

Scheme of work

AS/A-level English Language and Literature 7706/7707

Imagined worlds

Introduction

This is a scheme of work for the teaching and learning of *Imagined worlds*. It is not prescriptive but offers suggested approaches for teaching around the topic, drawing upon key learning, concepts and analytical skills.

In this part of the subject content, students should be encouraged to explore how writers present times, locations, events, and characters through specific uses of language and through the conscious shaping of their narratives. They should be able to read texts closely and confidently, drawing on a range of frameworks to support their analyses. Students should also be taught how to consider important aspects of the fantasy genre, and how contextual factors related to the production and reception of the novels influence and shape meanings.

Students study one of four set texts chosen from

- ***Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley**
- ***Dracula* by Bram Stoker**
- ***The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood**
- ***The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold**

Key terms for this unit are

Narrator: a fictional entity responsible for telling the story in the novel (note the general definition for a narrator on this specification is: a person responsible for writing or speaking a narrative).

Storyworld: the fictional world that is shaped and framed by the narrative.

Characterisation: the range of strategies that authors and readers use to build and develop characters.

Point of view: the perspective(s) used in a text through which a version of reality is presented.

Genre: a way of grouping texts based on expected shared conventions.

Speech and thought presentation: the ways in which a character's speech and thought are shown through varying degrees of narrator control.

Assumed coverage

Imagined worlds may be taught in any year of the A-level course but will need to be taught during the first year in classes where students are being entered for both AS and A level examinations. It is assumed that approximately 8 weeks would be spent in the study of the novel, comprising of about 4.5 hours classroom contact per week.

Scheme of work

Imagined Worlds

Prior knowledge: understanding of levels of language analysis and some basic ideas about narrative structure and point of view.

Week 1

Learning objective	Subject-specific skills	Learning activities	Differentiation and extension	Resources
<p>The fantasy genre</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the conventions of the fantasy genre be able to talk about concepts such as anti-realism, impossible worlds and unusual narratives make connections between fantasy and other genres such as science-fiction, dystopian and gothic literature. 	<p>Applying knowledge of the following to their set text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> generic conventions and how knowledge of these shapes expectations for readers relationship between fantasy and other associated genres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to bring in examples of fantasy literature from their own reading. Explore conventions and typical content and style (eg unusual events, characters, narration, laws of time and space and so on). Look at some further examples of science-fiction, dystopian and gothic literature, contemporary YA fiction (eg <i>Divergent</i>, <i>Hunger Games</i> series). Develop some shared understanding of the concept of <i>anti-realism</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students could be given extracts from existing literary critical work on the fantasy genre to be used in conjunction with primary reading. Depending on the text studied, students could also use extracts from film/TV eg <i>Dr Who</i>, various versions of <i>Dracula</i>, <i>Frankenstein</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extracts from texts (and/or those supplied by students) film/TV extracts as appropriate secondary reading (eg James and Mendelsohn <i>The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature</i>, Cambridge University Press)

Week 2

Learning objective	Subject-specific skills	Learning activity	Differentiation and extension	Resources
<p>Beginnings and endings (also see sample lesson plan)</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider the importance of the beginnings and endings of their set novel. 	<p>Applying knowledge of the following to their set text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> setting up of the storyworld at the beginning of the novel the privileged position of beginnings and endings in terms of narrative structure and their importance in presenting key aspects of themes, places, times and characters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do some focused work with openings of novels (use other non-set text examples – for example the beginning/opening paragraph to <i>The Almost Moon</i>) to encourage students to think about how authors set up: places, times, characters and events at the beginning of a novel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are our first impressions of the main characters? What kind of narrating voice is used? What patterns – and exceptions – seem to occur across a selection of beginnings looked at? Refine the focus by asking students to explore their own set text drawing together key aspects of the novel's beginning. Look at film/TV adaptations of chosen set text. How do these begin and how are these similar/different to the novel itself? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can complete similar activities with the ending of their novel, looking at the effect of making small-scale and more radical changes to the ending, deleting or adding extra scenes and so on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> selection of beginnings of novels (including <i>The Almost Moon</i>) film/TV extracts as appropriate

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiment by writing alternative beginnings to chosen set text – what do these add and what do these take away? Students could explore changing key aspects such as narrating voice, focus on characters, time and place.		
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Week 3

