and ensure that our students make the most of our proximity to the historic city of Lancaster by organising drama productions at venues such as Lancaster Castle or in the Dukes Theatre. Our students also contribute by coordinating writing groups, performing readings, and running four student-led journals: Flash, Cake, Lux and Errant. Finally, you can take advantage of opportunities to undertake a placement year or study abroad at one of our partner universities.

I hope that you will choose to join us.

Professor Sharon Ruston
Head of Department
Creative Writing at Lancaster

8th in the UK for Creative Writing
Complete University Guide 2023

Our Creative Writing lecturers are experienced, published practitioners in their chosen specialist areas. We have a long-established tradition of student-centred, workshop-led teaching.

Top 10

10th in the UK for student satisfaction with course
Guardian University Guide, 2022

Perform
Read your work at regular open mic nights.

Push your creative limits

Top 50

In the top 50 worldwide for English Language and Literature
QS World Rankings 2022

Publish
Publish your work in student-run journals such as Cake, Flash, Lux and Errant.

Push your creative limits

I have loved every second of Creative Writing here at Lancaster. The workshops are incredibly diverse; you are exposed to many kinds of writing, which really inspires and challenges you to push your creative limits. The Department is friendly and supportive, and the course has such an active presence on campus. In my second year, I was Secretary of Lancaster University Writers’ Society and in my third year, I was an Editor for Cake magazine, the University’s in-house literary journal. The opportunities for writers here are endless...

Daisy Brown
BA (Hons) English Literature and Creative Writing, recent graduate
Degrees and entry requirements

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Study abroad options
Placement year options

Visit our website for more information on degree options, entry requirements and scholarships [www.lancaster.ac.uk](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk)

Teaching and learning

Lectures
The lectures in the first year focus on the tools and techniques applied by other writers and how these techniques may be applied to your own work. Genre specific concerns - such as tools for effective dialogue, poetic form and stagecraft - are studied, alongside broader lectures on craft, such as methods for dealing with writer’s block. In the second and third years, the lectures focus more on the next stages; how to approach publishers, where to send your work and how to make a living as a writer. Lancaster staff are supplemented by speakers from the creative writing industry who give lectures which explore what it takes to get published as well as the wider literary contexts of being a writer.

Contact hours
You can expect to be in class for around nine hours a week in your first year, depending on which modules you sign up for. Classroom contact time is similar in your second and third years. You will have set reading and assigned writing for each of these classes, so this results in a full, though flexible, study schedule.

Assessment
In Creative Writing, most modules are assessed by the submission of a writing portfolio, developed through the workshop group with feedback from the tutor, along with a critical reflection essay to show an understanding of your use of technique and literary context of your work. We aim to return coursework to you, graded and with comments from your tutor, within four weeks. Other subjects that you combine with Creative Writing are typically assessed by a combination of coursework and end-of-year examinations.

Creative Writing workshops
Our Creative Writing staff bring a wealth of experience from the worlds of writing and publishing to enrich their teaching. Creative Writing workshops are at the core of our teaching. You meet regularly in small groups with a tutor to read and comment on each other’s work and to revise it in the light of this feedback. You will also have the opportunity to respond to the weekly lecture topics here.

Beyond the course curriculum
There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and field trips. Some are organised by staff, such as public lectures, reading groups, or visits to the theatre; others are organised by students, such as open mic nights on campus. Why not follow us on social media to see what we are up to - Twitter @lancaster_words; Instagram elcw_lancasterwords.
Your global experience

Study abroad
Grow in independence and confidence while immersing yourself in a new culture and way of learning. At Lancaster, you can apply to study abroad for the whole of your third year, providing a unique experience to add to your CV. Our current partner universities are located in Australia, Denmark, Switzerland and the USA. You register your interest and apply for your preferred destination once you arrive at Lancaster. Living in another country and studying your subjects from a different perspective offers considerable benefit both in terms of your understanding of the subject and your preparation for life after university.

