Department of English

Undergraduate Handbook
2014-2015

BA (Hons) in English

BA General in English and Another Subject

Subsidiary Programmes in English

University of Malta
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Welcome

If you are reading this Handbook, it is because you have been accepted as a student of the Department of English. I am joined by my colleagues in welcoming you to the Department and wishing you every success in your undergraduate studies.

These are exciting and formative years for you. What you learn at University will shape your life and career in crucial ways. The Department is keenly aware of that and recognises that its first duty is to provide an academic environment in which you can grow intellectually and develop your expertise and skills in English in ways which will help you in your further studies and in your career paths. You will benefit from a rich course catalogue which reflects the diversity and range of English Studies today. Study-units cover stimulating material in five main areas: literary studies, linguistics, literary criticism and theory, English Language Studies and cultural criticism. There are also enjoyable and engaging opportunities for students to practise their writing skills in a range of genres and in professionally-linked contexts. Our External Examiners and our alumni assure us that the undergraduate programme in English is stimulating, enriching and rigorous, and that it provides good preparation for further development of one’s studies and career. We trust, therefore, that you too will find an environment in the Department of English in which you can enjoy your studies and feel that you are developing strongly both intellectually and personally.

The Department’s aim is to make it possible for you to graduate with a good and eclectic knowledge in all areas of English Studies, and to make your undergraduate formation in English as broad and varied as possible. The outcome should be to allow you more than one option for further study at postgraduate level and to be well prepared for all of them, and to help you to have a varied portfolio when pursuing employment opportunities. More and more, in fact, there is an awareness that a degree in English gives you flexibility and adaptability across a range of careers, especially in today’s world where training in critical thinking and in accurate and stylish expression are becoming increasingly desirable. Every year, more of our students are moving into varied careers, including teaching, journalism, translation and interpreting, advertising, publishing, management, public policy, cultural policy and management. On that basis, then, there is much to look forward to and to work towards.

Remember that your undergraduate years may only be the start of your higher education, especially since postgraduate qualifications have become so sought after. You may wish to continue your studies abroad or in another course in this University—or you may wish to follow one of the Taught MA paths offered by the Department, in one of four specialised programmes: Modern and Contemporary Literature and Criticism; English Language; English and the Media; TESOL. There is also the exciting option of taking a Modular Taught MA in English, allowing you to choose units from across the other four Taught MA programmes, as well as the possibility of a Master’s by Research.

But whatever you do, we hope that you will also avail yourself of the various opportunities to broaden your horizons as a student. There are rich possibilities in Erasmus exchange, in the DegreePlus units offered by the University, and in the various talks, symposia and conferences that the Department and the Faculty of Arts (among other academic arms on campus) organise. Membership in student societies and participation in their activities—not least those of DESA, the Department of English Students Association—help too. This, then, is an exciting time to be a student—you have much to learn and much to work at, but much to enjoy as well.
A final note: my colleagues and I are committed to responding appropriately and positively to student feedback, and we are always striving to make sure that we provide the best environment we can for students to progress in. Any comments you might have about Departmental arrangements, conveyed either to me as Head of Department or to my colleagues, are always welcome. Meanwhile, we wish you well during your studies in the Department of English.

Dr James Corby
Head, Department of English

About this Handbook

This Handbook has been drawn up to provide you with a point of reference when you need information on aspects of your undergraduate studies in the Department of English at the University of Malta. As such, it is a resource which the Department hopes you will find useful during your studies. It does not replace, however, the information on the University’s Regulations and Bye-Laws, as approved by Senate and published by the Registrar’s Office, or the information on study-units and procedures available through eSIMS or the University of Malta’s various websites, which are acknowledged here as the more official sources that students should consult when in need of updated information.

The University’s Regulations pertaining to your course may be viewed at: http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/regulations/general
The web pages linked there will give you the full information on University Regulations for Undergraduate Courses and on Assessment Regulations.

We do hope that you will find the Handbook useful and that you will refer to it frequently during your undergraduate years. The Department welcomes your feedback about this or, indeed, any other aspect of its operations that may be in need of improvement. Please do feel free to communicate your suggestions on improving the Handbook to the Head of Department, the Year Tutors, or the Departmental secretary.
PART ONE
ORIENTATION
Notes on Terms Used in this Handbook and in University of Malta Documentation

Throughout your course, you will hear reference to the following terms, which are explained for you here in order to clarify some matters which might otherwise remain mysterious (especially in the first weeks of first year!).

Note that the University year is divided into two semesters. The first runs from early October to the end of January, and is followed by a three-week examination period. The second runs from the second week of February to the end of May and is followed by a month-long examination period.

The course catalogue, a copy of which is available for consultation in the office of the Departmental secretary, provides study-unit descriptions and further details on all the teaching available in the Department at undergraduate and postgraduate level. This information is also available online through eSIMS (see below). It is the information available through eSIMS which is to be considered official and binding in terms of study-unit information.

Please distinguish between the terms course, study-unit and programme. Your course is your BA (Honours or General) on which you are enrolled. Your study-units are the modules of 2, 4 or 6 ECTS for which you register at the start of each academic year. The programme is a document which sets out the study-units (compulsory, elective, or optional) available in any one year or across the three-year period of your course.

A compulsory unit, self-evidently, is one you must follow. An elective unit is one you may choose to follow from a choice of units indicated on the Department’s programme. An optional unit is a unit you may take from the programme of another Department; you may, however, prefer to take units from the Department of English programme for your optional component.

All study-units carry an ECTS value. This is a measure of the contact and study time pertaining to each unit (1 ECTS is equivalent to between 5-7 hours of contact time and around 25 hours of study time). In the Department of English, units are typically valued at 2, 4, or 6 ECTS. You are reminded that in a course like English, which is text-intensive, the ECTS value reflects but does not entirely cover the reading of primary and secondary texts expected. Keen and avid reading is expected by the Department in all its units.

