

This module will develop further the analytical and critical skills introduced in semester one, and the study of historical contexts which was the focus of study in semester two, by examining a key function of literary texts: the production of meaning through representation. An understanding of the work of representation – the reproduction of the world in images, symbols, and actions – is an essential component in the act of reading not only literary texts but all ‘language systems’: paintings, films, music. This module will examine representation and meaning in literary texts in five areas: *mimesis* (a Greek word, originating in classical literature, meaning ‘imitation’), *allegory* (the representation of abstract ideas or principles by characters, figures, or events), *spectacle* (the representation of memorable events or impressive appearances which are greater than and which subordinate everyday experience), *realism* (a style of writing that seeks to represent the familiar or typical in real life, rather than an idealized, formalized, or romantic interpretation of it), and *simulacrum* (a representation that makes a ‘pretence’ of reality but which bears no relation to any reality whatsoever). The course will explore literary and other constructions of the real, the surreal, and the hyperreal, metaphor, analogy, and the simulacrum, and consider how these forms of representation are fashioned, their histories, their limitations, and their effects in wider social and cultural spheres. We will look at films and images as well as literary and theoretical texts.

**Set literary texts for purchase:**

- **Mimesis:**  
Sophocles, *King Oedipus* in *The Three Theban Plays: King Oedipus; Oedipus at Colonus; Antigone*, translated by Robert Fagles Watling (London: Penguin Classics, 1984) ISBN 0140444254
- **Allegory:**  
*The Gawain Poet: Complete Works* ed. and trans. Marie Borroff (London: Norton, 2011) ISBN 9780393912357
- **Spectacle:**  
William Shakespeare, *Henry V* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1995) ISBN 1904271081
- **Realism:**  
Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, ed. Paul Schlicke (Oxford World's Classics, 1989) ISBN 9780199536276
- **Simulacrum:**  
See below

**The Module Reader** will contain full texts and extracts of further literary set texts, including the material for the *simulacrum* lectures and tutorials. In addition, the reader will reproduce historically relevant documents, theoretical writings, and contemporary critical works which will assist you in reading the literary works.

**Teaching** will consist of two lectures and one seminar per week. Arrangements for the viewing of films will be made at the beginning of the semester.