Learning objective	Subject-specific skills	Learning activity	Differentiation and extension	Resources
<p>Narrative structure</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the effects of different ways of structuring narratives • develop their expertise in applying analytical tools to sections of their chosen text. 	<p>Applying knowledge of the following to their set text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of the storyworld • use of description and plot advancing to create a fictional landscape • global narrative structures: epistolary structure, embedded narratives, flashbacks, shifts in time and place deixis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pairs or small groups, take an important section of the novel where the storyworld is fleshed out in terms of description and plot advancement. Identify precisely how this is achieved and report back on patterns in lexis, syntax and discourse. • Explore the novel's global narrative structure by presenting this in a diagrammatic format eg <i>Frankenstein</i> as a series of embedded stories. Think about how narrative transitions operate ie how are shifts in narrator, time, place encoded? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students could think about contrasting sections of their novel and look at the strategies each author uses to create episodes where either narrative, description or dialogue dominate. How can these sections be defined in terms of style? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A3 paper to allow diagrammatic representation of narrative structure • other materials could be used to show texts with unusual narrative structures (eg those involving time travel, shifts in narrating voice) and those that have episodes with very different focuses (eg narration versus description)

Week 4

Learning objective	Subject-specific skills	Learning activity	Differentiation and extension	Resources
<p>Locations</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand how authors set up and develop locations through specific language choices explore the significance of locations as key motifs in their chosen novel. 	<p>Applying knowledge of the following to their set text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ways of describing settings through specific syntactic and lexical choices themes and motifs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the likely effects created by the description of settings by giving students key episodes from their novel and asking them to find extracts of music or a series of images that they feel best match the author's description. Encourage reflection and precision when talking about specific language choices that influence their decisions. Encourage more general ideas of how a text 'feels' to be explored in terms of specific instances of use and larger patterns that occur in the extract. Split students into groups and give them key themes and motifs (eg domesticity, relationships and water, internal/external locations in <i>The Lovely Bones</i>). Present findings back to the rest of the class on each of these together with key episodes from the text in which these feature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students could again compare the development of locations in written texts with those in film and TV adaptations of their chosen novel. What aspects of setting and location do these emphasise? How do they rely on the affordances of a different (visual medium). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access to YouTube (or similar) and a selection of magazines/ images

Week 5

Learning objective	Subject-specific skills	Learning activity	Differentiation and extension	Resources
<p>Characterisation</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the ways in which characters are presented and developed through the process of characterisation develop their knowledge of key characters within their chosen text. 	<p>Applying knowledge of the following to their set text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ways of describing characters: physical appearance and body language, interaction, speech, opinions of other characters and the narrator the ways in which readers draw on schematic knowledge to flesh out descriptions and create vivid senses of characters the amount of focus afforded to individual characters at specific points in the novel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in pairs, students can explore the ways in which textual detail and schematic knowledge work together to develop character. Give them a very short description of a character from their set novel and ask them to think about how they 'gap fill' by building on what's in the text. For example, what mental construct of the following do different students create (from <i>Dracula</i>): <i>Within, stood a tall old man, clean-shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to foot.</i> Explore key characters in set novel by tracing their progression through the narrative. Students can work on one major character or a number of minor characters in detail, deciding on pivotal and key episodes (these should include the first and last time these characters are mentioned). They should ensure that they focus on: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work on gap-filling can lead to some fine-tuned discussion of particular language choices and their effects. Students could think about how making very small changes to a description can result in a very different image being constructed. For example, they could explore the significance of even the smallest changes by making their own to the character of Dracula and thinking about the effect of those choices. Student could look at larger character patterns across their novel by using one of the structuralist typologies (eg Propp). To what extent is it easy to distribute these roles across the novel? Are more recently written novels like <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> and <i>The Lovely Bones</i> more problematic in terms of seeing specific characters in specific roles? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A3 paper (or bigger) to allow students to present their posters

		physical appearance and body language, interaction, speech, opinions of other characters and the narrator. These can be presented to the remainder of the group as a poster utilising text, images and any other ways that students wish to show the development of characters across time in the novel.		
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Week 6

Learning objective	Subject-specific skills	Learning activity	Differentiation and extension	Resources
<p>Speech and Thought</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be able to identify and explain the ways in which authors present speech and thought in narratives and the effects of such choices. 	<p>Applying knowledge of the following to their set text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> categories of speech and thought (eg direct, indirect and narrator's representation of speech/thought acts) ways in which speech and thought are presented through specific speech verbs, verbs of perception, belief and memory, and personal vocabularies of characters the ways in which dialogue is handled and interaction is represented in literary fiction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the differences between the modes of speech/thought presentation by taking a short example of direct speech and converting it to other forms and looking at the effects of different presentations. Ensure that students are aware of the crucial linguistic differences, eg the removal of speech clauses for free direct speech, reconfiguration of pronouns for free indirect speech and the summary of what was said in narrator's representation of speech act and narrator's representation of speech. Working in pairs, students can summarise the personal vocabularies of key characters in their chosen novel (this could tie in with their work tracking characters). Or, two pairs could each work on one character with one pair exploring vocabulary choices that project a certain way of seeing the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on speech and thought presentation can be developed by looking at specific episodes where one form dominates the narrative and explaining the interpretative effects. This can be extended by looking at larger patterns across the novel: for example is the speech of certain characters always presented in a certain way? Why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cut up strips of examples of different types of speech (and thought presentation)