All study-units have a four-digit study-unit code (e.g. ENG2066). The first digit of the code indicates which year it is available in. In most cases the second digit is a ‘0’, indicating that the unit cannot be taken in part; units which are the exception to this rule have ‘1’ or ‘2’ as their second digit, indicating that the unit may be a smaller part or component of a larger unit and that it may be taken separately.

eSIMS, as reported in the webpage of the Office of the Registrar, is the University of Malta portal available to students, academic and administrative staff. It enables them to view information and perform various tasks online. The word eSIMS stands for Electronic Student Information Management System. The portal was launched in 2005. University of Malta students may use the portal for:

• Enrolling for each academic year
• Registering for each year's study units
• Viewing messages via eSIMS intray
• Viewing/updating personal details
• Viewing registered course details
• Viewing registered study-unit details
• Viewing University of Malta academic record
• Viewing previous and latest results
• Submitting feedback regarding lectures

You may also receive, through eSIMS, emails by academic and or administrative staff. These will be sent to your University email address, which (as other sections of this Handbook make clear) you should keep active and check regularly. Other general notices are posted on the Department’s notice board, on the second floor of the Old Humanities Building.

In assessment—through which your studies are graded—you will be required to sit examinations and to write assignments during different periods in your course. Examinations are held at the end of each semester. If tied to a study-unit you have just completed, they assess your mastery of material covered specifically in that semester or, in the case of year-long units, in that particular academic year. In third year, they are also linked to synoptic study-units—in which you are tested on material covered in the second semester in specialist seminars that allow for depth and range. If you are an Honours student, you will also have a viva voce examination, which is held at the end of your final year and in which you will be interviewed by members of the Department and the External Examiner (an academic from a Department of English in the UK, who assists in and audits the examining) on your synoptic papers and on your dissertation. General students are not normally called to a viva, but this may occur in certain cases.

Part of your assessment in study-units may include presentations, during which you will be expected to address the class for 15-30 minutes on reading or research carried out beforehand.

A dissertation is a long essay, of 12000 words, which all Honours students in the Department of English are required to write in their third year (General students do not write a dissertation). Dissertations are written under the guidance of a supervisor, or tutor—a member of staff who will mentor you in its writing.

**Essential Reading**

The Department assumes that, as someone who has chosen to graduate in English, you will be a student who reads avidly and across a range of genres.

During your years as an undergraduate you will wish to be acquainted with some of the canonical authors in English and American Literature, as well as with some of the authorities in the areas of literary criticism and theory, linguistics, cultural criticism and English Language Studies.

The study-unit descriptions available through eSIMS provide ample information on recommended reading for each unit, and lecturers will guide you in further reading.
The following texts are being recommended as essential for any undergraduate taking English—there are many more, of course, but these offer good initial guides for their areas and should be on every undergraduate’s shelf (or, these days, e-book library).


Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker, A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005)


**Department of English Website**

The Department of English website may be accessed at [www.um.edu.mt/english](http://www.um.edu.mt/english)

The website carries information about courses, forthcoming events and conferences, academics’ profiles, and a number of useful links.

You might also wish to ‘like’ the Department’s Facebook page, which provides regular news and updates: [www.facebook.com/uom.english](http://www.facebook.com/uom.english)

**Who to Contact When Requiring Information**

For most administrative matters, the secretary of the Department, Ms Romilda Formosa, will be able to answer most of your queries. In certain instances, you may be referred to the secretaries in the Main Office of the Faculty, Room OH308, or to the Faculty Officer, Ms Doreen Attard (Room OH352), or, in some other instances, to the offices in the University’s Administration Building.

Matters not resolved there may then be referred to the Year Tutors or to the Head of Department, as appropriate. General students may refer their concerns to the Tutor for General Students (see below).

Matters concerning outgoing and incoming Erasmus study and travel are to be referred to the Department’s Erasmus Coordinator, Prof. Stella Borg Barthet.

You might on occasion wish to approach your DESA Year Student Representative who will, in turn, approach the respective lecturer in your name—unless you feel it is an issue you wish to personally discuss with a lecturer. DESA can also put you in touch with various Student Groups and student initiatives that will enrich your undergraduate years.
Departmental Secretary

The secretary of the Department is Ms Romilda Formosa. Her office is in Room OH313 and her contact details are as follows:
Tel: 23402963
Email: romilda.formosa@um.edu.mt

Ms Formosa is your first point of contact on administrative matters. Do not consult lecturers or the Head of Department without first consulting the Departmental secretary, as most administrative matters are in any case best handled by Ms Formosa.

Student hours are indicated on the door to the Departmental secretary’s office. Please abide by these hours strictly, as the secretary will have other duties to attend to during the rest of the day.

Year Tutors, and Tutor for General Students

The Department of English has Year Tutors whose role it is to ease students’ progress and any concerns which may arise from time to time. Year Tutors help students with queries on progress and are available for consultation on academic and administrative matters that are specific to first-year, second-year, and third-year studies. The Tutors for 2014-2015 are:

Prof. Stella Borg Barthet – First-Year Tutor
Ms Sarah Grech – Second-Year Tutor
Prof. Ivan Callus – Third-Year Tutor

There is also a dedicated Tutor for General Students, Prof. Stella Borg Barthet.

Head of Department

The Head of the Department is Dr James Corby. His office is located on the first floor of the Old Humanities Building. His contact details are as follows:
Email: james.corby@um.edu.mt
Tel: 2340 2613

The Head is responsible for the Department’s academic direction and administrative organisation.

You may ask for an appointment with the Head of Department either by contacting the secretary or by writing an email on the address indicated above.

