Available degree options

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Previous knowledge of subject required? Yes, English

You can study English, Scottish, Irish and American literature, as well as courses in prose, verse, drama and film. You will also consider the ideas, human values and history behind this broad variety of texts.

- The School of English is ranked first in the Guardian University Guide 2018 and second in the Complete University Guide 2018.
- We offer a generous range of options covering all periods of literary writing in English from Anglo-Saxon times to the present.
- Staff include winners of the Queen's Gold Medal, the Forward Prize, the Whitbread Prize, the T S Eliot Prize, the Jerwood Fiction Prize, the Saltire Scottish Book of the Year Award, the Somerset Maugham Award, and two Fellows of the British Academy.
- Varied programme of visiting speakers, giving students the chance to discuss literature and criticism with leading modern writers, and to hear contemporary writers discuss set texts on undergraduate courses.
- Research-led teaching throughout the curriculum, which means from your first day you will be taught by leading experts.

What will I study?
St Andrews has a long and illustrious history of teaching literature in English. The School combines expertise in research with a dedication to teaching in a caring and friendly environment. Special research strengths include mediaeval language and literature, the Renaissance, the romantic and modern periods, Scottish literature, creative writing, and women's writing.

Studying English develops techniques that enable you to read with close attention and to consider the ideas, human values, and historical forces that have helped to form our literature. You will have the opportunity to read, to discuss, and to reflect with clarity on a wide variety of texts and develop analytical, descriptive, and evaluative skills. You will learn to communicate more fluently, lucidly, economically, and persuasively. These skills are both intrinsically enriching and eminently transferable.

First year
A third of your time will be taken up by English classes. In these you will focus respectively on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, and literature from 1680 to 1830. You will explore texts in prose and verse, ranging from Wuthering Heights and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde to contemporary Scottish writing. Emphasis is on practical criticism, close reading and the importance of literary and historical contexts. You will also cover, among other works, Gulliver’s Travels, Frankenstein, Wordsworth and Coleridge’s Lyrical Ballads, and look at travel, colonialism, the Gothic and the Romantic.

The rest of your time will be spent studying at least two other subjects, and there is a wide range from which you can choose.

Entry requirements
We consider all aspects of every application, including context, equivalent qualifications and the Personal Statement. Offers may be higher or lower than the grades stated here. See also page 169.

Qualifications must include English, English Language, English Literature or Drama.

SQA Highers: AAAB
GCE A-Levels: AAA
International Baccalaureate Points: 38, including HL6 in English.

“English really appeals to me as a subject because there is never a right answer; literature is open to interpretation, and because of this it is a subject that encourages student participation and encourages us to develop our own ideas and think for ourselves. I value the small class sizes at St Andrews which allows students to feel more comfortable to share ideas and grow in the confidence to do this.”

Hanna (St Helier, Jersey)
English

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/subjects/english
english@st-andrews.ac.uk

Second year
You will focus on literature from the mediaeval and Renaissance periods, and on drama and performance. You will be introduced to the earliest literature in English and the language in which it is composed. The mediaeval element draws on editions prepared by scholars in the School of English, designed to make early texts readily accessible. The Renaissance element ranges across various authors and genres, which may include Donne's Songs and Sonnets and Milton's Paradise Lost. The course on drama concentrates on the special characteristics of drama as an art form that crosses the boundaries of written text and public performance. A wide range of plays are covered, from the Renaissance to the present, including figures like William Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde and Gregory Burke.

Third and fourth years (Honours)
There is an exciting range of around 45 different courses from which to choose, and options may include Chaucer, Scottish Literature, Jane Austen, TS Eliot, creative writing, Shakespeare and film, Beowulf and a wide variety of other topics and approaches to the study of literature written in English. Single Honours students normally take eight courses in the two Honours years. You must include at least one on mediaeval literature, one on early modern literature and one other on eighteenth-century, Romantic or nineteenth-century literature. Joint Honours students normally take four courses in English (including one on pre-twentieth-century literature), and four in another subject. The dissertation, which is compulsory for Single Honours students, allows you to write an extended essay on a literary topic of your own choice.

Several courses involve creative coursework which – as well as the traditional essay – may involve literary journal keeping, writing a short play in its entirety, or even the opportunity to try a bit of mediaeval forgery. We aim to provide a range of topics and approaches that allow you to follow your own interests, whether towards specialising in particular authors or periods, or towards wide-ranging exploration in a variety of areas.

Study abroad
Students on English programmes participate in the University-wide St Andrews Abroad programme. You may also have the opportunity to participate in our School Abroad exchange programme. For information about study abroad options, please see: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study-abroad

Careers
A degree in English from St Andrews will open doors to a large and varied number of possible careers – from teaching, to writing, journalism, editing and performing and from public policy to finance. A degree in English from our University demonstrates to employers that you are a good writer, with the ability to craft and edit prose in English, that you are able to absorb and process information, that you are good at conducting research, that you are good at verbal and written communication, and that you have high level analytic skills. These are skills that are invaluable in most jobs.

Recent graduates have taken up internships with the United Nations, become writers and editors for Penguin Books, Harper Collins, The Times, Country Life magazine, and The Field magazine. Some have gone into sales, for example Waterstones, WH Smith. Others work for charitable organisations like Save the Children and in public policy (Scottish Executive, British Council) or in arts administration (the Barbican Centre, Sotheby’s), or the financial sector – working for companies like KPMG and Santander.

Postgraduate study is a popular choice for many of our graduates with a large range of Masters and PhD programmes available in English literature and creative writing. Within St Andrews these include period-specific Masters programmes (such as Romantic/Victorian Literature, or Modern and Contemporary Literature and Culture) or thematic programmes (such as Women, Writing and Gender or Postcolonial and World Literatures). We also have specialist MLitt and MFA programmes in Creative Writing and Playwriting and Screenwriting.

Careers

It is the passion and enthusiasm of the lecturers that makes English here great. Everyone is extremely encouraging and willing to offer additional assistance. There are weekly writing labs that are open to every English student. These sessions focus on a specific topic each week, with the aim of helping everyone improve their essay writing skills.

Euan (Perth & Kinross, Scotland)