Vacation travel
Discover a new world in the Easter and Summer vacation periods with our short trips to destinations around the globe. You will return with a CV that truly stands out from the crowd in the increasingly global world of work.

In the Easter vacation, we typically offer a ten-day trip to New York and Boston in which students and lecturers take part in academic, cultural and personal development activities.

During the summer, we usually run three-week programmes to destinations such as Malaysia, India, Ghana and China. These include meeting local students and businesses as well as academic study and cultural discovery. You can also attend summer schools at one of our many overseas partner universities.

Find out more:
www.lancaster.ac.uk/your-global-experience

Find your voice

Creative writing is a discipline - one that requires frequent routine and independent motivation. Studying the field at Lancaster gives you the facilities, tools and confidence to trust yourself and your instincts.

I’ve always been fascinated by horror and comedy clashing together in surprising ways and fantastical environments. During workshops, some of my fellow students and tutors shared this sensibility while others did not but it was always useful to hear from such a variety of people, all with my best interests at heart. Sometimes their suggestions helped focus my ideas, remove continuity errors or improve my grander plans, other times they simply showed how prospective readers could respond to things I took for granted. These aspects are all useful but most importantly, they encouraged me to find my own voice and stick to it.

Writing is always about self-expression and beyond my writing, this revelation has given me an assuredness in every aspect of life.

My fellow students have been insightful, good natured people and connecting with them outside of seminar rooms to discuss ideas and workshop independently grew naturally from the open-minded nature of the department.

I’ve been on the exec for the university’s Film Society and written for the newspaper, SCAN, both of which have informed my writing. The former with its cavalcade of international and cult cinema offering inspiration, and the latter giving me an opportunity to hone my craft and collaborate with an editorial body. Lancaster has a great selection of societies which complement the course. A writer’s one is the most obvious, but everything from stand-up comedy to journalism, theatre to filmmaking provides many opportunities to try different styles of creative writing. The University’s connections to arts organisations such as Lancaster Arts and the wonderful Duke’s cinema and theatre also provides a professional springboard if you get involved.

Joe Hopewell
BA (Hons) Film and Creative Writing, Year 3
Degree structure

Creative Writing at Lancaster is always taken as a joint major or a minor alongside another subject. It benefits greatly from being in combination with other subjects, and we offer many flexible pathways. In the module breakdown that follows, you will see how Creative Writing is combined with the study of English Literature. For modules available in other joint major degree programmes, see page 18.

BA (Hons) English Literature and Creative Writing (80/20% split)

On this joint major degree, you will spend as much time on Creative Writing as you do on English Literature. Creative writing workshops, lectures, and readings will help you to develop your own writing, and this will be accompanied by a rigorous and inspiring study of literature.

BA (Hons) English Literature with Creative Writing (75/25% split)

This major-minor degree comprises three-quarters English Literature and one-quarter Creative Writing. This means that a very intensive focus on English Literature is accompanied by weekly creative writing workshops with a practicing writer from our staff.

Year 1

CORE Introduction to Creative Writing

You will examine the basic techniques of prose and poetry. Divided into two parts, 'Approaching Writing' and 'Putting it into Practice', each is assessed by a portfolio of your work.

CORE Literature in Crisis

This broad introductory module will show how literature from the Middle Ages to the contemporary period has responded and been shaped by states of crisis, upheaval and radical change. Providing a taste of famous and less well known texts through the Renaissance, Victorian, Romantic, and modern periods, the module will explore many and varied possible approaches to reading literature. You will be introduced to the key debates in literary study such as decolonisation, authorship, and adaptation. The course concludes with a range of mini-modules designed with an eye on employability. You will choose one from such as: Medieval Manuscripts in the Digital Age; Creating a Literary Podcast; Building Minecraft Worlds for the Teaching of Literature; Creating a Literary Tour; Reading Lancaster Priorie; and Re-writing Waiting for Godot.