Please note that queries are to be addressed in the first instance to the secretary and to the Year Tutors, as appropriate, before being referred to the Head of Department.
Department of English Lecturing Staff

The following lecturers are members of the Department of English. Contact details and brief information on their teaching and research information is given on the Departmental website. A fuller profile for each lecturer is available on the Department’s website: (www.um.edu.mt/arts/english).

To contact by telephone, please dial 2340 and then the appropriate extension number.

**Dr Mario Aquilina**
mario.aquilina@um.edu.mt
Room 110, Guzé Cassar Pullicino Building (Tel. +2560)
*Research and Teaching Interests: English Proficiency; Style; literary and critical theory; research and writing techniques in literary criticism; English and the Media; electronic literature*

**Prof. Stella Borg Barthet**
stella.borg-barthet@um.edu.mt
Room 250, Old Humanities Building (Tel. +2289)
*Research and Teaching Interests: Postcolonial literature; Afro-American writing; eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century English fiction; nineteenth-century American writing*

**Prof. Ivan Callus**
ivan.callus@um.edu.mt
Room 350, Old Humanities Building (Tel. +2972)
*Research and Teaching Interests: Contemporary fiction; critical and cultural theory; posthumanism; futures of literature*

**Dr James Corby (Head of Department)**
james.corby@um.edu.mt
First floor, Old Humanities Building (Tel. +2613)
*Research and Teaching Interests: Literature and philosophy; romantic and modernist aesthetics; literary and cultural theory; contemporary poetry*

**Dr Maria Frendo**
maria.frendo@um.edu.mt
First floor, Old Humanities Building (Tel. +2615)
*Research and Teaching Interests: T.S. Eliot; modernism; the literature of Symbolism and Decadence; Shakespeare; the late nineteenth-century libretto; literature and music*

**Dr Giuliana Fenech**
giuliana.fenech@um.edu.mt
Room 110, Guzé Cassar Pullicino Building (Tel. +2560)
*Research and Teaching Interests: English Proficiency; English and the Media; cultural studies and theory; literature and technology; new literacies; children’s literature*

**Ms Sarah Grech**
sarah.grech@um.edu.mt
Room 110, Guzé Cassar Pullicino Building (Tel. +2560)
*Research and Teaching Interests: Language variation; dialectology and world Englishes; phonology and intonation theory; corpus linguistics*
Prof. Daniel Massa
daniel.massa@um.edu.mt
Room 317, Old Humanities Building (Tel. +2956)
Research and Teaching Interests: Seventeenth and eighteenth-century English literature; Shakespeare and contemporary dramatists; Renaissance humanism; literature of the Commonwealth

Prof. Lydia Sciriha
lydia.sciriha@um.edu.mt
Room 345, Old Humanities Building (Tel. +2306)
Research and Teaching Interests: Sociolinguistics; psycholinguistics; discourse analysis

Dr Odette Vassallo
odette.vassallo@um.edu.mt
Room 110, Guzé Cassar Pullicino Building (Tel. +2560)
Research and Teaching Interests: English proficiency; stylistics; language in context; semantics and pragmatics; language and creativity; cognitive poetics; applied linguistics

Prof. Peter Vassallo
peter.vassallo@um.edu.mt
Room 307, Old Humanities Building (Tel. +2266)
Research and Teaching Interests: British and European Romanticism; British writers and Italy; writers and the Mediterranean; travel writing; comparative literature

Other Lecturers Associated with the Department

In addition to the teaching provided by its full-time academic staff, as listed above, the Department benefits from the further teaching provided by the academics in this list, who lecture in other Departments/Faculties at the University of Malta, or hold part-time or casual lecturing appointments within the Department of English.

Dr Petra Caruana Dingli
petracd@go.net
Teaching and Research and Teaching Interests: Pre-Raphaelite poetry and painting; the Victorian novel, Victorian poetry; travel literature

Dr Carmel Caruana
carmel.a.caruana@um.edu.mt
Research and Teaching Interests: Shakespeare and early modern English drama and literature; René Girard’s mimetic theory in relation to literary and cultural studies; history of ideas and worldviews; the interface between literature; anthropology; religion and modernity
Prof. Saviour Catania (Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences)
saviour.catania@um.edu.mt
Room 405, Centre for Communication Technology (CCT) (Tel. +2426)
Research and Teaching Interests: Film theory/aesthetics; film and literature; the romantic, Victorian and modern gothic novel

Dr Michelle Gialanze
michelle_gialanze@gmail.com
Research and Teaching Interests: English as a second language; language variation and change

Prof. Gloria Lauri-Lucente (Deputy Dean, Faculty of Arts, and Head, Department of Italian)
gloria.lauri-lucente@um.edu.mt
Room 316, Old Humanities Building (Tel. +2955)
Research and Teaching Interests: Anglo-Italian Literature; film studies; literary theory; comparative literature.

Dr Lee Ann Montanaro
leeannmont@gmail.com
Research and Teaching Interests: Psychoanalysis and twentieth-century avant-gardes; Research methodology; High Modernism

Ms Janice Sant Balzan
janicelsant@onvol.net
Teaching and Research and Teaching Interests: Modern American poetry; contemporary poetry

Dr Clare Vassallo (Department of Translation and Interpreting)
clarie_vassallo@um.edu.mt
Room 343, Old Humanities Building (Tel. +3377)
Teaching and Research and Teaching Interests: Semiotics; Translation theory and literary translation; gender and literature; literary and cultural theory

Dr David Vella
david_vance_vella@hotmail.com
Teaching and Research Interests: Literary theory and contemporary drama and fiction

Dr Daniel Xerri
daniel.xerri@um.edu.mt
Second language acquisition

Ms Abigail Zammit
abigail.a.zammit@um.edu.mt
Teaching and Research and Teaching Interests: Contemporary poetry and creative writing
List of Academics in other Universities Associated with the Department

Academics indicated on this list are included because they have served as External Examiners for the Department, or because they are members of the Advisory Board of *Countertext* (an academic journal housed in the Department, published by Edinburgh University Press), or because they lecture periodically in the Department.

