

**Glorious Distortions**  
**SCH5461 2023/24**

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Module Leader: **Dr Valentin Gerlier**

Other Module Staff: Alice Oswald, Emma Bush, Dr Bram Thomas Arnold, Dr Tracey Warr



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## Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the Glorious Distortions (SCH5461) module. This module considers the historical move from a cosmic to an internalised self. While in a hunter-gatherer culture we dwelt within psyche, by the 12th century, psyche frequently dwelt within us. Focusing on the twin themes of *love* and the notion of the 'otherworld' (whether sacred or secular, Christian or pagan), we trace this move through Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Irish and Welsh narrative and literature, Arthurian Romance and the afterlife of such mythic motifs in the work of Shakespeare. We also consider cultural influences such as that of Islamic thought on the Arthurian Grail romances or the cultural cross-pollination in the courtly schools of Eleanor of Aquitaine. We consider how all these narratives have shaped us today.

Taking its cue from Bachelard's notion of the imagination as an affective distortion of reality, the module considers historical shifts in understanding of the self and relationships ranging from ancient cultures to medieval romances and poetry and compare these to contemporary understandings of the self. The literature studied will include Anglo-Saxon riddle poetry, the Irish Fenian Cycle, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Winter's Tale*.

Some key supporting texts are Christian Moevs' *The Metaphysics of Dante's Divine Comedy*, Ted Hughes' *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*, and Mark Williams' *Ireland's Immortals*.

Creative practice workshops will develop notions explored in the module. We will also consider the medieval book and its evolution into an object in the context of more contemporary artistries.

## Teaching and Assessment Team



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Module Tutor



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Module Tutor

## Module Aims

- a) To analyse the scholarly, imaginative and metaphysical relationship to love, both divine and earthly, that underpins key medieval literature studied in this module.
- b) To emphasize the influence of other cross-cultural currents such as the influence of troubadours and trobaritz, Celtic tropes and motifs Persian thought (through the examples of Hafez and Rumi) on the texts studied.
- c) To develop research, critical reading and writing and creative practice skills.

## Module Assessed Learning Outcomes

(Numbers relate to Learning Outcomes detailed in the Programme Specification in the Handbook.)

At the end of the module the learner will be expected to be able to:

1. Identify the move from the mythological to the psychological in the arc of the stories examined. To compare and contrast narrative motives.
2. Coherently demonstrate the diffusion of both Celtic and Persian influences within the study materials.
3. Articulate the heretical tensions between societal conduct and the romantic urgings of the troubadours.
4. Demonstrate field research and documenting skills
5. Demonstrate creative practice skills

See the Module Records in the Programme Handbook for further details.

## Teaching and Learning Strategy

SUMMARY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING		
Scheduled Activities	Hours	Comments/Additional Information
Lectures	16	4 x face to face and 4 online lectures delivering the module introduction and critical presentations on the module topic and materials

Supervised time in the studio/workshop	6	Creative practice work
Practical classes and workshops	6	Research methods workshop
Seminars	12	2 x face to face and 4 online reading groups
Fieldwork	12	Two fieldtrips
Tutorials	1	Online tutorials on essays and supplementary task with tutor
Peer Group Tutorial	2	Student-led peer group tutorial
Guided independent study	245	Students will be expected to spend significant time during the module, and in the completion of their projects studying independently
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	(NB: 1 credit = 10 hours of learning; 10 credits = 100 hours, etc.)

Students are expected to take full responsibility for their learning, **attend all** scheduled sessions, read appropriate indicated readings, and work on set exercises (formative and summative assessment).

Based on previous experience; students who failed to attend sessions are likely to be unsuccessful or show poor performance. Please ensure that you are engaging with the content and learning activities relating to this module.

Note that there are amendments to teaching delivery in this academic year due to the coronavirus crisis.

Students are responsible for ensuring that you have the necessary computer equipment, software and wifi signal to participate fully with online teaching.

## Scheme of Work

Module Teaching Dates:

8–19 January 2024 Module begins onsite followed by  
22 January–16 February 2024 online 2 x 2 hours per week on zoom.

The full Module Timetable will be on the Glorious Distortions DLE site. Please note that this schedule may be subject to alteration.

The Programme Handbook and this Module Guide are available at:  
<https://www.dartington.org/about/learning/resources-for-students/>

Online teaching is delivered via the University of Plymouth DLE.

University of Plymouth Library: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/library>

And see the onsite Dartington Library.

The Module Assessment Feedback Form is on the Glorious Distortions DLE site.

**This module will be assessed by:**

Element of Assessment	Module Weighting	Component	Link to Assessed Learning Outcomes
Coursework	Portfolio comprising 3,000-word essay (on one of the set question options) with documentation and critical reflection on creative work pursued and shared onsite during the module	100%	All

**Essay**

Choose **one** of the following and write a 3,000 word essay with references and bibliography.

1. Examine the usage of Romance tropes in *Gawain and the Green Knight*. What might be learnt from the tale's usage of tests and temptings, seduction, hunting and wounding?
2. 'A writer is someone who can make a riddle out of an answer' (Karl Kraus) discuss the relationship of riddling to story-telling, using the materials discussed in this module.
3. Create a commentary on any of the stories explored in module three.
4. Examine the relationship of Celtic heroines or heroes with the Otherworld. You can pick one or several, and a heroine or hero could qualify as a supernatural figure.
5. Track the importance of the hunt in Celtic myth, including practical and metaphysical standpoints.

