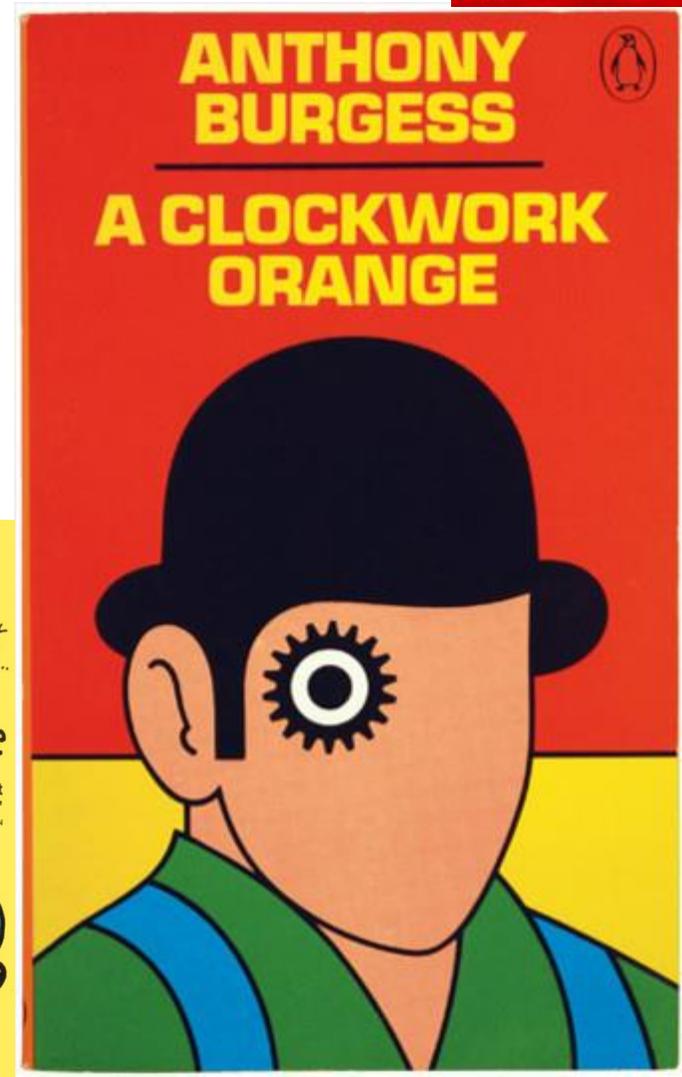
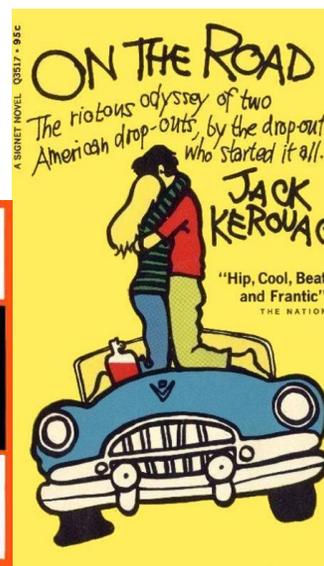
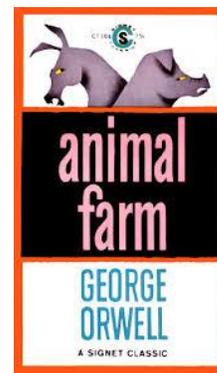
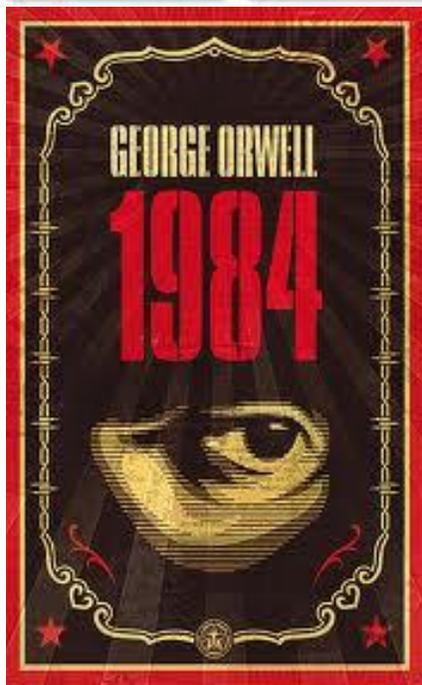