Dr Neil Badmington (Cardiff University)
Prof. Catherine Belsey (Swansea University)
Dr Lucia Boldrini (Goldsmiths College)
Dr Ruben Borg (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Prof. Michael Burke (Roosevelt Academy, University of Utrecht)
Prof. Ron Carter (University of Nottingham)
Prof. Timothy Clark (Durham University)
Prof. Simon Critchley (The New School)
Prof. Patricia Duncker (Manchester University)
Dr Stefan Herbrechter (Coventry University)
Prof. Fiona Hughes (University of Essex)
Prof. Neil Lazarus (Warwick University)
Prof. Francesco Marroni (University of Pescara Chieti)
Prof. Giuseppe Mazzotta (Yale University)
Dr Laurent Milesi (Cardiff University)
Dr Anne O’Keeffe (University of Limerick)
Prof. Michael O’Neill (Durham University)
Prof. Jean-Michel Rabaté (University of Pennsylvania)
Prof. Nicholas Roe (University of St Andrews)
Prof. Stuart Sillars (University of Bergen)
Prof. Peter Stockwell (University of Nottingham)
Prof. Philip Tew (Brunel University)
Prof. Patricia Waugh (Durham University)
Prof. Nigel Wood (Loughborough University)

Departmental Office Holders for Undergraduate Matters

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<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Dr James Corby</td>
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<tr>
<td>First-Year Tutor</td>
<td>Prof. Stella Borg Barthet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second-Year Tutor</td>
<td>Ms Sarah Grech</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third-Year Tutor</td>
<td>Prof. Ivan Callus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor for BA General Students</td>
<td>Prof. Stella Borg Barthet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erasmus Coordinator</td>
<td>Prof. Stella Borg-Barthet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departmental Representatives on the Faculty’s Student Request Committee</td>
<td>Prof. Stella Borg-Barthet, Dr James Corby</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaison with DESA</td>
<td>Dr Giuliana Fenech</td>
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PART TWO
THE DEGREE IN ENGLISH
Study-Units on Offer in the Department of English

Units on offer on the undergraduate programme in 2014-2015 can be accessed through the online Course Finder.

Differences between the Honours and the General degree in English

An Honours student is an undergraduate who chooses to focus predominantly on English for his or her course. There is therefore a greater of specialisation in English on an Honours degree—though it must be said that specialisation only really starts to set in at postgraduate level, with MA courses.

A General student is an undergraduate who chooses to focus on another area conjointly with English in his or her course.

A student who chooses Honours will cover 26 ECTS in English in the first year, 46 ECTS in the second year and 60 ECTS in the third year. A student who chooses General will cover 26 ECTS in English in each year. All students follow the same programme in the first year.

Honours students write a dissertation in their final year.

Both Honours and General students will take synoptic study-units at the end of their third year, and both are subject to viva voce examinations (though Honours students are the more likely to be called for a viva). The differences in the structure of Honours and General examinations are explained in a different section in this Handbook (see Appendices 7 and 8).

Honours and General Programmes

The relevant programmes of study for English can be accessed through the online Course Finder.

Requirements to Proceed to Honours

Students wishing to take Honours in English are required to score an average of 65% in their English study-units in their first year. First-year students are therefore reminded of the importance of doing well in their studies if they wish to be eligible for Honours.

Despite this regulation, there is no suggestion—in University regulations or in practice—that students proceeding to General are to be considered as lower achievers, not least because students may choose to proceed to General even when having scored an average higher than 65% in their first-year study-units.

Which Study-Units Should You Choose?

A number of units in your programme are compulsory and eSIMS registers you on them automatically.
Other units—the electives and optionals—may be chosen partly on the basis of preference or in consultation with your prospective lecturers and/or Year Tutors.

**University of Malta Students Following Units in the Department of English but Who Are Not Students of the Department**

Students who fall in this category are welcome to read this Handbook—indeed, they are advised to do so.

The Department services courses in the following areas: Media and Knowledge Sciences; Law; Education; Theology.

**Erasmus Students Following Courses in the Department of English**

The Department warmly welcomes students who are here for a semester or for one academic year as part of an Erasmus exchange. Prof. Stella Borg Barthet, the Erasmus Coordinator, is available to extend help and advice to Erasmus students.

With some exceptions, most units offered by the Department are on offer to Erasmus students. Please consult the online list of study-units available to Erasmus students for 2014-2015.

Erasmus exchange students are expected to abide by all University of Malta and Department of English guidelines.

**Publication of Results**

Results of study-units are published on eSIMS within the dates indicated in the Assessment Guidelines. Students will receive an email through eSIMS, to indicate that results would have been published.

Any communication on results, of whatever nature, that takes place before that date is unofficial and not binding on the Department or the University.

No study-unit or dissertation results are placed on the Department of English noticeboard.

Degree classifications are published by the Registrar’s Office on eSIMS and on the Faculty of Arts notice board.

**The Degree in English: Award, Graduation and Classification**

On successful completion of the course, students will graduate in the November degree conferment ceremony. The degree is awarded in one of four classes: First, Second Upper, Second Lower, Third.
Grade Descriptors and Assessment Guidelines

Grade Descriptors and Assessment Guidelines are provided in Appendix 1 of this document.
PART THREE
GENERAL INFORMATION AND SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO BEAR IN MIND
Use of the University of Malta’s Libraries and Library Services

As a student reading English at University, your course is more text-intensive than most. A good deal of your time will be spent reading up on literature, linguistics, literary criticism, the History of Ideas and other areas central to your course. The Department assumes that you will be doing this. Accordingly it is active in co-organising orientation sessions in the Library and introductory session in the use of electronic databases, which complement the Library’s holdings with online access to academic journals and reference tools, MLA, JStor, Project Muse and ASP among them. You are encouraged to enrol on and attend these sessions, as they will have a significant and positive impact on your studies and the quality of your work.