OPTIONAL World Literature

You will explore a wide and exciting range of texts from world literatures in English that have influenced the development of English Literature, including the Bible and classical writers such as Ovid, Homer, and Dante. You will look at modern world authors in translation, like Kafka and Borges, and at today’s culture through contemporary authors such as Salman Rushdie and Mariama Bâ, as well as new media writing and the graphic novel for example, Marjane Satrapi’s Persepolis.

OR

OPTIONAL Minor module

You can select a module in another subject to complement your studies in Creative Writing. We will provide a list of minor module options prior to starting your studies at Lancaster along with information on how to register for your preferred choice.

Year 2

CORE Intermediate Creative Writing Workshop

In a series of weekly lectures, you will study more advanced techniques and approaches to various literary forms, encouraging you to push the boundaries of your work. You’ll put the lectures into practice in your weekly writing workshop, and be assessed by a portfolio submission.

English Literature and Creative Writing students take:

OPTIONAL Select two term-long specialist Creative Writing modules

+ Short Fiction: Genre and Practice
+ Poetry: Genre and Practice
+ Writing Memoir
+ Writing Place and Landscape
+ Writing for the Stage

OPTIONAL Select one year-long English Literature module

+ Late Medieval to Early Modern Literature
+ Victorian Literature
+ American Literature to 1900
+ British Romanticism
+ Literature, Film and Media

OPTIONAL Select one further English Literature module

+ American Literature to 1900
+ British Romanticism
+ Literature, Film and Media

OPTIONAL The Theory and Practice of Criticism

This module explores what literary criticism currently is and what it may yet become. You will study theoretical and philosophical concepts, such as race, gender, time, death, space, the Other, and the unconscious. You’ll be introduced to modern thinkers, from Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche, through to more recent figures such as Simone Weil, Walter Benjamin, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Fred Moten, Cornel West, Sara Ahmed, and Slavoj Zizek.

English Literature with Creative Writing students take:

+ Late Medieval to Early Modern Literature
+ Victorian Literature
+ American Literature to 1900
+ British Romanticism
+ Literature, Film and Media

Information contained in this booklet with respect to modules is correct at the time of publication, and the University will make every reasonable effort to offer modules as advertised. In some cases changes may be necessary and may result in some modules and combinations being unavailable, for example as a result of student feedback, timetabling, staff changes and new research. Please check our website for the latest information. www.lancaster.ac.uk
Degree structure

Year 2

Specialist Creative Writing modules

If you are studying Creative Writing as a joint major subject, you will choose two-term-long modules in Year 2. The below modules are indicative and may change according to staff availability.

Please note that if you study Creative Writing as a minor subject (e.g. BA (Hons) English Literature with Creative Writing), you will choose modules in your major subject instead of these.

Short Fiction: Genre and Practice
You will gain experience in reading, writing, workshopping and reflecting on the short story, as well as flash fiction. The module seeks to develop a knowledge of the history and development of the form, current theoretical approaches to reading, and an awareness of your literary context. During the module, you are also expected to keep a journal, in which you reflect upon your writing and reading.

Poetry: Genre and Practice
This is an intensive study of poetic form and technique, coupled with a workshop where you will give and receive feedback on your own poems. The emphasis is on reading as well as writing poetry; it will explore how your own experience translates into poetry and how poetry becomes an experience generated by language, memory, imagination and form.

Writing Place and Landscape
This module is designed for students who are interested in writing imaginatively about places and/or landscapes, providing a grounding in the broad field of nature, environmental and place writing. You will be encouraged to consider your own work as part of a larger, ongoing literary conversation about place. The module also contains an element of fieldwork, linking the act of physically walking through a landscape to the practice of reading and writing about it.

Writing for the Stage
The module enables you to write for the theatre and to develop your awareness of the processes by which a written script makes its way to performance. You will be taught to explore the effects that different staging approaches and performance strategies have on your scripts. You will develop your own writing style and gain an awareness of the professional requirements of playwriting. The module culminates in a performance showcase.

