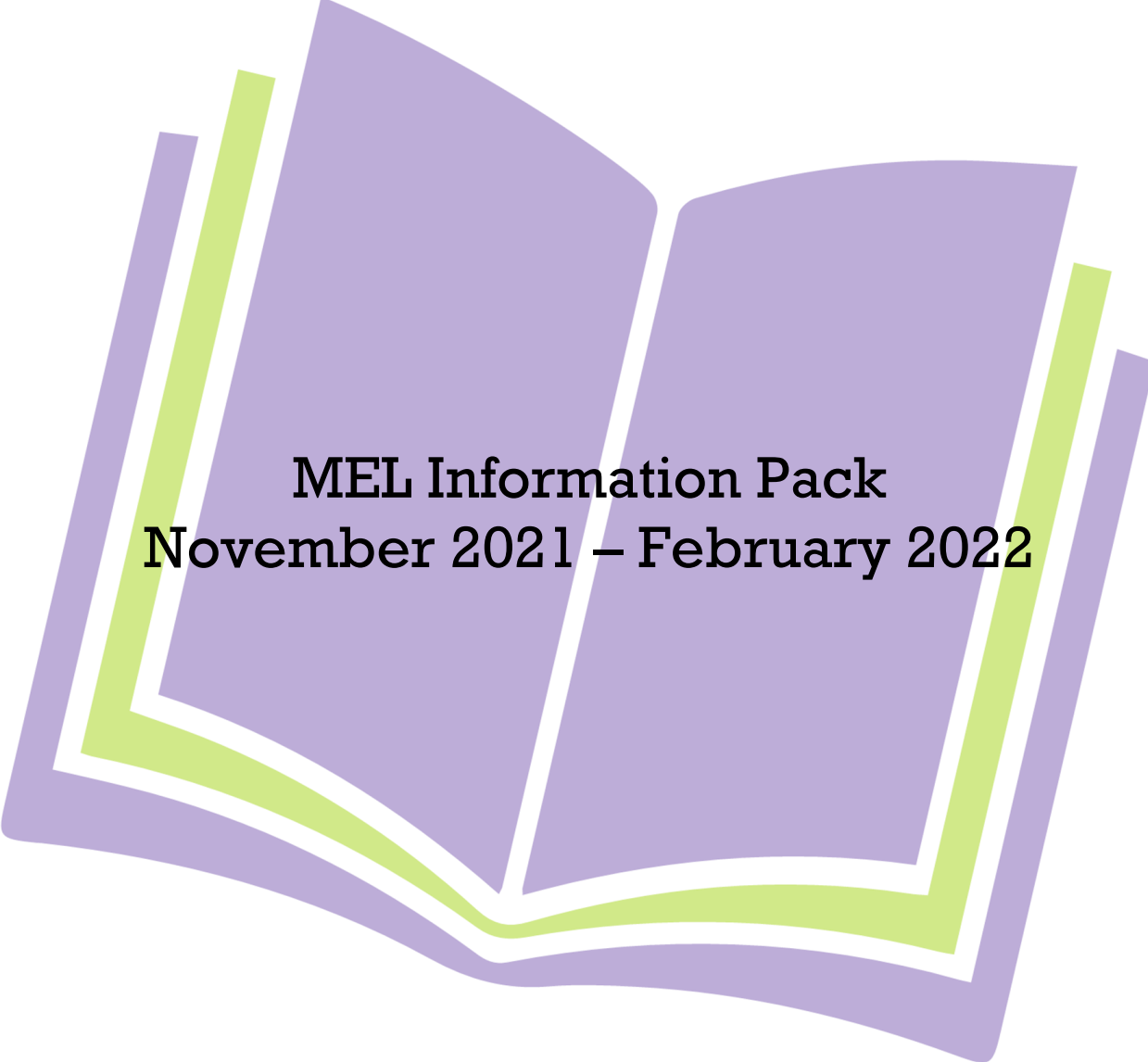


Mastering English Literature 2021-22



MEL Information Pack
November 2021 – February 2022

How to Apply

Please complete an online application form:

<https://arts.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/application-for-mastering-english-literature-november-2021>

The deadline is **midnight on Sunday 3rd October 2021**.

Admission is based on your application form and personal statement. You can prepare a personal statement and then paste it into the online application form. Alternatively, you can enter your information directly. There is an option to *finish later*.

Information and advice

Please read all the information in this pack thoroughly before completing your online application form. If you have any questions or would like an informal chat about the course, please email **english-lifelong@bristol.ac.uk**.

Who can apply?

This course is open to anyone who already holds an undergraduate degree in any discipline. It is aimed primarily at mature students from the local area who wish to refresh their study skills and explore a wide range of texts. This course is also designed to support students who are considering an MA level in English Literature.

This course is **not** suitable for students wishing to do an undergraduate degree in English Literature. The English Literature and Community Engagement (ELCE) part-time degree or the Reading English Literature short course may be of interest to these applicants. Details can be found at www.bristol.ac.uk/english/study/part-time/short-courses/reading-english-literature/.

Course fee

The course fee for Mastering English Literature is **£410.00**

A request to pay in instalments can be considered.
Please email **english-lifelong@bristol.ac.uk**

What does the course aim to achieve?

