

Paths of Study in English

The following ‘pathways’ are ways of finding links among the courses offered in English and related disciplines. These particular paths are articulated in ways that respond to the strengths of the English Programme at Canterbury and to the current state of the discipline of English studies. By examining the pathways outlined here, you will get some ideas about the relations among our courses and how you might sensibly move from one to another.

These pathways do not describe a prerequisite structure, only some useful links among courses. Students majoring in English are not required to choose and stick to any particular pathway. You may well come up with your own ‘pathway’. What you are required to do is to choose your courses thoughtfully in a way that makes some kind of coherent sense and to consult the Programme Coordinator, Undergraduate Coordinator and other relevant staff as you make these choices.

Academic and Nonfiction Writing Pathway

Whatever your plans for the future, the ability to write clearly, concisely and persuasively will be a huge benefit. Writing well entails finding things out, organising your thoughts, and communicating effectively – so in learning to write well you simultaneously learn to think well. For your academic studies, for most workplaces, for specialised vocations, and for a great many everyday situations, clarity of thought and expression is the most valuable of skills.

In turn, a focus on nonfiction writing also means exploring different sorts of texts and the tactics writers pursue within the “literatures of fact” that shape our understanding of the world. Nonfiction genres – including speculative essays, travel-writing, popular science writing and biography – have developed over many centuries to influence our thoughts on identity, place and knowledge itself.

Courses in this Pathway

ENGL 117 Writing the Academic Essay

ENGL 201 The Essay and Beyond: Traditions and Practice in Non-fiction Writing (new in 2011)

Compatible Courses

ENGL 102 Introduction to English

Children’s Literature Pathway

Long before J. K. Rowling wrote *Harry Potter*, children’s literature has been an enormously popular area of academic study and research internationally. Courses in the subject number among the most selected choices for undergraduates in Australasia. Now that the university has welcomed a host of non-traditional fields of study into its programme, it hardly seems strange to be reading about *The Narnia Chronicles* for a tutorial, or writing an essay on Melvin Burgess’s book for teenagers, *Junk*. Children’s literature has clearly come of age as an academic discipline. As rigorous as any other, its appeal for students lies in the opportunity to critically study the texts that they may have enjoyed as children themselves, as

well as understanding how these same texts can illuminate the constantly changing conception of childhood. For those wishing to acquire a broad knowledge of this growing field, we have developed a pathway whereby students can take a range of courses from 100-level to Honours.

Studies in children's literature will be of interest to those thinking about teaching to all levels, and to people interested in further training in librarianship or museum studies or in art history and archive work. Cultural studies, psychology, sociology and education all address the culture of the child, and their programmes can be enhanced with a selection of papers from this pathway. English majors should seriously consider including children's literature in their degree: it is challenging enough to address the more serious questions about reading; equally, it reminds us that the pleasures of the text first began with those of childhood.

Courses in this Pathway

ENGL 115 Childhood in Children's Literature

ENGL 213 Children's Classics: Popular Children's Texts and their Representations on Film

ENGL 313 Cultures of the Supernatural

Compatible Courses

ENGL 105 New Zealand Literature 1

ENGL 117 Writing the Academic Essay

ENGL 118 Creative Writing: Skills, Techniques and Strategies

ENGL 201 The Essay and Beyond: Traditions and Practice in Non-fiction Writing (new in 2011)

ENGL 220 Creative Writing: Short Fiction

Creative Writing Pathway

Within the English Programme at the University of Canterbury, Creative Writing is being developed as an academic discipline and subject of study and practice that is strongly complementary to the formal study of literature, criticism, literary theory, cultural studies and linguistics. Within universities around the world Creative Writing is now considered an important if not essential tool in approaching individual texts, and in gaining a greater understanding and appreciation of textual and cultural activity.