Writing for the Stage is delivered in partnership with The Dukes Theatre in Lancaster.

www.dukeslancaster.org

English Literature modules

Late Medieval to Early Modern Literature
You will examine literatures of travel, power and revolution from the late fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The focus is generically and historically wide-ranging, from John Mandeville’s and Margery Kempe’s marvellous journeys through Europe, Northern Africa, Asia and the Holy Land, to the brilliant and edgy theatre of Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson, and the writings of revolutionaries such as John Milton and monarchist libertines like Aphra Behn.

Victorian Literature
What is a ‘Victorian attitude’? You will address this question by examining the role played by literature in the defining cultural debates concerning progress, science, revolution, Englishness, empire, class, death, and sexuality. You will examine a wide range of Victorian authors including such as George Eliot, Charles Dickens, Christina Rossetti, Oscar Wilde, Tennyson, Charlotte Bronte, and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

American Literature to 1900
What do we mean by ‘American Literature’ and how do we define America and ‘the American experience’? How has American Literature evolved from its colonial origins? You will answer these questions by engaging with many different voices, many conflicting and contrasting views, a diversity of complex experiences, and a great range of writing in form and style.

British Romanticism
This module develops a well-rounded sense of Romanticism, a movement that includes the poetry of not only Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, and Shelley but also lesser-known female figures, as well as Gothic fiction and the novels of Jane Austen.

Literature, Film and Media
You will survey formal, generic, historical, cultural, narrative and theoretical relationships between literature and film across a range of periods, genres, topics and cultures, examining the practice and analysis of literary film adaptation. This module includes, within its final assessment, a creative project that may take any form – textual, visual, filmic, or even material and three-dimensional.
Degree structure

Year 3

CORE
Advanced Creative Writing Workshop

A series of lectures will look at the practicalities of life as a writer, including approaching editors, publishing in magazines, and getting work commissioned for the stage. Our core staff are typically joined by guest speakers from the industry. This will feed into further workshops, developing a portfolio with an experienced and practicing tutor.

English Literature and Creative Writing students take:

OPTIONAL
Select four Creative Writing modules

- Longer Fiction: Skills and Techniques for Approaching a Novel
- Creative Non-Fiction II
- Writing/Reading Poetry
- Writing Fiction for Young People
- Advanced Short Story: Form and Practice
- Poetry and Experiment

OPTIONAL
Select further modules in English Literature to make up 60 credits

See pages 16-17 for example module options.
You may also choose to complete a dissertation: a 10,000 word project on a subject of your choosing.

English Literature with Creative Writing students take:

CORE
Dissertation

This is a long essay on a subject of your choice. It could be something that caught your attention earlier on in the course that you want to approach in more depth, or a long-standing enthusiasm that you would like to study in a more systematic and focused way. Whatever you choose, you will be helped by regular supervision from a member of staff.

OPTIONAL
Select two 15-credit English Literature modules such as:

- Science Fiction in Literature and Film
- Women Writers
- Victorian Gothic

See page 16-17 for more module options.

OPTIONAL
Select further modules in English Literature to make up 50 credits

See page 16-17 for module options.

Modules

Year 3

Specialist Creative Writing modules

If you are studying Creative Writing as a joint major subject, you will choose four term-long modules in Year 3. The below modules are indicative and may change according to staff availability.

Please note that if you study Creative Writing as a minor subject (eg BA (Hons) English Literature with Creative Writing), you will choose modules in your major subject instead of these.

Creative Non-Fiction II

You will develop your practice across a range of creative non-fiction forms and topics and extend your reading in this area. This module will concentrate on reviews, essays, and cultural reflection.

Writing Fiction for Young People

This module will introduce you to the constraints and opportunities of writing for young people. Beginning with picture-books and concluding with young adult novels, you will explore elements such as paper engineering and multi-modal narratives; coming-of-age tropes and inventive language. As we explore, you will develop a better critical understanding of the field.

