



WMC LITERATURE WEEKENDS

Continuing a long tradition of Literature weekends, WMC Literature draws people from far and wide for weekends devoted to in-depth discussion and study of books and plays, under the guidance of a tutor.

A typical weekend will focus on one or two books which we have read in advance. The tutor brings information about authors, context and themes, and a tutor-led discussion follows. Each weekend may be attended as a stand-alone course.

The course begins late on Saturday afternoon with tea and biscuits and concludes with Sunday lunch. A bar is available on Saturday evening when a film relevant to the course may be shown.

We meet either at Shallowford House, near Stafford or Wistaston Hall near Crewe. Both are pleasant locations with en suite bedrooms and are easily accessible by road or train.

2016-2017 PROGRAMME

CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S WRITING

22nd – 23rd October 2016 at Wistaston Hall

Tutor: **Dr Nick Bentley**

- Ali Smith *How to Be Both* (Penguin, 2014)
- Raving Beauties (eds.) *Hallelujah for 50ft Women* (Bloodaxe, 2015)

During this weekend we will look at two recent works that showcase contemporary women's writing. Ali Smith's experimental novel *How to Be Both* juxtaposes two time periods – the present and fifteenth-century Italy – and interweaves a dual narrative that explores topics ranging from gender identity and sexuality to the emotive power of art. *Hallelujah for 50ft Women* is a collection of poems that explores cultural representations of women. It includes poems that are by turn political, poignant, thought-provoking, shocking, and incredibly funny.

COURTSHIP AND CONDUCT: BURNEY AND AUSTEN

26th – 27th November 2016 at Shallowford House

Tutor: **Dr Nick Seager**

- Jane Austen *Pride and Prejudice*
- Frances Burney *Evelina*

This weekend we will compare two important novelists of manners, Burney and Austen. We'll consider ways in which their novels *Evelina* (1778) and *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) respond to changing conceptions of society and gender, help construct new rules for propriety and courtship, and develop innovative techniques for representing consciousness and desire in fiction at a time when the novel was being established as a major genre.

TELEVISION DRAMA – A SERIOUS ART GENRE?

7th – 8th January 2017 at Shallowford House

Tutor: **Dr Derek Tatton**

- *The Gathering Storm* (2002) with Albert Finney and Vanessa Redgrave
- *Into the Storm* (2009) with Brendan Gleeson and Janet McTeer
- *Churchill's Secret* (2016) with Michael Gambon and Lindsay Duncan

We will engage with the status of TV drama, arguing the case that, at its best, the genre should be valued and reviewed in the same way as theatre, drama and film. We will take two main examples. Starting with comedy, we will view extracts from *Dad's Army*, and work from Raymond Williams' contemporary reviews in *The Listener*, which placed the series as a comic drama of enduring significance. A similar approach will then be made to the three

biographical TV film dramas on Winston Churchill, all available on DVD. We will discuss extracts from two of them; the other will be shown in full late Saturday evening for discussion on Sunday morning.

IRISH PROSE

11th – 12th February 2017 at Wistaston Hall

Tutor: **Dr Jerome de Groot**

- Colm Tóibín *Nora Webster*
- Anne Enright (ed.) *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story*

This weekend looks at contemporary Irish prose, particularly the work of Colm Tóibín (*Nora Webster*) and short-stories from Anne Enright (ed.), *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story*.

HENRY JAMES: RELATIONSHIPS AND ROMANCE

4th – 5th March 2017 at Wistaston Hall

Tutor: **Dr Kate Walchester**

- Henry James *Portrait of a Lady* (1881)
- Henry James *The Aspern Papers* (1888) Novella

In *Portrait of a Lady* we will consider Henry James's account of meetings between the different consciousness of America and Europe, as told through the story of a travelling American beauty and the characterisation of the men she encounters. Brought to Britain by her aunt, Isabel Archer is faced with complex decisions about her future and a number of proposals of marriage. In contrast *The Aspern Papers*, set in Venice, explores questions about who should have access to and control of the private romance of a public figure.

BRONTË MYTHS

8th – 9th April 2017 at Shallowford House

Tutor: **Dr Amber Regis**

- Elizabeth Gaskell *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. by Elisabeth Jay (Penguin, 1997). Recommended because it reproduces the controversial first edition.
- Polly Teale, *Brontë* (Nick Hern, 2005) Drama

Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* has been instrumental in shaping the posthumous legacies of the Brontë family. For contemporaries the book's terror lay in its public exposure of private lives. But for subsequent readers, the Brontës' personal histories have been as fascinating and enthralling as their poetry and fiction. This weekend will explore Gaskell's biography and its foundational 'myths' of the Brontës' lives – its revelations and omissions, reception and controversies. We will also explore the legacy of Gaskell's biography in contemporary representations of the Brontës on stage.