		world (for example use of particular semantic fields or age-specific words), and the other looking at any syntactic patterns (word order, types of sentences, use of contractions and so on).		
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Week 7

Learning objective	Subject-specific skills	Learning activity	Differentiation and extension	Resources
<p>Point of View (also see sample lesson plan)</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be able to identify different types of narration and their effects explore the effects of different kinds of modal constructions in presenting narrators' and characters' beliefs consider the impact of potentially unreliable narrators in the novel they are studying. 	<p>Applying knowledge of the following to their set text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> different types of narration (eg homodiegetic and heterodiegetic) ways in which modality is marked in narratives through the use of modal verbs, adjectives, adverbs, tags and phrases reliable and unreliable narrators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how point of view operates by asking students to construct narratives around a photograph from different perspectives both perceptually and ideologically, and from different time frames. Students should be able to explore how narratives position readers to see events in certain ways and that this representation is always partial and subjective. Students can then explore the different ways in which point of view operates in selected parts of their novel, undertaking some rewriting exercises to explore the significance of particular perspectives in their text. Working in small groups, students can look at the effects of different patterns of modality in parts of their novel. Ensure that students are able to distinguish between two very basic types of modality (deontic and epistemic) and then 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on point of view can be developed by exploiting the potential of film to present different perspectives and time frames. Students could work with extracts from their novels and storyboard these and/or film short scenes where they present parts of their novel and discuss the reasons for using particular shot types. If facilities are available, more advanced editing could be undertaken and used as the basis for further discussion. Students could find examples of modality operating in non-literary texts: do different kinds of genre relying on different sorts of modal patterning and forms? For A level students, this would form very good preparation for NEA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> photograph and narrative extracts storyboarding sheets access to filming and editing equipment

		<p>focus on extracts that are either primarily epistemic, primarily deontic or largely unmodalised (flat and neutral). What is the effect of this kind of patterning? Again, some simple rewriting exercises to 'shift' the modal flavour will give insight into aspects of point of view and characterisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Again in small groups, ask students to take one character and think about the reliability of their narrative or speech. Do they have any grounds for being unreliable? How do they try to validate their feelings? How do other narrators/characters frame them as being reliable or not?		
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Week 8

Learning objective	Subject-specific skills	Learning activity	Differentiation and extension	Resources
<p>Developing contextual awareness</p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be able to think about the significance of a range of contextual factors in the shaping of meaning. 	<p>Applying knowledge of the following to their set text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> biographical, literary and historical contexts of production contexts of reception including modern interpretations of texts and genres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to research contexts of production for each of their texts to focus on specific contextual factors that might be important in developing an informed response. This should focus on information that is relevant and closely relatable to the fantasy genre rather than general socio-historical context (eg the influence of the gothic on Shelley, her thinking and writing, late Victorian ideas about science and the human condition, dystopian fiction and the threat of war and postmodernism at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries). Give groups of students different interpretations from both the literary-critical tradition and from online reading groups such as <i>goodreads.com</i>. What differences can students see in the ways that their set text has been interpreted over time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students could develop their work by considering how the fantasy genre has been modified across time, including in very recent narratives and adaptations of older texts (eg the abundance of vampire films, TV programmes and novels). For example, how are vampires represented in the <i>Twilight</i> series of books and films? How is this different to Stoker's depiction in <i>Dracula</i>? Students can explore what different groups of readers have said about their texts. They could take a critical reading frame (eg new historicist) or a particular group of readers (eg females) and explore how (and why) novels are interpreted in different ways depending on a reader's ideological stance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a variety of extracts from different historical sources, influential texts and different interpretations access to libraries/online reading for research and for access to different interpretations different versions of similar fiction, films, TV extracts on the gothic, science-fiction, dystopia, supernatural and so on to compare with the set text in terms of representation of ideas, characters and events

		(Even for more recent texts it should be possible to see variations in interpretations.)		
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