Advanced Short Story: Form and Practice

You will study structure, time, genre and endings and write your own short fictions. Each week you will discuss, in detail, one or two specimen short stories, as well as workshop your own creative work. Topics covered will include: plot, narrative and ‘the twist in the tale’; the epiphany and other ways of ending; rewriting fairy tales, folk tales and myth.

Poetry and Experiment

This module challenges the received structures of language in your own poetry through a close reading of experimental poets. The first hour of every seminar will look at how poets from Alice Oswald to Ezra Pound stretch or break the lyric formula. We will encourage you to experiment either as a continuation of the radical departures first implemented by the poets in question, or to break from comfortable notions of confessional or lyric poetry.

Elements of Tragedy

What does ‘tragedy’ mean, for a creative writer today? How do we effectively engage with a tradition that is thousands of years older than us? What can tragedy offer to writers working in different genres?

These and many other questions are at the heart of this module.

Tragedy is a genre with which writers have been experimenting for thousands of years, and many contemporary writers engage with and subvert its conventions. It is a genre which transcends form, and as such this module offers you the opportunity to produce either prose fiction or script.

Longer Fiction: Skills and Techniques for Approaching a Novel

During this module you will examine, the unique features of long fiction (novellas and novels). Through seminar discussion of set texts, the workshopping of creative writing in progress and the writing of synopses and other planning documents, you will develop competence in approaching a long fiction project. This includes: strategies for planning and structuring, choosing point of view and tense, developing plot, addressing theme and characterisation, experimenting with form and considering an ending.

Writing/Reading Poetry

This module will deepen your engagement with both the writing and the reading process. Both closed and open forms will be explored through a wide-ranging selection of poems. A portion of each seminar will be spent discussing the set poems for the week. The dual assessment (a portfolio of your own poems plus a close reading of two of the syllabus poems) reflects the course emphasis on the inter-relationship between reading and writing.
Modules

Year 3

English Literature 15-credit modules
These half-unit modules are typically designed around the current research of members of staff, and so are subject to frequent changes. The modules below are offered as a snapshot of some of our current modules rather than as an indication of what may be running in future years. We usually offer around twenty half-unit modules each year.

Science Fiction in Literature and Film
You will trace the development of science fiction, providing an insight into the conventions of the genre and in particular how key themes have been successfully adapted for the screen. You will interrogate themes such as war and trauma (Starship Troopers, The Forever War, Akira), encounters with the alien or other (War of the Worlds, Monsters) the imagination of dystopia (The Dispossessed, Children of Men, Moxyland), and questions of human subjectivity, transcendence, love, and loss.

Victorian Gothic
In the Victorian period, the decaying castles, corrupt priests, and ancestral curses that were so prominent in the first phase of the Gothic novel gave way to an increased emphasis on spectral and monstrous others: ghosts, werewolves, vampires, mummies and other creatures of the night. You will explore these phenomena in their historical, cultural, and literary contexts, with particular focus on emerging discourses of gender, sexuality, colonialism and class.

Postcolonial Environments
This module explores how postcolonial writing grapples with environmental change, crisis and collapse. You will read a wide range of twentieth and twenty-first century literature from places such as South Africa, Nigeria, Israel/Palestine, and indigenous North America, and therefore develop an understanding of modern and contemporary postcolonial/world literatures, and the environmental sensibilities they articulate and contest. Topics may include land, enclosure, waste, toxicity, climate change, and urban space.

Bible and Literature
This module considers the Bible as literature and looks at the reciprocal relationship between the Bible and other literary texts. We will consider the ways in which knowledge of biblical texts provokes more profound readings of literature and ask whether rewritings of the Bible refine or subvert the original text.

Women Writers
Virginia Woolf famously asked ‘what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister?’ and went on to explore the obstacles to literary success encountered by women writers. This module follows Woolf’s lead by seeking to redress the historical marginalisation of women writers in the English literary canon through an exploration of how women have come to writing at different historical moments, what they have chosen to write, and how.

