

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT English: Literary Study (Advanced Higher)

NUMBER D8VJ 13

COURSE English (Advanced Higher)

SUMMARY

The English: Literary Study unit is concerned principally with extending the critical reading skills of candidates through the study of a range of literary texts. Candidates will study a substantial number and variety of texts selected from the list of authors and texts specified by SQA.

The content of the unit comprises:

- knowledge of the various ways by which meaning is created
- understanding of critical concepts and approaches.

What distinguishes the study of literature at Advanced Higher level from that at Higher is the greater number and variety of texts studied, the greater depth to which these are studied and the emphasis on comparison, contrast and generalisation.

OUTCOME

Respond critically to seen literary texts.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained:

- a Higher course award in English.

Administrative Information

Superclass: FC
Publication date: March 2003
Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version: 01

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Advanced Higher.

CORE SKILLS

There is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components in this unit.

Additional information about core skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 2001).

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

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OUTCOME

Respond critically to seen literary text(s).

Performance criteria

Understanding

The response takes a relevant and thoughtful approach to the prescribed task and demonstrates secure understanding of key elements, central concerns and significant details of the text(s).

Analysis

The response makes relevant and thoughtful critical comment and demonstrates secure handling of literary/linguistic concepts, techniques, forms.

Evaluation

Judgements made are relevant, thoughtful and securely based on detailed evidence drawn from the text(s).

Expression

Structure, style and language, including the use of critical terminology, are consistently accurate and effective in developing a relevant argument.

Evidence requirements

Candidates must produce one critical essay.

The essay must be written:

- without assistance
- under supervision
- within the centre
- in response to an unseen question
- on text(s) from a genre selected from the list of authors and texts specified by SQA.

Critical essays on poetry (Chaucer excepted) must deal with at least three poems. Essays on other genres may deal with one or more than one text.

Candidates must:

- have access to relevant text(s) during the writing of the critical essay
- meet all of the performance criteria in the critical essay.

Authors, texts and topics that are the subject of teaching, study or assessment in other units of the English course or in the units of other courses must not be used for assessment purposes in this unit.

The list of authors and texts specified by SQA is given in the Course Arrangements.

National Unit Specification: support notes: summary

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This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Content

Candidates will study and respond to texts (selected from the list of authors and texts specified by SQA) in at least two of the following categories:

- drama
- poetry
- prose fiction
- prose non-fiction.

Activities

Candidates will engage in a variety of language activities such as:

- exploratory reading of texts
- re-readings
- note-making and ‘marking the text’
- identifying, analysing and discussing key features of texts
- exploring critical concepts through reading, discussion and direct teaching
- developing awareness of the relationships between text and context (literary, linguistic, historical, ideological, for example)
- participating in tutorials, seminars and reading workshops
- exploring the insights and judgements of others
- formulating and presenting critical ideas in discussion papers and essays
- witnessing performances.

Outcome

Respond critically to seen literary text(s).

Assessment

Candidates must produce one critical essay in accordance with the evidence requirements of the unit.

Note

Authors, texts and topics that are the subject of teaching, study or assessment in other units of the English course or in the units of other courses must not be used for assessment purposes in this unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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GUIDANCE ON CONTENT AND CONTEXT

The summary table gives indication of content and context. While the focus of study in this unit will be on extending and strengthening skills in reading and responding critically to literature, opportunities will arise for integrating related skills – in linguistic and textual analysis, for example.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

This unit offers clear extension of work already undertaken in English: Literary Study at Higher. There are, however, significant differences.

- Candidates must select text(s) from a list of specified authors/titles. This has the merit – and the added difficulty – of requiring candidates to develop awareness and understanding of the work of an **author** or a **group of texts** (as distinct from the study of a single text). Related to this are other demands – the exploration of cultural, historical and linguistic dimensions in literature; the recognition of literary traditions; the consultation and use of critical commentaries; some understanding of the function and purposes of literature.
- Candidates will, in all probability, find themselves in much smaller teaching groups and in more flexible and varied learning/teaching contexts. Direct, teacher/lecturer-led guidance and instruction will still have a place, but there will be greater emphasis on independent study, on supported self-study, on interaction with tutors and fellow candidates in tutorial groups, seminar groups and reading workshops in which views and insights are exchanged. Candidates will require to take greater responsibility for their own learning and progress.
- There will be a larger volume of work to be undertaken and more demanding study of more complex texts and their interrelationships.

In all of this, candidates should be encouraged to read as widely as possible within and beyond the list of specified authors and texts in pursuit of their own interests and enthusiasms – for the intrinsic value to be gained from breadth of reading, for the enrichment and comparative insights such breadth will bring to the study of their selected texts and, not least, for the possibilities such reading will offer in terms of their decisions about dissertation texts and topics.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

In order to achieve the unit outcome, the critical essay which candidates are required to produce **must** meet:

- all of the evidence requirements
- all of the performance criteria.

As assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process, candidates should undertake a number of activities for formative purposes.

In summative assessment, care must be taken in question design. Questions must create a framework within which candidates have opportunity to demonstrate coverage of all of the performance criteria. In particular, there must be opportunity to demonstrate competence in the analysis of literary text(s).

SPECIAL NEEDS

This course specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).