Make sure you are using the University Library’s books and services discerningly and consistently. You will also want to pop into the Faculty of Arts Library on the top floor of the Old Humanities Building, which offers a pleasant and intimate environment in which to work. Make good use, too, of the Short Loan Section in the Library and the Reference Room—there are a number of very useful resources there.

If you feel that there are important books or journals which you would like to see but which are not available, please contact Dr Maria Frendo, the Department’s representative on such matters, who will be glad to help.

Attendance

All students in the Department of English are required to attend all scheduled lectures, seminars and tutorials as they appear in the semester timetable or as directed by lecturers. Failure to attend lectures may lead to disciplinary action. In certain cases, unauthorised absence may also mean that you will not be allowed to sit your exams.

Students are encouraged to attend events organised by the Department where local or visiting academics may be delivering talks. The Department is very active in this area and goes to a great deal of trouble in creating such opportunities. Your undergraduate education will be richer and more rounded if you participate in such events.

Consultation with Lecturers

Department of English lecturers—those who lecture part-time in the Department as well as those who are full-time members of the Department—have always tried their best to maximise their availability and approachability within the time constraints they face. They are ready to help you both during consultation meetings and in contact over email correspondence.

You may consult lecturers during their Consultation Hours (these are announced in lectures or indicated on the door to their respective office) or after having emailed to ask for an appointment.
Lecturers will quite often be ready to speak to you even outside consultation hours, but if they are otherwise occupied when you turn up in their office unannounced they will suggest an alternative time for meeting.

Consultation sessions should not normally exceed 15 minutes (except in meetings related to dissertation supervision).

**Email Contact with Lecturers and Email Etiquette**

You are welcome to email lecturers, but please take note of the following guidelines:

- Use your discretion on which matters warrant an email. A number of issues (for instance, registration on courses; administrative matters concerning eSIMS records; examination dates; Add/Drop forms, etc.) should in the first instance be referred to the Departmental secretary or the Faculty secretaries concerned. Lecturers are best placed to address academic rather than administrative concerns.
- Lecturers will do their best to answer your emails in good time. A “gentle reminder” where there has not been a reply may be sent, but please note that there may be some delay in replies at certain periods during the year—e.g. during the Christmas, Easter and summer recesses, or when the Department is holding viva voce examinations for undergraduates and/or postgraduates, or during attendance at academic conferences (both local and international).
- Pay attention to email etiquette. Be sure to always respond to a lecturer who has initiated contact on any matter concerning you (e.g. supervision of your dissertation). Use appropriate modes of address—for instance, emails starting with “Hi!” are not quite suitable.
- In correspondence with lecturers, remember that as Department of English students your writing may be scrutinised even in email correspondence. This is part of your training. Consequently, do not be put out if lecturers write back pointing out some error in your phrasing or asking you to rewrite your email before they can respond.

**Reading Week and Revision Week**

The Department schedules a *Reading Week* in the middle of each semester, with the exception of the first semester in first year. This reflects the fact that evidence of breadth of reading is an assessment criterion in the course. Accordingly, no lectures are held during Reading Week. Students during this period are expected to focus on coverage of primary and secondary texts, to read around the areas they are studying by following up leads in journals (the journal databases in the library are crucial in this) and to encounter further works by writers, critics and linguists whose work is relevant to the study-units concerned, and to making sure that they are able, both in tests and assignments, to write in a manner that is appropriately textured as far as in-depth knowledge of primary texts and broader awareness of intellectual contexts is concerned.

Reading Week is not a break—emphatically not. Students are reminded that the assumption is that they would have used Reading Week well, and that all assigned and recommended reading will have been covered comprehensively.
The Department feels very strongly that Reading Week is to be availed of in the best ways possible. Failure by students to do so may lead the Week being revoked across the undergraduate course. Consequently participation by students in other academic activities not related to what is envisaged here is to be referred to the Head of Department for authorisation. This includes activities related, for instance, to DESA events or symposium organisation. Similarly, no fieldwork is to be undertaken during Reading Week, as that will curtail the time available to the work envisaged as taking place during the Week.

Revision Week refers to the last week of each semester. Faculty of Arts guidelines lay down that during this week lecturers are not to present any new study-unit material, but to guide students in revision and—where sessions are held—to recapitulate on material covered. In some cases, lecturers may opt to hold consultation sessions throughout this week rather than to offer formal lecturing.

The Dissertation

All Honours students are required to write a dissertation in their third year. The dissertation is not a requirement of the General course.

Students will be required to submit a dissertation proposal in November (the deadline will be announced by the Head of Department). The proposal should carry a title and a subtitle, together with a description of between 300-500 words on the dissertation’s guiding idea, research questions, relevant background, preferred approach and structure.

The dissertation is to be submitted in the second semester of third year, by 4pm on the last working day in April. Three heat-bound copies are to be submitted. In addition, electronic copies are to be emailed to the dissertation tutor, to the Departmental secretary and to the Head of Department.

After the viva voce examination, and after any recommended revisions are carried out, two hard-bound copies are to be submitted to the Department, together with an electronic copy for archiving by the library. Graduation is conditional on this final submission.

Students writing a dissertation will be assigned a supervisor, or tutor, by the end of November of the third year of their studies, following a Departmental meeting held to examine all dissertation proposals.