There will be opportunities to sharpen study skills, read a wide range of texts, and gain a taste of the University's expertise in Shakespeare, Romanticism, modern and contemporary poetry, and women's writing. We hope the seminar discussions will be enjoyable and will help students build their confidence in discussing literary texts at this level.

Guidance is given to those who are considering an MA in English Literature or further study. There is an emphasis on the core subjects studied in the University of Bristol MA. This course aims to help students produce written work of a standard appropriate to submit as a writing sample with an application to the MA at Bristol.

When and where do the classes take place?

There will be 10 meetings on Tuesday evenings, November 2021 to February 2022 from 6pm to 8pm.

The course dates are: 2nd Nov, 9th Nov, 16th Nov, 23rd Nov, 30th Nov, 7th Dec, 14th Dec, 18th Jan, 25th Jan, 1st Feb 2022.

The course will switch between on campus and online sessions on alternate weeks. More detail on this as well as a course outline will be provided prior to the course start date.

Please email English-lifelong@bristol.ac.uk for further details.

How is the course marked?

Students will be required to complete two formative assignments of 2000 words. These assignments will not count towards the final mark for the course. In addition, students will be required to submit one summative assignment of 3000 words which will form the final mark.

What happens after the course?

Advice will be offered on the pathways to further study. Over the past decade, several students have progressed to an MA at Bristol. Please note that progression to the MA English Literature is not automatic upon completion of the MEL course. Students will be required to submit a separate application and students will be supported and guided through the application process.

You can read more about Bristol's MA in English Literature at www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/2021/arts/ma-english-literature/.

You can also read more about the University's Graduate School of Arts and Humanities at www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/study/postgraduate/.

A student's perspective: Harriet's story

What background did you have in education before doing the MEL course?

I did a degree in Linguistics and German at Sussex University in 1988. I then worked in publishing for 10 years in book production. I stopped work to have my family and worked part-time for my husband's business as a bookkeeper. The children got to an age where it became imperative that I do something else because I was going a bit frantic!

What made you apply for the MEL course?

I had always wanted to do a literature degree. I was too scared to go straight for an MA because I didn't have confidence after so many years out of education. So when I looked at MEL, it seemed a very good level. I liked the subject matter it was going to cover – drama, a novel and poetry – and the fact that it was not just one period.

What was the course like?

It was fantastic. It was very unthreatening and welcoming. We were all different ages and stages and we were made to feel you could say anything you wanted without fear of ridicule. You could say what you thought and have it discussed. The tutor, Stephen Derry, is very entertaining and witty but incredibly well read – so he made it fun as well. I learnt a lot about essay writing and about close reading. I'd never done that before: unpacking paragraphs and seeing other ways of reading books than as a straightforward form of entertainment, which was crucial before going on to the MA. And I discovered that I liked poetry!

You're now studying part-time on the MA in English Literature?

Yes, I had to apply for the MA and got accepted. It's been great. I could enthuse forever. Again, it's been supportive. You get the confidence from MEL to open your mouth in a seminar. It's incredibly well taught and I think it encourages you to be independent in your thinking but at the same time you're not left on your own. I took a module on Dickens. It was a huge amount of reading but I absolutely loved it.

What are you planning to do next?

I'm quite interested in archive work or research in that area and the MA is going to give me the confidence to pursue that. Society gives you some sense of status if you're in employment. If you choose not to be, to raise a family, then you do feel as if you've stepped into oblivion. Coming back to do an MA has made me feel I have something to say that is of value and has given me the confidence to go back into work.

What would your advice be to anyone thinking of applying for the MEL course?

Do it! Without hesitation, whether you want to go on to MA or not – because it opens your eyes to literature in a way you may not have looked at it before.

James' Story

In 2017, I became interested in doing an English Literature MA. I had been working in publishing as a copy editor for about seven years, but I had no formal qualifications above A levels, so I wasn't sure if I could be admitted to an MA course. I contacted the English Department at the University of Bristol to find out if it was possible to get onto the MA without a first degree, and the course director, Dr Theo Savvas, recommended Mastering English Literature.

MEL turned out to be a good way to bolster my MA application as well as a practical preparation for graduate study. But it was also enjoyable and worthwhile of itself. I loved rediscovering writers such as Jane Austen and Philip Larkin from a new, critical perspective. The teaching on MEL was excellent, and the tutor, Stephen Derry, fostered a welcoming atmosphere, taking all contributions seriously. I found his efforts to connect the concerns of normal, non-academic readers with academic research particularly valuable. It became clear, from Stephen's example, that treating literary texts as objects of analysis need not entail losing sight of them as sources of pleasure and meaning. The course also proved useful when I later came to negotiate the bureaucratic issues that arise in applying for a postgraduate course without a first degree, such as requirements for transcripts, certificates and academic references.

After completing MEL, I moved onto the MA. The step up was challenging, but thanks to the assignments and discussions that I'd engaged with on MEL, I didn't feel entirely out of my depth. Once I was immersed in a full-time postgraduate programme, I felt doubly grateful for the knowledge and confidence I'd already gained from MEL, without which I think I would've found the seminars intimidating and the assignments daunting. I completed the MA in September 2018 and am now working on a proposal to do a PhD at Bristol.