Employability - 15-credit modules
You can select one of the following modules which offer hands-on opportunities to apply your knowledge and skills in a real-life environment. These opportunities aim to help you approach your professional life with more confidence.

Schools Volunteering Module
If you are considering training to be a teacher, this module gives you invaluable hands-on experience of working alongside a teacher in the classroom for half a day a week over the course of a term. You will devise a special activity to do with students and reflect on the experience in an end-of-placement essay.

Placement in Local Creative and Heritage Industries
There are opportunities to undertake an assessed work placement module in the Lent term. The placement takes place at a relevant host organisation, with typically 30-40 hours being spent on placement. Previous students have been placed at organisations such as publishers, museums, newspapers, heritage sites and arts venues.

English Literature 30-credit modules
These full-unit modules are taught over the course of two terms.

Modernism towards Post-modernism
You will look at a range of experimental Anglo-American writing from the early twentieth century – the period of modernism proper – to the emergent post-modernism of the 1960s. Through close examination of path-breaking works from T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Wallace Stevens through to Samuel Beckett and Thomas Pynchon, you will examine the meaning and usefulness of two of the most powerful aesthetic concepts of the last century.

Shakespeare
This module examines Shakespearean drama in its own time, as a platform on which early modern debates about agency and government, family and national identity were put into play. By examining texts from across Shakespeare’s career, we will explore their power to shape thoughts and feelings in their own age but also in ours. Texts might include Julius Caesar, Twelfth Night, Henry IV Part I, King Lear, and The Tempest.

Contemporary Literature
You will encounter the explosion of new literatures from the decolonising/newly post-colonial world and the rise of new literary forms in the post-war period. The module foregrounds literature in English in its international dimensions, from South Asia and the Caribbean, as well as from multicultural and devolved Britain. Recurrent themes include margins, haunting, migration, and metamorphosis. Texts include Achebe, Things Fall Apart; Selvon, The Lonely Londoners; Atwood, Oryx and Crake; Coupland, Hey Nostradamus!
Creative Writing joint major degrees

In addition to English Literature, you can study Creative Writing in a joint major (50/50) degree structure with:

- English Language
- Film
- Fine Art
- Theatre

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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Creative Writing</td>
<td>Intermediate Creative Writing Workshop</td>
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<td>Your joint major core module</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ English Language</td>
<td>+ Short Fiction: Genre and Practice</td>
<td>+ Longer Fiction: Skills and Techniques for Approaching a Novel</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Film</td>
<td>+ Poetry: Genre and Practice</td>
<td>+ Creative Non-Fiction II</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Fine Art</td>
<td>+ Writing Memoir</td>
<td>+ Writing/Reading Poetry</td>
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<td>+ Theatre</td>
<td>+ Writing Place and Landscape</td>
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<td>+ Writing for the Stage</td>
<td>+ Elements of Tragedy</td>
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<td>+ Advanced Short Story: Form and Practice</td>
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<td>+ Poetry and Experiment</td>
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Visit our website for detailed information on your joint major core and optional modules
www.lancaster.ac.uk

Life on your degree

Student-run journals

We have four in-house, student-run, creative writing journals. The print publication Cake publishes poetry, flash fiction, and reviews of work from established poets and newcomers alike. Flash is an undergraduate-run online and print journal which publishes fiction, poetry, critical and hybrid work by current Lancaster undergraduates. Lux is an interdisciplinary journal that seeks to showcase incisive and original work from students across the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Errant is dedicated to creative-critical writing and hosts occasional special seminars.

www.lancaster.ac.uk/literary-lancaster

The Lancaster Award

The Lancaster Award is a non-academic certificate developed in partnership with employers to help you make the most of your time at Lancaster and to demonstrate the skills you have developed along the way. It is designed to reward the wide range of volunteering activities and placements undertaken by many of our undergraduates. Potential employers increasingly value a profile that includes more than just strong academic results, and the Lancaster Award recognises and validates these.