Once the proposal has been approved, a student writing an undergraduate dissertation in the Department of English is entitled to five meetings of 30 minutes each between December and April. The meetings should normally take place after the submission of chapter drafts (the first meeting, of course, is excepted from this guideline).

Synoptic Study-Units

In the third year there are three special ‘synoptic’ study-units—one in Literary Studies, one in Cultural Criticism and one in Linguistics—that have been designed to provide students with more guidance and greater focus in their preparations for synoptic modes of conceptualisation. Each unit is assigned two hours of lectures weekly in the second semester of third year, and students—both Honours and General—will sit two exam papers in the June session. Further information is available in Appendix 4 and from lecturers throughout the academic year, but students may wish to note that a thematic focus has been assigned to each unit, as follows, and that preparatory reading will be assigned at various stages of the
academic year:

Literary Studies : Irony
Cultural Criticism : Contemporary Mythologies
Linguistics : Discourse

The Department of English has devoted a good deal of work to these units and looks forward to exploring these topics with final-year students, in a teaching environment that will be enlivened by ample seminar-style discussion as well as team teaching. Note also that each unit provides good preparation for postgraduate pitches of study, should that be of interest later on.

The Viva Voce Examination

Formal or business dress is not required for a viva voce examination, but students generally feel that being turned out reasonably smartly helps their confidence.

All BA (Hons) and BA students may be called for a viva voce examination. The Board is composed of the Head of Department as Chair, members of the Department, and a visiting External Examiner, who would be an eminent Professor in a Department of English in a UK university. Questions will not normally exceed 20 minutes and will focus on two topics: your scripts in the synoptic study-units and your dissertation.

Style Sheet: Annotation and Referencing Conventions

A style sheet is a handbook that explains which conventions in writing, quoting and referencing ought to be followed in the preparation of assignments and dissertations.

The Department of English has two preferred style sheets.

The style sheet to be used for assignments and dissertations in literature, literary criticism and theory, and cultural criticism is that set in the MHRA Style Guide. This is available for download at http://www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml

For assignments and dissertations in Linguistics, referencing should follow the Author-Date system.

An Appendix is provided with this Handbook setting out further guidelines on the documentation of online sources (see Appendix 5).

International or Erasmus students who may be accustomed to some other established system of referencing—for instance, that of the Modern Languages Association (MLA)—may use that following prior approval by the lecturer of the study-unit concerned.
Examinations

The Department makes allowance for the fact that some poise and control in writing is lost in the pressure of a test or examination. You are reminded, however, that as students of English high levels of accuracy, cohesive argumentation and stylishness is expected—these are, indeed, assessment criteria.

You will be given assistance in how to approach tests and examinations in the Writing Seminars run each year.

The use of dictionaries is not allowed in any Department of English test or examination.

Assignments

Undergraduate assignments should typically be 3500 words but should not be shorter than 1500 words and not longer than 3500 words. This word count does not include the List of Works Cited.

Assignments should be accompanied by a declaration at the front confirming that the work is original and that all quoted phrasing has been suitably acknowledged in the referencing. Appendix 3 provides the cover sheet required.

On certain study-units, an electronic as well as a hard copy of your assignment should be submitted. In such cases, the email address to which the copy should be sent will be indicated by the lecturer concerned.

Lecturers in each unit assessed by assignment will guide you in the academic expectations pertaining to your essay or written task.

Fieldwork

In some study-units, particularly pertaining to Linguistics but also potentially in areas related to Cultural Criticism or Professional Skills, etc, you will be asked to conduct fieldwork.

This fieldwork is generally to be conducted in periods approved by the lecturer of the study-unit and by the Head of Department.

The Department recognises that in some instances the fieldwork may lead to some awkward situations with members of the public or people working in certain professional fields. For this reason, seek advice from your lecturer about how to sensitively handle awkward situations that may arise during your data collection.

Any concerns about the fieldwork should be communicated in the first instance to the lecturer concerned and subsequently, if and as appropriate, to the Year Tutor or Head of Department.
Presentations

In some study-units across all the 6 areas of the course catalogue (Literature, Linguistics, English Language Studies, Literary Criticism and Theory, Cultural Criticism, Professional Skills) you will be asked to prepare and deliver presentations: talks, quite possibly based on reading, surveys, and/or the use of presentation software, to be given to your course mates and lecturer. These are excellent opportunities for training in public speaking and in ordered presentation of your material, and you should make best use of them in your undergraduate years.

Return of Assignments

Assignments will be returned to you after the publication of results.

The Department reserves the right to dispose of assignments that are not collected within three months of the publication of results.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism—passing off as your own writing which is not in fact yours—is one of the most serious breaches of academic discipline that exists. The Department is very strict in its plagiarism policy. Lecturers will fail work which is plagiarised and/or may refer the student to the Department’s or the University’s disciplinary procedures. Please remember that the penalties for plagiarism are harsh.

The Department has a very simple rule which should ensure that you never run the risk of plagiarism when writing assignments and dissertations. It is this one: any phrase or longer formulation quoted from a book, article, newspaper, website, recording, film, TV or radio programme or other source—even if it is only a two-word phrase—should be acknowledged and referenced in a footnote (or endnote) and in the List of Works Cited.

Use of Laptops, Tablets and Smart Devices in Lectures

Although the Department does not discourage the use of laptops, tablets and smart devices in lectures, it reserves the right to prohibit these in study-units where it is felt they have been used inappropriately or in a manner that distracts or disrespects lecturing staff and/or other students.

If a lecturer asks you to stop using a laptop or other device, please do so immediately. If it happens, it is a sure sign that you have abused your lecturer’s trust and very possibly that of your fellow students as well. Indeed, if using a laptop or other device, do ensure that this does not in any way bother or distract students around you. Make sure that screen brightness is adjusted and that keying noise is kept to a minimum.

