

## Liverpool John Moores University

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Title: Locating Madness  
Status: Definitive  
Code: **6107ENGL** (122150)  
Version Start Date: 01-08-2021

Owning School/Faculty: Humanities and Social Science  
Teaching School/Faculty: Humanities and Social Science

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**Academic Level:** FHEQ6      **Credit Value:** 20      **Total Delivered Hours:** 35

**Total Learning Hours:** 200      **Private Study:** 165

### Delivery Options

Course typically offered: Semester 1

Component	Contact Hours
Lecture	11
Seminar	22
Tutorial	2

**Grading Basis:** 40 %

### Assessment Details

Category	Short Description	Description	Weighting (%)	Exam Duration
Reflection	AS1	Seminar Journal (including textual analysis) 1500 words	30	
Essay	AS2	Researched Essay 3000 words	70	

### Aims

1. *To understand and interrogate discourses of and about 'madness' through the analysis of a range of texts.*
2. *To extend students' understanding of the role of binary constructions (with particular reference to identity and difference in gender, sexuality, race, and class) in relation to madness and its discourses.*
3. *To explore possible links between linguistic and mental functioning as represented in literary texts, especially in relation to modern accounts of trauma and traumatic experience.*
4. *To critique and problematize accepted modes of representing madness in contemporary culture.*

## **Learning Outcomes**

After completing the module the student should be able to:

- 1 Critically and independently review discourses surrounding madness, and consider their continuing cultural significance using knowledge about madness in a range of historical settings and cultural traditions
- 2 Respond analytically, creatively, and imaginatively to representations of madness in a range of sources, especially literary texts from different genres such as poetry, fiction, memoir, theatre, and film adaptation.
- 3 Demonstrate awareness of the major intellectual and theoretical traditions which have sought to investigate structural parallels between language and literature and the 'normal' and the pathological mind.
- 4 Critique the status, use, and function of the term 'madness', especially in relation to debates in contemporary culture, and integrate new concepts and evidence from a range of other debates, e.g. linguistic, sexual, spatial, historical, political, and medical.

## **Learning Outcomes of Assessments**

The assessment item list is assessed via the learning outcomes listed:

Seminar Journal 1500 words	1	3
Researched Essay 3000 words	2	4

## **Outline Syllabus**

*Introduction 1: Defining Madness. No set text: group discussion of models and vocabulary of madness (materials provided)*

*Introduction 2: Confining Madness. Set texts: Diary of a Madman by Nikolai Gogol; excerpt from Foucault, Madness and Civilization.*

*Textual locations 1: fiction. Set text: The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath.*

*Textual locations 2: poetry. Set text: selection of poems from Bauer, A Mind Apart.*

*Textual locations 3: memoir. Set text: The Last Asylum by Barbara Taylor.*

*Textual locations 4: theatre. Set text: Equus by Peter Shaffer.*

*Theories of madness and language. No set text (materials provided).*

*Trauma and literature 1. Set text: Regeneration by Pat Barker.*

*Trauma and literature 2. Set text: The Butcher Boy by Patrick McCabe.*

*Everyday Madness. Set text: 'The Collectors' by Matt Bell.*

*Madness Mind and Brain. Set text: The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks.*

## **Learning Activities**

Lectures, seminars, and consultation tutorials; private study, written work and Blackboard activity.

## **Notes**

This module explores the aesthetic, cultural, and political functions and changing values of the topic of 'madness' in modern western culture, addressing the problems and products of discourses of mental illness or instability through the analysis of a variety of literary texts.

It encourages students to extend their understanding of key binary constructions of order and disorder, normality and deviance, freedom and confinement, 'self' and 'other', 'meaning' and 'non-meaning', as they operate through 'madness' and its cultural representations, with reference to language, sexuality, race, class, and national identity.

Topics and theories considered include different definitions of and approaches to 'madness'; the discursive dynamics of sanity and insanity; madness as a symbol of social order and disorder, or as counter-culture and protest; the gendering of madness; the relationship between linguistic and psychic instability; psychic investment in writing; the relationship between psychoanalytic theory and literary writing; the spatial inscription of psychopathology or mental distress; scientific narratives of madness and the mind; and theories of the carnivalesque, melancholia, abjection, phobia, and trauma.