Find out more:
www.lancaster.ac.uk/lancaster-award

Student-led activities

There are many other opportunities for writing in Lancaster. Here are some of the activities our students have taken part in:

- Run their own workshops in the Writer’s Society, one of the student-run societies at Lancaster.
- Set up reading and writing groups, such as the Sci-Fi and Fantasy, Literature and Religion, and Queer Reading Groups.
- Organised literary salons with nationally and internationally acclaimed authors.
- Attended poetry-sermon by poet priest Rachel Mann at Lancaster Priory.
- Presented at Errant creative-critical seminar at Lancaster Castle.
- Attended guest readings of poets and writers such as Juliet Jaques, Andrew McMillan, Nguyen Phan Que Mai, Zoe Gilbert, and PJ Harvey.
- Taken a student production of the Canterbury Tales to the Edinburgh Festival.
- Discussed their poetry with Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Paul Muldoon.
- Participated in a graphic novel writing workshop with graphic novelist, Benoît Peeters.
- Made major contributions to the volunteering programmes of Lancaster University Students’ Union.
- Made short promotional films about life in the Department.
Meet our staff

Our Creative Writing lecturers are experienced practitioners in their chosen specialist areas, including poetry, the novel, short fiction, script writing, creative non-fiction, and new media. They have won multiple national and international awards. Our full selection of staff profiles is available on our website. Here are introductions to three of them:

Professor Paul Farley
Professor in Creative Writing, poet, writer and broadcaster

Paul Farley has received widespread acclaim for his poetry, including the Whitbread Prize, the Somerset Maugham Award, the Cholmondeley Prize, the E. M. Forster Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, two Forward Prizes and the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year. His Selected Poems was published by Picador in 2014.

As well as writing poetry, his award-winning non-fiction book Edgelands (2011), a series of journeys into England’s overlooked wilderness, was a BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week. Paul has also written more widely on the arts and literature for The Guardian, Granta, Art Review and others, and is a well-known broadcaster, having written and presented many arts features and documentary programmes for radio and television, as well as writing several original dramas and adaptations. He also presents BBC Radio 4’s contemporary poetry programme, The Echo Chamber. Paul’s book Deaths of the Poets (2017), is a series of non-fiction journeys into the myth of the doomed poet.

Professor Jenn Ashworth
Professor in Creative Writing, novelist and short story writer

Jenn Ashworth studied at Newnham College, Cambridge and the Centre for New Writing at the University of Manchester. Before becoming a writer, she worked as a librarian in a prison. Her first novel, A Kind of Intimacy, was published in 2009 and won a Betty Trask Award. On the publication of her second, Cold Light (Sceptre, 2011) she was featured on the BBC’s The Culture Show as one of the UK’s twelve best new writers. Her third novel The Friday Gospels (2013) and her fourth Fell (2016) are also published by Sceptre. Ashworth has also published short fiction and won an award for her blog, Every Day I Lie a Little.

Her work has been compared to both Ruth Rendell and Patricia Highsmith; all her novels to date have been set in the Northwest of England. In 2019 she published a memoir-in-essays about reading, writing and sickness called Notes Made While Falling which was a New Statesman Book of the Year and shortlisted for the Gordon Burn Prize. Her latest novel is Ghosted: A Love Story which was shortlisted for the Portico Prize. She lives in Lancashire, is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and is a Professor of Writing, specialising in long prose fiction, the memoir and creative-critical writing.

Tajinder Singh Hayer
Lecturer in Creative Writing, scriptwriter

Taj has been writer on attachment at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, writer in residence at BBC Radio Drama Manchester, writer on attachment at the National Theatre and was nominated as one of the Royal Court’s fifty promising playwrights in 2006-7. He has written for the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Peshkar, Freedom Studios, Menagerie, and Look Left, Look Right Theatre Company. He won the BBC’s Spin new writing award in 2003 with People Like Me, and has written for BBC Radio Four, BBC Radio Three, Big Finish Productions and the BBC Asian Network. He won the 2021 Papatango Prize with Ghost Stories from an Old County. He has also written for the CBeebies channel, and his short films have been shown at festivals around the world.
Your future career

Throughout your degree, we encourage you to gain work experience that will support you in achieving your chosen career. A wide range of placement and internship opportunities are available, including credit-bearing modules that include working in creative, cultural and heritage organisations or schools. We offer the option of a placement year with the majority of our degrees, which will boost your employability.