At this level, your attention and critical assimilation of material is what is looked for. Note taking should not be approached as a transcription exercise, so make sure that your note taking skills are honed to the levels expected at University.
Behaviour during Lectures

It hardly needs to be said, but student conversation is to be avoided at all times during a lecture. Please maintain standards of courtesy toward your lecturers and fellow students.

Recording of Lectures, Seminars, Tutorials, Consultation Meetings

Recording of lectures, seminars, tutorials or consultation meetings without prior permission is strictly forbidden.

International Travel during Semesters

Absence abroad during semesters should only be undertaken with the permission of the Head of Department.

A Final But Vital Note: Your Handling of the English Language

If you are reading this Handbook, it is because you wish to graduate in English. Think of this in terms of becoming a professional in English. Those working in other areas and fields will look to you to set the benchmarks in appropriate English-language use across a variety of contexts. They will rightly expect high standards in your writing and speaking, and will be understandably put out if your proficiency, accuracy and style leave anything to be desired. Be prepared to carry this fastidiousness to all aspects of your writing—from assignments to examinations, from dissertations to the preparation of a curriculum vitae, from job applications to your emails and your participation in social media.

The Department emphasises the importance of its students using appropriate handling of grammar, usage and style. This has a number of implications. For instance, you do not get any extra marks for writing accurately or effectively—that is expected of English students—but you will lose marks if you don’t. Additionally, the higher grades are not achievable in assignments and dissertations where writing is below par. Please do not expect a grade higher than a C or C+—if that—if you are not writing with consistent accuracy and in an acceptable style. In other words, while noting that competent understanding of conceptuality and good expression typically accompany each other, the Department emphasises that evidence of the former in tests, assignments, presentations and dissertations will not be allowed to compensate for poor expression where evidence of the latter cannot be ignored.

If you have any misgivings about this and would like assistance with aspects of your writing, please contact any lecturer in the Department or Dr Odette Vassallo (the Director of the Centre for English-Language Proficiency) for further guidance.
APPENDIX 1
GRADE DESCRIPTORS AND ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES
APPENDIX 1
GRADE DESCRIPTORS AND ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

Note: In the following descriptors, the word ‘criteria’ refers to considerations indicated in the descriptor for the ‘A’ Grade.

A (80-95%)
Excellent work throughout: a benchmark. Work awarded an ‘A’ grade will show evidence of some or all of the following: solid and expansive study, competent and incisive understanding of content and conceptuality, unblemished writing, cogent and well-balanced structure, controlled and poised style, critical thinking and acumen, accuracy and flair in expression, rigour in research and/or data collection, an ability to pitch things on the ‘meta’ plane, historically textured thinking.

In exceptional circumstances and where all these factors are present to an impressive degree, an A+ (96-100%) may be awarded, but these instances are very rare.

B+ (75-79%)
A very good performance, without quite being a point of reference in the same way that an ‘A’ assignment would be. Good levels of breadth and depth and good handling of conceptuality and content. Solid on all criteria and the work is well presented, though perhaps marginally lacking or inconsistent where flair, originality, incisiveness and cogency of structure are concerned. Writing skills are of a very high order.

B (70-74%)
A good performance: above average. Solid on most of the criteria, but with some evidence of a need for deeper or broader analysis, especially when it comes to reflective thought, which may be only hesitantly present. Shows more than adequate understanding and appreciation of the main conceptual issues, but may have some gaps in the criteria indicated above, as well as some slight, pardonable errors.

C+ (65-69%)
An average performance: solid and shows adequate understanding of the main issues, but some gaps and lacks start to become noticeable, especially in accuracy and style of expression and in the range and depth with which content, conceptuality and reflectiveness are handled. May also show some inaccuracies in factual areas and suggest the need for more focused study.

C (60-65%)
An average performance, but with some errors which would require attention in future work. Adequate on most of the crucial criteria, but there is evidence of harder study and effort needed and of greater importance to be given to mastering detail and nuances and to improving accuracy, expression and style. An effort should also be made toward deeper and broader preparation and reflectiveness.

D+ (50-55%)
Below average. Does little more than enough to pass and shows incomplete mastery of content and conceptuality, with serious shortcomings in most of the criteria indicated above. Writing skills are an issue.
D (45-49%)
Below average. Does just enough to pass—more solid studying would be a good place to start from when attempting improvement, and attention should also be given to writing skills. Greater pride in one’s work expected, as there may be evidence of careless and insufficient engagement with the task in hand.

F (0-44%)
Below par on every one of the crucial criteria. Writing skills are especially poor, and there are very serious shortcomings in comprehension of content and in engagement with the most vital aspects of the conceptuality in question. The work handed in may also show signs of incompleteness.
APPENDIX 2
THE CLASSIFICATION
APPENDIX 2
THE CLASSIFICATION

The Classification refers to whether an undergraduate degree is awarded in the First Class, Second Class Upper, Second Class Lower or Third Class categories.

The demarcation for the Classes is determined on the basis of a final mark, as follows:

80% and above : First Class
70-79% : Second Class Upper
55-69% : Second Class Lower
45-54% : Third Class

For Honours Students, the final mark is calculated as follows (General students should check with the Faculty Office on how the mark for a General degree is calculated):

10% on the basis of first-year performance
25% on the basis of second-year performance
25% on the basis of third-year performance in the study-units
40% on the basis of the performance in the dissertation and synoptic papers.