Creative Writing, as a discipline, is also an important component within a wide range of prospective careers as it develops the student's skills in analysis and expression. The core elements of Creative Writing – writing, interpretation and analysis; the ability to look at the world from different perspectives; the ability to articulate emotions and ideas clearly and forcefully; and the skills of drafting and editing – are valuable in every profession.

Creative writing can lead to jobs in publishing (writers, editors, book publishers), performance (drama, radio and television broadcasts), motion pictures (playwrights, screenplay writers,) advertising, teaching, communications, journalism, and arts administration. It can also prepare students for graduate and professional work in law and business or government work as policy writers and advisors. There is also much scope for creative writing in such areas as online publications, web design and editing. Its potential applications cover a wide and ever-growing field, both academically and outside the University. In addition, postgraduate work in Creative Writing is now available through the recently introduced MFA (Creative Writing) degree, the first of its kind in New Zealand.

Courses in this Pathway

ENGL 118 Creative Writing: Skills, Techniques and Strategies
ENGL 220 Creative Writing: Short Fiction

Compatible Courses

ENGL102 Introduction to English
ENGL 105 New Zealand Literature 1
ENGL 109 American Literature
ENGL 117 Writing the Academic Essay
ENGL 201 The Essay and Beyond: Traditions and Practice in Non-fiction Writing (new in 2011)
ENGL 209 Australian Literature
ENGL 210 New Zealand Literature 2
ENGL 236 Contemporary American Literature
ENGL 237 Hardboiled LA: Los Angeles in Literature and Film
ENGL 304 Drama: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Critical Theory and Cultural Studies Pathway

By definition, critical theory and cultural studies cannot be confined within traditional subject boundaries. Rather, these are forms of analysis that occur between disciplines, bringing together many different ways of thinking about the manifestations of culture. Within the English Programme at Canterbury, courses contributing to this path of study focus on those aspects of critical theory and cultural studies that have special relevance for the exploration of written, visual and performance texts: questions of taste and value, popular and elite culture; issues of gender and sexuality; the working-out and display of identity, conflict and exchange; the shifting relationships between human societies, animals and the environment; the social, political and economic pressures that shape texts and their reception.

Students completing these courses emerge with a versatile conceptual vocabulary and a skill-set that enables them to analyse a diverse range of cultural phenomena in depth. A degree including courses in critical theory and cultural studies will be of particular use to students intending to pursue careers in journalism and other kinds of writing, broadcasting, film production, policy analysis, politics and the arts.

Courses in this Pathway

ENGL 132 Cultural Studies: Reading Culture
ENGL 232 Cultural Studies: Cultural Politics/Cultural Activism
ENGL 243 From Bambi to Kong: The Animal in American Popular Culture
ENGL 249 American Science Fictions and Intelligent Technologies
ENGL 313 Cultures of the Supernatural
ENGL 348 Crime and Punishment in American Popular Culture

Compatible Courses

ENGL 109 American Literature
ENGL 117 Writing the Academic Essay
ENGL 201 The Essay and Beyond: Traditions and Practice in Non-fiction Writing (new in 2011)
ENGL 333 The Exotic

Drama and Performance Pathway

Drama and performance are among the oldest and most culturally important of literary forms, and such texts form a central part of the literary canons of Western culture. Furthermore, theorists have recently drawn attention to the theatrical and performative nature of all social space, and students who specialise in drama will learn to understand how the practices of the dramatic and theatrical are shaped by, and can shape, social, political, and historical factors. This is achieved through the study of a wide range of theatrical and dramatic texts from the ancient Greeks to current Broadway theatre, alongside the analysis of non-traditional texts and events such as the political rally or activist ‘zap’. Whilst dramatic specialists are not expected to develop professional performance skills, there are opportunities to learn by practical experience throughout drama-centred courses, alongside the more traditional theoretical academic study of the literary text.