Advanced Higher

Dissertation



Course Weighting

- Specialist Study/ Dissertation (40%)
- Literature Study (30%)
- Creative writing (30%)

Specialist Study: Task

- *Make an independent study of and produce a dissertation on an approved aspect or aspects of language or literature of 3500 words.*

Text Selection

- You must select texts that **are not being taught** on the course this year, and that are of **suitable literary merit**.
- You may choose the texts of **one author** to explore.
- You may choose the texts of more than one author which are **linked** by **thematic concern** or **historical period** or **stylistic feature**.
- Single works by one author should **avoid serial treatment** in which each work is isolated from the others.
- There is no rule against crossing genre; however, it is alleged that SQA 'don't like it!'

Area for Study

- Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to engage critically and analytically with primary texts and literary criticism. While the dissertation topic may vary in scope between individual submissions, all dissertations must **have a clear focus with definable boundaries**.
- In guiding your time and task-management, draw up a list of tasks that you have to do, and **draw up a realistic timetable** in which to fulfil them.
- Your first main aim will be to **establish a topic**, read your **primary texts** and **explore existing criticism** in your chosen field. You should take notes and begin to formulate your ideas.
- The texts you pick will have **themes/ideas that will guide your topic** – that's probably why you picked the text. It is through close reading of the text that you will be able to **narrow your focus**.

Timeline

- Throughout the course of producing your dissertation, you will have to produce the following, which will be kept as proof of authenticity:

1. Reading and note-taking.....	<u>DUE: Wednesday 1st October</u>
2. Draft title and proposals	<u>DUE: Wednesday 8th October</u>
3. Outline plan.....	<u>DUE: Wednesday 5th November</u>
4. First draft.....	<u>DUE: Wednesday 3rd December</u>
5. Second Draft.....	<u>DUE: Wednesday 4th February</u>

- The final uplift date by SQA is around Easter. However, you should be finished in good time to allow you to work on creative writing folio and examination preparation between March and May.

Dissertation: Marker's Report

- Successful dissertations undertook **detailed** comparative studies of **challenging** material.
- Less successful submissions suffer from **poorly constructed tasks** (too broad in scope) with a **disregard for footnotes** and bibliography.
- **Serial treatment** of two or more texts often lead to weak analysis.
- Over-reliance on a **limited range of secondary sources** (usually the well-known commercial or semi-commercial websites)
- Candidates with **“better, more substantial use of research tended to do well.”**

Reading and Note-taking

- A good dissertation requires **commitment** and **discipline**.
- Work out a **timetable** of study for the next month (Sept) to enable you to meet your 1st deadline - tbc
- Be **realistic** and accept that not all your study time will be productive; therefore, build in **more than you think you will need**.
- Be prepared to **make use of dead time**. Keep a copy of one of your texts on you at all times with a pad and pen. Read and re-read. Ask questions and record. Write analytical paragraphs based on a chapter or section. Read it back and question.

Reading and Note-taking

- Read your **primary texts**.
- **Notes** – plot summary, character development, setting, style and theme.
- Also give yourself time to **ask questions** at end of each reading section.
- Be **systematic** and **organised**.
- If you own your text (recommended), **annotate it**. Highlighter key. Notes in margins.
- It is the process of reading, re-reading and note-taking that will **inform your area for study**.

