

ISSU9JJ - Junkies and Jezebels: Scotland and Gender

Module description

Recent advances in feminist and LGBT+ liberation movements have had a visible and global impact on culture, literature, politics and commerce. This module examines gender and sexuality in a Scottish context. As binary understandings of gender and sexuality are increasingly shown to be outdated and outmoded, developments in our understanding of gender and sexuality are making headlines and becoming a regular part of our daily discourse in both our social and working lives. This course enables students to apply their knowledge of identity politics to a dynamic range of relevant texts.

The texts in this module examine the decline of traditional, industrialist, 'hard man' masculinities in Scotland. Through an exploration of dynamic, contemporary and highly acclaimed texts, this course examines broken masculinities, resistant femininities, and resurgent Scottish LGBT+ fictions. A select range of relevant secondary sources will accompany this exploration of primary literature, introducing students to iconic theorists, as well as relevant contemporary critics examining Scottish literature from a gendered perspective.

There will be optional opportunities to submit creative work as an alternative to an essay assignment, enabling students to demonstrate understanding of the stylistic and thematic aspects of the course as creative practitioners.

Module outline

This module provides a guided introduction into two fields: Scottish literature, and critical theories of gender. You will study a range of acclaimed Scottish texts that explore gender, across a diverse range of poetry, novels, cinema and drama. Through student-centered workshops and seminars, you will work together with peers to explore a range of primary and secondary texts that explore literature and gender. You will gain some knowledge of core gender theory texts, and have opportunities to apply insights gained to your core reading. You will also have a platform to demonstrate your knowledge through a presentation on a text of your choice. Opportunities to submit a piece of creative writing instead of a traditional academic essay will be made available. You will work to develop a final piece of academic or creative writing demonstrating core transferrable academic skills, assisted by workshops that focus on developing good academic practice alongside an understanding of our core texts. By the end of the module, you will have developed skills in both academic and creative practice.

Learning outcomes

The module will help develop written and oral communication skills through written coursework and tutorial participation. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss gender and sexuality in contemporary Scottish texts.
- Engage with secondary texts by leading critics in the fields of gender, sexuality and Scottish writing.
- Convey a detailed academic argument, both verbally and in writing.
- Work collegiately towards defined research goals.
- Present a critical reading of a key text to others.
- Produce a piece of creative writing as part of a writing workshop.

Proposed teaching schedule

One-hour workshop; two-hour interactive seminars weekly.

Week one

- Outline of the course and assessments. Workshop exploring selected short extracts from Scottish contemporary literary criticism.
- Seminar: Selection of poetry by Tom Leonard, Carol Ann Duffy, Harry Giles, and Rachel McCrum. Analysis and discussion.

Week two

- Film Showing: *Trainspotting*.
- Workshop exploring key scenes from *Trainspotting*, and introducing key critical works on Welsh.

Week three

- Film Showing: *Black Watch*
- Workshop exploring key scenes from *Black Watch*, and an introduction to post-industrial masculinities.

Week four

- Creative Writing Workshop – the birthday game. Inspired by *The Panopticon*.
- Seminar – Key scenes from *The Panopticon*. Discussion of critical viewpoints from key critics.

Assessment

Assessment will be based on an in-class presentation on a text of your choice (worth 50%) and an essay **or** piece of creative writing (worth 50%). The essay will be based on at least one of the primary texts based on the course, with students expected to draw on theoretical and critical insights gained during the module. Any student choosing to submit a piece of creative writing is expected to show an understanding of the craft of fiction, drama or poetry, as well as demonstrating – through their own practice – understanding of stylistic insights gained during the module.

Suggested field trips

The People's Palace (Glasgow) and a visit to the Scottish Women's Library (Glasgow).