Drama and performance specialists receive a general grounding in literary studies in the first year, followed by the opportunity to undertake a detailed analysis of the work of William Shakespeare. Later, students may choose to develop practical skills in dramatic writing for the stage and screen, itself allowing the further cultivation of literary analytical expertise. Elsewhere, drama specialists develop a detailed knowledge of dramatic texts and practices from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, and honours students are able to pursue their interests over a broad range of courses, including work on exciting recent developments in the theory and practice of performance and performativity.

Drama specialists often work in fields which rely on teamwork, strong presentation, and dealing with the public, including arts and media, advertising and PR, politics, teaching, and community work. While practical skills are not assessed on this pathway, drama specialists will be extremely well-placed to undertake further study in professional drama and performance practice. Furthermore, students who choose to pursue this pathway at a postgraduate level will find that the study of drama is a flourishing discipline in the education market around the world.

Courses in this Pathway

ENGL107 Shakespeare

ENGL 132 Cultural Studies: Reading Culture

ENGL 219 Bloody Satisfaction: Revenge from the Greeks to *Kill Bill* (new in 2011)

ENGL 232 Cultural Studies: Cultural Politics/Cultural Activism

ENGL 243 From Bambi to Kong: The Animal in American Popular Culture

ENGL 313 Cultures of the Supernatural

Compatible Courses

ENGL 109 American Literature

ENGL 117 Writing the Academic Essay

ENGL 201 The Essay and Beyond: Traditions and Practice in Non-fiction Writing (new in 2011)

Human-Animal Studies Pathway

Courses in this path of study focus on the representation and treatment of nature, the environment and nonhuman animals, while at the same time examining humans’ relationship to their natural and cultural habitats, and to the other living beings that share them. Particular

attention is paid to the ways in which humans make use of nature – in industry, science, art and popular culture – and the resulting breakdown of boundaries that could once be taken for granted (for example between human and animal, culture and nature). The Humans, Animals and Environments path of study thus provides new ways of looking at issues of vital importance in our contemporary world: for example the environmental crisis, the ethical status of animals, globalisation, technology, and consumer culture.

Students completing these courses emerge with a versatile conceptual vocabulary and a skill-set that enables them to analyse a diverse range of cultural and environmental phenomena in depth. Such knowledge will be of particular use to students intending to pursue careers in teaching, journalism and other kinds of writing, broadcasting, film production, tourism, advertising, policy analysis, conservation, politics and the arts.

Courses in this Pathway

ENGL 132 Cultural Studies: Reading Culture

ENGL 243 From Bambi to Kong: The Animal in American Popular Culture

Recommended Courses

ENGL102 Introduction to English

ENGL 117 Writing the Academic Essay

ENGL 201 The Essay and Beyond: Traditions and Practice in Non-fiction Writing (new in 2011)

ENGL 333 The Exotic

Literature and History Pathway

When we read a piece of literature, we attempt to engage with and understand someone else's way of seeing the world. The Literature and History pathway will make students more familiar with the world of the past as it has been represented in works of literature.

The placing of literary texts within their historical and cultural contexts has been at the forefront of literary scholarship over the last twenty five years. This pathway enables students to engage with that scholarship and to discover for themselves the rich possibilities of this kind of literary analysis. In this pathway students will discover how literature from the past is both formed by and influences its particular historical circumstances. They will also be invited to consider the relationship between literature and history. These forms of study will provide them with a much deeper understanding of literature's place in relation to political, social and cultural changes.

By specialising in this area, undergraduates will significantly enhance their work in other disciplines, especially history, cultural studies, philosophy, anthropology and the history of art. Knowledge of past literary traditions is also essential for anyone wishing to take their literary studies further.

Studying courses within this pathway will enable students to gain essential skills for the workplace outside of the University in the assimilation of complex and sometimes alien material, in the development of skills in careful and critical reading and in presenting complex arguments based on their acquired knowledge. It will also help foster an insightful but considered approach to different ways of thinking about the world.