Note-taking Advice

Secondary Reading

- Locate your text within its historical period (significant events and concerns of that society), genre and literary tradition of the time.
- Identify the main critics of your writer's work.
 - Do they agree or disagree about individual characters' motivation? Do they emotionally respond to the characters in the same way?
 - Are there different ways of looking at the text in terms of literary theory? Feminist perspective? Marxist perspective? Post-modern perspective?
- Consider to what extent you agree and disagree with certain critics. Whose arguments can you build on or disagree with? You must always acknowledge secondary sources.
- Avoid too heavy reliance. Dissertation is about YOUR RESPONSE, of course, but you must show an understanding of existing criticism.
- Best time for a class visit to libraries?

Reading and Note-taking

- Secondary reading is essential to **show you have an awareness** of your author, theme, stylistic features or historical period **in the context of other criticism.**
- You will have access to Edinburgh University library (if not already.)
- Do not be tempted to read everything on your text. Try to narrow reading based on where you think your focus is going to lie. **Relevancy.**
- You should **find out the critical views** on the relevant aspects of your text **AND consider your reaction to them.** Agree and expand? Disagree? Disagree in part?
- Record notes **systematically**; know when your notes are verbatim, in own words or a reaction from you.

Title

- The wording of the dissertation topic should:
 - identify **authors and texts** to be studied
 - indicate **the scope of the study** to be undertaken
 - provide a concise explanation **of the literary or language aims of the study** to be undertaken

Approved Examples

- A critical analysis of the uses Evelyn Waugh makes of satire in *Decline and Fall*, *Black Mischief* and *Scoop*.
- A critical analysis of John Galt's portrayal of 19th Century Scottish rural life in *The Annals of the Parish* and *The Provost*.
- A critical appraisal of Angela Carter's use of traditional myths and fairy tales to explore female sexuality in her novel *The Magic Toyshop* and in four of her short stories — *The Bloody Chamber*, *The Snow Child*, *The Lady of the House of Love* and *The Company of Wolves*.
- An analytical and evaluative study of the literary techniques D H Lawrence employs in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Women in Love* to create powerful female characters who challenge the social conventions of their times.

Topic Construction

- Text and author
- Thematic area of study
- Stylistic exploration

To break it down...

- Title should –
 - Suggest a detailed **comparison** of texts
 - Concentrate **on literary features** of the text
 - Concentrate on **a limited number of texts** in detail
 - Deal with a **substantial body of reading**
 - Include texts of **literary merit**
 - Focus on a specific **thematic link**
- Try to come up with some possible phrasing of your title. Two or three examples.

Note-taking Advice

Primary reading

- Reading the texts. Recording what you notice under the usual headings. Be detailed. Record quotations. Record your own observations, analysis and questions.
- Identify key scenes of your texts – character introductions, turning points, realisations, climax... Read and re-read.
- Keep notes organised. Identify quotations, your analysis, your further questions/confusions
- When you approach your secondary reading – consider what questions your primary note-taking has raised. Note-taking is thinking.

Deadline – Thursday 23rd October

- Prepare a brief presentation on your research.
 - Historical context of the work
 - How your writer fits into the time-period/literary traditions of the time
 - Brief summary of the works.
 - Key things you noticed about the writers' style (see note-taking sheet)
 - Reference to at least three critical views
 - What you think your 'area of study' will be now that your research is fully underway.
- We will then have one week to refine the area of study – by **Thursday 30th October.**

Deadlines - amended

1. Reading and note-taking.....	<u>DUE: Thursday 23rd October</u>
2. Draft title and proposals	<u>DUE: Thursday 30th October</u>
3. Outline plan.....	<u>DUE: Thursday 6th November</u>
4. First draft.....	<u>DUE: Wednesday 3rd December</u>
5. Second Draft.....	<u>DUE: Wednesday 4th February</u>

There will be no change to the first draft deadline. At all.

Reading

- Two dissertations to read.
- Consider –
 - The framing/defining of the topic
 - The structure of the essay
 - The quality of analysis
 - The quality of expression
- Write on the text your thoughts for Thursday. Start now!