In borderline cases, the higher class may be awarded at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, subject to the External Examiner’s endorsement and subject also to a good and sound performance in the viva voce examination.
APPENDIX 3
ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET
ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

Student Name and Surname ____________________________________________

I.D. Number (or Passport or Registration Number)_________________________

Email Address _______________________________________________________

Study-Unit Code and Title _____________________________________________

Name of Lecturer _____________________________________________________

Assignment Title _____________________________________________________

Number of Words _____________________________________________________

I confirm that all material presented in this assignment is original and has not been presented, in part or in whole, for any other course or study-unit. All material that is not my own has been appropriately acknowledged according to the conventions of the style sheet guidelines set by __________________________. The material is acknowledged in the footnotes and the List of Works Cited.

I understand that accurate and effective use of English is an assessment criterion in the assignment, as is evidence of broader reading.

An electronic copy of this assignment has been emailed to this address:

_____________________________________

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
APPENDIX 4
SPECIMEN PAPERS, +SYNOPTIC STUDY-UNITS
Synoptic Paper I : Ideas and Concepts

Time: Three hours

Choose one question from each section.

Literature and Literary Theory
Theme: Irony

Question 1:
‘In the end, and after the effect of its cleverness and invention has receded, nobody really likes irony. People don’t really know where they stand with irony, not to mention that irony is not actually very nice, when all is said and done.’ Discuss this statement with reference to what writers, critics and philosophers have said about irony.

Question 2:
Is the opposite of irony earnestness? Discuss.

Question 3:
Discuss some of the affinities and distinctions between irony and one of the following:
- wit
- sarcasm
- satire
- detachment
- engagement.

Language and Linguistics
Theme: [Discourse]

Specimen questions will be provided at a later date.

Culture and Media
Theme: Culture, Media and Contemporary Mythologies

Question 1
‘After Barthes, mythologies will never be the same again.’ Discuss.

Question 2
‘Never mind the media’s construction of contemporary mythologies; what we should be looking at is contemporary mythologies about the media.’ Discuss.

Question 3
‘It is impossible to understand cultural criticism without appreciating how powerful the mythology of everyday life is.’ Discuss.
Synoptic Paper II: Readings, Interpretations, Applications

Time: Three hours

Choose one question from each section

Literature and Literary Theory
Theme: Irony

Question 1
Ironic is part of the linguistic fabric of English literature. It is hard to conceive of the work of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Swift or Austen without it. But, as is clear in Hardy’s Life’s Little Ironies and in so many other texts besides, English literature has a keen sense of situational irony as well. Discuss with examples.

Question 2
‘Ironic makes the reader its accomplice.’ Discuss with examples.

Question 3
Discuss the importance of techniques of ‘ironic revisitation’ in postwar literature.

Language and Linguistics
Theme: [Discourse]

Specimen questions will be provided at a later date.

Culture and Media
Theme: Culture, Media and Contemporary Mythologies

Question 1
‘Mythologies—ancient and modern—and the new media: they’re just made for each other.’ Discuss with examples.

Question 2
Using examples, examine how contemporary culture and media have reworked the idea of the redemptive hero.

Question 3
‘The oldest myth of all: the battle between good and evil. Contemporary culture and media can’t get away from that one.’ Discuss.
APPENDIX 5
DOCUMENTING ONLINE SOURCES
APPENDIX 5
DOCUMENTING ONLINE SOURCES

This document, prepared by the Department of English for the benefit of students seeking guidance on referencing of online and electronic sources in their assignments and dissertations, is an extension to the MHRA Style Guide, 2nd Edition. Its recommendations should be considered as a replacement for section 11.2.10 “Online Publications”. The document adapts MLA guidelines on online citations (MLA Style Manual 3rd Edition) to MHRA style.

General

One major difference from MHRA guidelines being recommended here is that the URL of a Web source should only be provided in cases where, in its absence, the reader would be unable to locate the source. If there is enough information to help with locating the source, then the URL should not be included. URLs tend to be long, complex and subject to change. Typing them into a browser is difficult and often leads to mistakes.

Information relating to online sources should be presented in the following order:

1. Name of author/compiler/director/editor/translator of the work
2. Title of work (italicised if independent; in roman type and quotation marks if part of a larger work). If the work is untitled, refer to the genre of the work (e.g. Home page, Introduction, Online Posting).
3. Title of the overall Website (italicised) if distinct from item 2.
4. Version or edition
5. Publisher or sponsor of the site; if unavailable, use N.p.
6. Date of publication (day, month, and year, if available; n.d. if unavailable)
7. In footnotes also include, if available, page or paragraph number.
8. Medium of publication (Web)
9. Date of access (day, month, and year)

If some of the information is unavailable, cite what is available. You may have to be flexible in citing online sources. What is important is that there is consistency within the system you are adopting and that readers can locate the sources you are using.

A Work Cited Only on the Web

Footnote Examples


**Bibliographic Entry Examples**


**A Work on the Web Cited with Print Publication Data**

If you are citing a work that has also appeared in print, it may be important to include the original bibliographic data for the print publication. This may be the case, for example, when a book is scanned and included in an online archive.

In such cases, include all the information you would include in documenting a print source, but add the following information at the end:

1. Title of the database or Website (italicised)
2. Medium of publication consulted (Web)
3. Date of access

**Footnote Example**


**Bibliographic Entry Example**


**Scholarly Journals Available Only Online**

For scholarly journals which are published only online, follow the documenting guidelines for print, but add the following information at the end:

1. Medium of publication (Web)
2. Date of access

Online journals may sometimes not include page numbers. In such cases, you may use *(n. pag)* or refer to paragraph number, if available.

**Footnote Example**

A Work on the Web Cited with Publication Data for another Medium besides Print

When citing a source online that is also available in another medium (but not in print)—for example, a digitised version of a film on the Web—including the details that you would use in citing the original but add the following at the end of your entry:

1. Title of database or Website (italicised)
2. Medium of publication consulted (Web)
3. Date of access

Bibliographic Entry Example