Placement year degrees

With most of our degrees you can take a placement year, where you apply to spend Year 3 working in a professional paid role in a sector of your choice. Securing a placement is a competitive process, so we support you with personalised coaching and professional guidance throughout your second year.

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences internship scheme

As a student with us, you can apply to the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (FASS) Internship Scheme that offers exclusive opportunities that are ring-fenced for students in the Faculty. A myriad of paid, sector-specific internships are available each year in the summer vacation and part-time during term time. Just to give you a taster, some of the past employers include Carnegie Publishing, Lancaster Arts, More Music, The Dukes Theatre, Comma Press, Deco Publique, Crowberry Consulting, Fairfield Association, The Active Lancashire and National Trust. Discover more: www.lancaster.ac.uk/FASS-placements

Careers

A degree including Creative Writing can underpin many careers and, as well as helping our students make good academic decisions while they are with us, we also recognise the need to think ahead to life after graduation. In addition to offering placement modules, we deliver professional development sessions on employability-related matters, including bespoke talks by the University’s Careers Service and we host visits from potential employers and alumni of the Department. Our graduates have gone on to be authors, poets, screenwriters, journalists, new media and content writers, as well as working in the professions listed below.

Our excellent careers support is recognised in the league tables where we are 13th for English and Creative Writing (Guardian University Guide 2022). A degree in Creative Writing opens up exciting and varied career opportunities:

- Writers
- Librarians
- Publishers
- Editors
- Archivists
- Journalists
- Media and PR
- Advertising
- Teachers

Find out more about our lifelong careers support: www.lancaster.ac.uk/careers

Important information

The information in this publication relates primarily to 2023–24 entry to the University and every effort has been taken to ensure the information is correct at the time of printing (June 2022). The University will use all reasonable efforts to deliver the courses as described but the University reserves the right to make changes after going to press. In exceptional circumstances that are beyond the University’s reasonable control (Force Majeure Events), we may need to amend the programmes and provision advertised. However, in this event, the University will take reasonable steps to minimise the disruption to your studies. You are advised to consult our website at: www.lancaster.ac.uk/study for up-to-date information before you submit your application. More information on limits to the University’s liability can be found in the Student Contract at: www.lancaster.ac.uk/terms. Further legal information may be found at: www.lancaster.ac.uk/compliance/legalnotice.

Top 20

13th for English and Creative Writing graduate prospects
Guardian University Guide 2022

Kayla’s placement

I completed a 5 week placement with Carcanet Press as part of a third year module. The experience gave me a whole new breadth of insight into marketing new book releases, and also the publishing industry as the complex creature that it is. Overall, I’m grateful to Carcanet and the University for giving me the opportunity to gain such experience, which in turn has helped me to shape my career prospects after graduation.

Kayla Jenkins
BA (Hons) English Literature and Creative Writing, graduated 2019

Abbie’s professional experience

I enjoyed the ‘Writing for the Stage’ module. It gave me the chance to see my work performed professionally and establish contacts in the industry. The tutor, Taj Hayer, was very passionate about the subject. I had never really tried writing scripts before and Taj’s workshops were expertly delivered and feedback was concise and honest, showing where you needed to improve quite clearly. This, combined with the professional experience of working in the Dukes Theatre in Lancaster, collaborating with actors and directors in a professional environment made the module very valuable. It allowed me to develop my writing skills whilst gaining experience in a career environment; something which very few other creative writing courses do.

Abbie Grundy
BA (Hons) English Literature and Creative Writing, graduated 2018

Find out more about our lifelong careers support: www.lancaster.ac.uk/careers