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THE TUTORS

Dr Nick Bentley is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Keele University. His research interests include post-war British fiction, postcolonial writing and literary theory. He is author of *Martin Amis; Contemporary British Fiction; Radical Fictions: The English Novel in the 1950s*; and editor of *British Fiction of the 1990s*, and co-editor of *The 2000s: A Decade of Contemporary British Fiction*. He is currently working on a guide to the literary criticism of contemporary British fiction, and a book on the representation of youth subcultures in post-war and contemporary British fiction.

Dr Nick Seager is Lecturer in English at Keele University. He works on literature from 1660 to 1830 and has published essays on Bunyan, Defoe, Swift, Richardson, and Goldsmith. He is the author of *The Rise of the Novel: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism*. Currently he is working on a book called *Daniel Defoe and the History of Fictional Form* and an edition of Samuel Johnson's *Life of Mr. Richard Savage*.

Dr Derek Tatton has taught adult courses for the WEA, Cambridge, Keele and the OU; was Warden/Principal at Wedgwood Memorial College from 1979, organising and teaching WEA/Keele Tutorial Literature weekends until his retirement. Since then, he has continued a similar involvement as Administrator of the Raymond Williams Foundation.

Dr Jerome de Groot teaches English Literature at the University of Manchester. He works on the 17th Century and modern British fiction. He is the author of *Royalist Identities* (2004), *Consuming History* (2008) and *The Historical Novel* (2009).

Dr Kate Walchester lectures at Liverpool John Moores University. She is author of ‘*Our Own Fair Italy*’: *Nineteenth Century Women’s Travel Writing and Italy 1800-1844* and *Gamle Norge: Nineteenth Century British Women Travellers and Norway*, as well as a number of essays on travel writing and nineteenth-century women’s writing for journals such as *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* and *The Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies*. She is currently writing a monograph about nineteenth-century travelling servants.

Dr Amber Regis is a Lecturer in Nineteenth-Century Literature at the University of Sheffield. She has particular research interests in life-writing, and has published work on John Addington Symonds, Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West.

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PAYMENT

Residential rate: £100 – includes tuition and full board.

Non-residential rate: £78 – includes tuition and all meals except breakfast.

Deposit: £30 per weekend, non-returnable. Balance due 4 weeks in advance.

DEPOSITS DUE

By 1st September for October and November weekends.

By 26th November for January and February weekends

By 31st January for March and April weekends.

Late bookings welcome if there is space.

LOCATIONS

Shallowford House is in a pleasant rural location, 5 miles from Stafford and 3 miles from Junction 14 on the M6. (Shallowford House, Shallowford, Stone, ST15 0NZ)

Wistaston Hall is in a leafy suburb, between Crewe and Nantwich, 2 miles from the station and 8 miles from Junct. 16 on the M6. (Wistaston Hall 89 Broughton Lane, Crewe CW2 8JS)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Further information on road routes and taxi-sharing for train travellers is available and will be sent when you enrol. If you want to ask anything about the courses or locations, contact Maggie Washington, phone: 01538 751848, e-mail: chris.washington@btinternet.com

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BOOKING FORM BELOW

WMC Literature — Booking form

TITLE: _____ NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE: _____ PHONE NO: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Emergency contact during your stay: _____

I enclose :

	Deposit	Full fee	Deposit due by
22-23 October 2016	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 st Sept.
26-27 November 2016	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 st Sept.
7-8 January 2017	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26 th Nov.
11-12 February 2017	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26 th Nov.
4-5 March 2017	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	31 st Jan.
8-9 April 2017	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	31 st Jan.

TOTAL ENCLOSED £ _____

Balances are due four weeks in advance.

Late bookings are welcome if there is space.

Please make your cheque payable to: **Barlaston Lit Group**. To pay online, send an e-mail requesting bank details to: jeanlowthian@tiscali.co.uk

Accommodation:

Single room

Twin room sharing with _____

Non-resident

Please state any dietary requests or special needs:-

SEND TO: Jean Lowthian, 33 Berkeley Vale Park, Berkeley, Glos. GL13 9TG