6. Discuss troubadour and/or trobairitz poetry in relation to the notions of individuality and romantic love.
7. Discuss one or more of these themes in the Shakespearean materials studied: desire, the imagination, the faery world/otherworld.
8. '*The Winter's Tale* is the myth of Demeter and Persephone retold'. Discuss.
9. Discuss a medieval text of your choice in relation to selected medieval artefacts. What light do they throw on one another?
10. 'In the medieval universe, it is love that moves everything'. What might such insight mean for today?
11. Explore the poetics of love in Dante's work.
12. Does a story have a voice as well as its characters *and/or* is the voice of story determined by its place?

### **Creative Work**

Your creative work in progress is assessed through your work in progress during the module, presented in your PebblePad portfolio and accompanied by a one page critical reflection.

**Assignment Deadline is Friday 23 February 2024 12 noon.**

Your assignment should be uploaded to the DLE.

Marks (provisional until confirmed by a Subject Assessment Panel in June) and feedback are available to you on Friday 23 March 2024 12 noon on the DLE.

### **Marking Rubric for SCH5461 – Glorious Distortions**

LO1. Identify the move from the mythological to the psychological in the arc of the stories examined. To compare and contrast narrative motives.			
LO2. Coherently demonstrate the diffusion of both Celtic and Persian influences within the study materials.			
LO3. Articulate the heretical tensions between societal conduct and the romantic urgings of the troubadours.			
LO4. Demonstrate field research and documenting skills			
LO5. Demonstrate creative practice skills			
	Fail: 0 – 49%	Pass: 50 – 59%	Merit: 60 – 69%
	Does not demonstrate sufficient understanding.	Demonstrates partial understanding. and engagement with	Demonstrates a sound understanding and engagement with the areas of the learning outcomes.



		the areas of the learning outcomes.	
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## Late Work/Extenuating Circumstances

If your participation in an examination or assessment has been affected by an extenuating circumstance, then you can ask the University to take this into consideration. You can submit a claim for extenuating circumstances to cover late submission of work, non-submission of work or non-attendance at a time specific assessment, such as an examination, test presentation or performance, or field class.

Information regarding the Extenuating Circumstances policy and how and where to submit Extenuating Circumstance Claims are available

here: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/exams/exam-rules-and-regulations/extenuating-circumstances>

Where there are no valid extenuating circumstances, the following regulations will automatically apply:

- Work submitted after the deadline date/time but within 24 hours of it, will be capped at the pass mark 50%.
- Work submitted 24 hours after the deadline will receive a mark of zero.

Please notify the programme and module leader of any extenuating circumstances as soon as possible.

## Sources of Guidance and Support

Please contact your personal tutor, in the first instance, if you have any concerns and worries both of an academic or personal nature and they will be able to assist you with academic concerns and direct you to support for other issues.

The Student Support Officer is Feline Charpentier and the Academic Support Officer (including DSA applications) is Cheryl Davies. They can both be contacted on

[studentsupport@dartington.org](mailto:studentsupport@dartington.org)

The Learning Technologist is Naomi Robertson and she can help with any technical issues. [Naomi.Robertson@dartington.org](mailto:Naomi.Robertson@dartington.org)

Please notify the programme and module leader of any modified assessment provision required as soon as possible.

## Referencing Protocols and Academic Offences

Dartington Arts School uses the Harvard referencing system. See Cite Them Right for guidance on referencing and Harvard formatting:

<https://www-citethemrightonline-com.plymouth.idm.oclc.org/Home>

When writing a report or an essay you are expected to fully reference the materials you have used. The report or essay should be your own work, in your own words.

Plagiarism is an offence under the University regulations on examination and assessment offences. It is important that you familiarise yourself with what constitutes plagiarism, and academic offences. Further information can be found:

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations/plagiarism>

And <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/exams/exam-rules-and-regulations/examination-offences>

## Reading List; Recommended Texts/Support Materials

Alighieri, Dante. (2012) *The Divine Comedy*. Trans. Robin Kirkpatrick. London: Penguin Classics.

Anon. (trans G. Delanty and M. Matto) (2012) *The Word Exchange: Anglo-Saxon Poems in Translation*. New York: Norton & co.

Anon. (trans. J. R. R. Tolkien) (2014) *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. New York: Harper Collins.

Blackburn, P. & Economou, G. (trans.) (2017) *Proensa: An Anthology of Troubadour Poetry*, New York: New York Review of Books.

[There are quite a few anthologies of troubadour poetry in translation. Another option is Paden, W.D. & Paden, F.F. (trans.) (2014) *Troubadour Poems from the South of France*, Martlesham: D.S. Brewer.]

Bogin, M. (2013) *The Women Troubadours*. New York: Norton.

De Hamel, C. (2016) *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts*. London: Allen Lane.

Gerlier, V. (2022) 'Words of Childlike Grace', in *Shakespeare and the Grace of Words*. London: Routledge, 134-180.

Heaney, M. (1995) *Over Nine Waves: Book of Irish Legends*. London: Faber & Faber.

Hughes, T. (2021) *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*. London: Faber & Faber.

Lears, A (2020) *World of Echo: Noise and Knowing in Late Medieval England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Mandelstam, O. (1977) 'Conversation about Dante' in *Selected Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Markale, J. (1987) *Women of the Celts*. Rochester: Inner Traditions Bear & Company.

Moevs, C. (2009) *The Metaphysics of Dante's Divine Comedy*. London: Oxford University Press.

Shakespeare W. (2000-) *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Winter's Tale*. Arden Edition, 3rd series.

## Module Feedback

We value what our students say. You share your feedback; we act upon it. Part of the feedback process includes Module Evaluation. The Module Evaluation Form is on the DLE.