English Literature Pre-Course Assignments

1. Purchase a copy of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* ready for September. We would recommend the student edition by Cambridge University Press, ISBN: 978-1107615489. **You will need this for the first week of term.**

2. Read the RSC article on the 'Stage History of Hamlet'. Make a page of notes consolidating your learning about key influences in its history. (https://www.rsc.org.uk/hamlet/about-the-play/stage-history)

3. Read the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy from Act 3 Scene 1 (included below). What do you think the main ideas are of this speech? What imagery is Shakespeare using here to explore ideas around life and death? You may research this, however use your own thoughts and brain first! You should annotate the extract closely.

4. Watch the following 4 actors performing the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy. What mood and tone do they all present? What is similar and different about their performances? What choices has the director made about staging/ casting/ lighting – how does this convey the ideas of this speech? Make notes on your ideas and observations.

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6CLdCl9TB0 – Andrew Scott (stage production)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYZHb2xo0OI - David Tennant (2009 Film)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjuZq-8PUw0 – Kenneth Brannagh (1996 Film)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiWf4I6bOcA – Lawrence Olivier (1948 Film)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23hZQiMoB7A – A bit of fun!

5. Watch a full production of Hamlet. Choose either a film or stage version to watch – lots available on Prime Video and some for free on Youtube. This will greatly help your understanding of the play prior to studying it. It will also allow you to explore how a director and actors have made decisions about staging, characters etc.

6. Read the following article from the British Library about the Dystopian Genre:
   https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/freedom-or-oppression-the-fear-of-dystopia

7. Choose at least one dystopian text from the reading list and read it over the summer.

8. Create a slideshow/ word document which explores the novel you have read. What dystopian features can you identify in the novel? Give examples from the novel – use quotations if you can.

9. Watch a dystopian film of your choice and write a review which explores how successfully the film presents the dystopian genre.

10. Conduct some research into influences of the Dystopian genre. Create a timeline of 10 significant historical/ social or literary events which were influential to the genre.

Wider Reading List

Literature

1. After London – Richard Jefferies (1885)
2. War of the Worlds – H. G. Wells (1898)
3. The Iron Heel – Jack London (1909)
4. The Machine Stops – E M Forster (1909) *Short Story*
5. Herland – Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1914)
6. We – Yevgeny Zamyatin (1924)
7. Der Prozess – Franz Kafka – (1925)
8. City of the Living Dead – Laurence Manning and Fletcher Pratt (1930)
9. Brave New World – Aldous Huxley (1932)
10. The Final War – Carl W Spohr (1932) *Short Story*
11. The Big Sleep – Raymond Chandler (1939)
12. Nineteen Eighty-four – George Orwell (1949)
13. Fahrenheit 451 – Ray Bradbury (1953)
14. The Man in the High Castle – Philip K Dick (1959)
15. A Clockwork Orange – Anthony Burgess (1962)
16. Make Room! Make Room! – Harry Harrison (1966)
17. Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? – Philip K Dick (1968)
18. Woman on the Edge of Time – Marge Piercy (1976)
19. The Forever War – Joe Haldeman (1977)
20. The Handmaid's Tale – Margaret Atwood (1987)
21. Robocop – Paul Verhoeven (1987)
22. Noughts and Crosses – Malorie Blackman (2001)
23. Zone One – Colson Whitehead (2001)
24. Oryx and Crake – Margaret Atwood (2003)
25. Never Let me Go – Kazuo Ishiguro (2005)
26. The Power – Naomi Alderman (2017)
27. Suicide Club – Rachel Heng (2018)
28. The Water Cure – Sophie Mackintosh (2018)
29. Red Clocks – Leni Zumas (2018)
30. Blackfish City – Sam J Miller (2018)
31. We Cast a Shadow – Maurice Carlos Ruffin (2019)

Film

1. Metropolis – Fritz Lang (1926)
2. Invasion of the Body Snatchers – Don Siegel (1955)
3. Colossus – D.F. Jones (1966)
4. 2001: A Space Odyssey – Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C Clark (1968)
5. A Clockwork Orange: Stanley Kubrick (1971)
6. Alien – Ridley Scott (1979)
7. Blade Runner – Ridley Scott (1982)
8. Mad Max/ Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior – George Miller (1982)
9. The Terminator – James Cameron (1984)
10. The Matrix – Wachowski Brothers (1999)

Graphic Novels

1. V for Vendetta – Alan Moore (1982)
2. Watchmen – Alan Moore (1987)
3. 1984 – George Orwell/ Fido Nesti (2021)

Task 3: To Be or Not to Be, Act 3 Scene 1

Speech: "To be, or not to be, that is the question"

BY <u>WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE</u>

(from Hamlet*, spoken by Hamlet)*

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause—there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovere'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,

And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.