Dissertation

- You are gonna be writing this...
- Writing is a process.
- Drafting and re-drafting sections

Structuring

- Your main sections should compare key aspects of the text. Imagine writing a comparative essay on 'Brave New World' and '1984'. (*A comparative analysis of techniques used to explore the dangers to human nature.*)
- To make the essay COMPARATIVE, you have to hold up the aspects of the text beside each other:
 - Section 1 - Characterisation in BNW, followed by characterisation in 1984
 - Section 2 - Use of Setting in BNW, followed by setting in 1984
 - Section 3 - Narrative voice in BNW, followed by narrative voice in 1984
- Your characterisation points might involve 2 paragraphs on BNW, followed by 1 long paragraph exploring characterisation in 1984.
- While looking at 1984, you would use comparative phrases to demonstrate that you are comparing while analysing. 'is similar to' 'also employs' 'unlike Huxley, Orwell...' 'the clear difference appears to be...'

Paragraph Structure – Same as always!

- **Topic sentence** which makes the main claim of the paragraph (and links to what has come before)
- Subsequent sentences should **justify** or **illustrate** the claim:
 - Appropriate quotation and analysis (rinse and repeat!)
 - Reference to critical views that you've found – showing that the ideas are not entirely yours if necessary.
 - Consistent focus on essay title and topic.
- **Summing up of the paragraph**, clearly focusing on your theme/title. What has been ascertained in the paragraph, and link onto next paragraph.

Examine

- Read the essay section on narrative voice.
 - Notice the clear topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph.
 - Notice the analysis is consistently linked to the title of the dissertation.
 - Notice the comparative elements of the writing.

Formal Style

- No contractions
- Avoid addressing the reader
- Avoid using 'I' unless you are being emphatic.
- No slang terms
- Complex sentence structure and vocabulary
- Avoid emphatic punctuation!!
- Be careful with the use of 'of course'
- Use complex sentence structure, but one sentence across four lines is probably the limit of what a reader can handle.
- Quotations of more than four words should be indented and on new line.
- Use italics to identify the names of your texts throughout.

Footnotes

- Footnotes should be kept to a minimum and numbered sequentially from the beginning to the end of your dissertation.
- The first reference to a text cited or quoted from should be given in full as follows:
- Bennett, Joan, *Four Metaphysical Poets*, (London, 1953), p23.
- The normal convention for subsequent references is: Bennett, p47.
- It is acceptable to abbreviate lengthy titles in footnotes or textual references. For example: *All's Well That Ends Well* can become AWTEW.
- Simple references, such as line numbers or page references of quotations from a book or a play or a poem already cited in full, can usually be incorporated in the text, normally in parentheses after quotations.
- Internet sources should be referred to thus:
- Crowley, J, *New York Times* (1985), Review of *Lanark*. Available: <http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~crumey/gray1.html>
- In MSWord you can find footnote function under 'references' and 'add footnote'

Sources

- Ensure you have kept a clear list of all your sources, primary and secondary

Miller & Williams Dissertation

1. Key words from title to be explored?
2. What is the line of argument set out in the introduction? I.e. What is the candidate setting out to show/prove?
3. How are the main sections of the dissertation broken up?
4. Find some comparative words/phrases.
5. Write down criteria for what you think makes a good dissertation based on this.

Dissertation

- A lot of your dissertation will be focused on characterisation, so it is important to analyse the key moments for your character.

Dissertation: Analysis Task

- Introduction of main character
 - Personality suggested
 - Details about looks
 - Thoughts and feelings
 - Reactions to events and other people
 - What others think about them
 - Language used (if they are the narrator. Look at sentence structure, vocab, imagery, tone of voice?)
 - Link your character's introduction to main themes of novel
- Table with sections: **Quotation**, **Analysis**, **Thematic Links**

Might need to analyse word choice, imagery, sentence structure, tone