

MA Highlands and Islands Literature: Syllabus

Postgraduate Certificate in Highlands and Islands Literature

Prerequisite: Hons degree; Bridging Unit for those with degree in subjects other than language and/or literature

The Gaelic Legacy (CORE)

This module looks at the imaginative world of Gaelic culture through the ages and evaluates its legacy. It will explore dominant ideologies, key texts, and oral literatures. While being taught in translation, it will aim to give students confidence in the pronunciation of Gaelic and an understanding of metrics. It will look forward to the future for Gaelic literary icons.

Writers and Place (CORE)

Cultural affiliation and conflict is what ultimately drives most issues of identity politics in the modern world. These are issues of cultural inheritance: acculturation is therefore central to our understanding of nationality, its internal diversity, and the porousness or otherwise of its cultural borders with its neighbours. The process of acculturation is core to our understanding of nationality and to future research. This module will examine a range of contemporary Highland texts, exploring their key technical and thematic features, and focusing on such issues as: the role of writing in their construction of regional identity; the literary use of non-standard language; regional identity; literature and politics. The course will also feature appearances by prominent Scottish writers, who will talk about their own work in the modern Highlands and Islands context.

Literary Iconographies (CORE)

This module examines a range of contemporary Scottish/Highlands and Islands fiction and poetry from a variety of literary critical perspectives – Scottish theory, poststructuralism, deconstruction, postcolonialism, cultural materialism/new historicism, feminism – and explores a rich diversity of narrative/poetical themes and forms. It also analyses the works' socio-historical contexts and interrogates if/how/why they interact with contemporary issues.

Early Scottish Literature (OPTION)

This module aims to give students a sound knowledge of the literature of the Highlands and Islands from earliest times up to 1600 in their linguistic, social, and literary context. The development of specific themes and styles in each language group will be compared and contrasted and the societies which produced them analysed. It will provide a literary context for those students wishing to take the Language and Palaeography of Older Scots option at PG Dip level.

Scottish Theatre and Drama: The Power of Performance Art (OPTION)

This module aims to examine the contribution of Scottish drama to ideas concerning war, fascism and the existence of 'evil' in society, whilst briefly

taking into account the wider context of European post war drama. The plays range from the 1940s to 2000, but all share a concern with themes which are pivotal to war discourse – power, ideological control, violence, peace and religion. The theorists studied in the module are Brecht, Althusser and Macherey along with some materialist feminist criticism. The module operates a closely integrative approach between theory and literature.

Historical and Cultural Perspectives of the North Atlantic Rim (OPTION)

This module aims to look at the cultural and social disparities of the North Atlantic Rim regions in terms of historical background and cultural heritage and the influences both external and internal which have modified and impinged upon it. Particular attention will be paid to communities which are satellites of larger areas in the region commensurate with the status of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland.

Postgraduate Diploma in Highlands and Islands Literature

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Modern Scottish Gothic (CORE)

This module examines the role of Gothic fiction in Britain from the 18th to the 21st century. It examines the narrative themes and structures of classic Gothic novels and positions them within their contemporary discursive contexts of politics, law, science, religion, medicine and gender. Taking the history of the Gothic genre into account, it looks at modern Scottish Gothic short stories and locates them within their cultural contexts, exploring what this genre says about hegemonic discourses in Scotland today.

A Tour of the Highlands (CORE)

This module aims to explore the exocentric view of the Highlands and Islands expressed in historical travel writing and fiction. This module will contrast primary and secondary sources and the perceptions of non-fiction writers such as Martin, Boswell, and Pennant and fiction writers such as Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg. The construct of a Highlands and Islands exoidentity will be evaluated and applied in a wider global context. The debate will be continued to the present day.

Exploring Creative Writing (OPTION)

This module provides opportunities for the practice, study and development of creative and professional writing, operates at an advanced or publishable level and is intended to appeal to students with an interest in creative writing, those who want to develop their ideas with a view to completing a full length work and seek contact with others who are similarly minded in an environment that builds on the craft and practical business of writing such as editing, manuscript preparation, improvement, marketing, contracts and so on.

The Language and Palaeography of Older Scots (OPTION)

This module aims to give an in-depth knowledge of Older Scots Language. The course will also contain an introduction to palaeography and glossary

compilation working from manuscripts and early printed texts. It will cover both literary and non-literary material.

The North Atlantic Rim Literary Context (OPTION)

This optional literature module seeks to offer students an insight through prose and poetry to the literary cultures of the North Atlantic Rim and the various forms of social organisation and social change of the North Atlantic Rim.

MA in Highlands and Islands Literature

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Research Dissertation (CORE)

This is a generic UHI postgraduate module. The module aims to provide students with an opportunity to undertake a sustained, rigorous and independent investigation of some aspect of material culture and the environment. There is an online UHI postgraduate dissertation handbook for student guidance.

The dissertation must consist of original work. It should be informed by the theoretical and practical knowledge and expertise which the participant has developed through other modules and/or in previously accredited learning. It should focus on a theme, topic or issue which is relevant to the subject. The resulting dissertation should not only present and interpret the research findings but also critically evaluate the research design and methodology employed; and identify the outcomes of the research in terms of actual or planned developments and changes.