Courses in this Pathway

ENGL 102 Introduction to English
ENGL 107 Shakespeare
ENGL 217 Eighteenth-Century Literature and Empire
ENGL 219 Bloody Satisfaction: Revenge from the Greeks to *Kill Bill* (new in 2011)
ENGL 304 Drama: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
ENGL 315 The Twentieth-Century Novel
ENGL 316 New Zealand Literature 3

Compatible Courses

ENGL 105 New Zealand Literature 1
ENGL 109 American Literature
ENGL 117 Writing the Academic Essay
ENGL 201 The Essay and Beyond: Traditions and Practice in Non-fiction Writing (new in 2011)
ENGL 333 The Exotic

Novel and Narration Pathway

The novel is the most popular, resilient and adaptable literary form to have emerged in the last 300 years. It has continually responded to changes in social organisation, travel, war, literacy, global politics, ethics and fashion. It has borrowed from journalism, history, philosophy, film, game theory, psychology, economics and youth culture. It has been the vehicle by which individuals, classes, peoples and nations have expressed their sense of themselves, and has become a global means for the exchange of cultural knowledge. It ranges from traditional ‘classics’ to difficult high modernist texts, thrillers, comics and ‘bodice rippers’. The novel has traditionally been the most enjoyable of genres and it remains highly attractive to students. We all read and enjoy fiction but rarely stop to think how essential narrative is in every area of life: our sense of our selves, our understanding of history.

This pathway capitalises on the pleasures and attractions of fictional narrative while offering students a guided way into the novel’s capacity to represent the world and its complexities, and to suggest its possibilities as an art-form. Students will be introduced to the variety of sub-genres within the novel and to its historical transformations. As well, students will encounter, at different levels, the theories and techniques of narrative.

Novel studies are ideal for undergraduate students going on to jobs in education, the civil service or the private sector because they provide an accessible way into literary studies that allows the development of critical thinking and writing skills at different levels. They are also especially suitable for students wishing to pursue an academic career because they provide access to such an extensive range of activities within the discipline, from history to rhetoric and cultural theory.

Courses in this Pathway

ENGL 102 Introduction to English
ENGL 236 Contemporary American Literature
ENGL 237 Hardboiled LA: Los Angeles in Literature and Film
ENGL 315 The Twentieth-Century Novel
ENGL 333 The Exotic

Compatible Courses

ENGL 109 American Literature
ENGL 115 Childhood in Children's Literature
ENGL 117 Writing the Academic Essay
ENGL 201 The Essay and Beyond: Traditions and Practice in Non-fiction Writing (new in 2011)

Postcolonial Writing Pathway

The postcolonial literatures that we study in English are those of the former British colonies: Africa, India, the Caribbean, Canada, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and the Pacific. The term 'postcolonial' does not mean that colonialism is a thing of the past, but refers to the way in which the cultures of these nations continue to be shaped by their experiences of colonisation. This postcolonial path of study includes courses in New Zealand writing at all three levels, which explore who we are as a nation in terms of the way we have been shaped by our history. Courses in other postcolonial literatures help to put our own local experience into a broader critical context.

To have studied in this area is an enormous advantage for anyone who wants to work in the cultural sector in New Zealand: teachers, writers, journalists, policy analysts, or anyone engaged in politics or the arts. They help us to understand and appreciate our own cultural heritage. And they supply the tools which allow us to analyse the most urgent cultural issues of our time: settler identity, Māori sovereignty, bi- and multiculturalism, globalisation.

Courses in this Pathway

ENGL 105 New Zealand Literature 1
ENGL 209 Australian Literature
ENGL 210 New Zealand Literature 2
ENGL 251 African American Women Writers
ENGL 316 New Zealand Literature 3
ENGL 333 The Exotic

Compatible Courses

ENGL 102 Introduction to English
ENGL 109 American Literature
ENGL 117 Writing the Academic Essay
ENGL 201 The Essay and Beyond: Traditions and Practice in Non-fiction Writing (new in 2011)
ENGL 232 Cultural Studies: Cultural Politics/Cultural Activism