What a prospective student needs to know about this course

The key skills and components of the course

- The first examined unit, entitled ‘Drama and Poetry Pre-1900’ involves the study of a Shakespeare play and the comparative study of drama and poetry produced pre-1900. Not only will students broaden their horizons in terms of the texts that they have read before, but they will learn the vital importance of the contexts surrounding these texts.

- The second unit, ‘Comparative and Contextual Study’ invites students to become experts in a particular period or genre of literature (such as American Fiction or The Gothic). In this unit, they will prepare to answer questions on key ‘set texts’ as well as an ‘unseen’ passage in their specialist topic area. They will also explore new ways of interpreting literature – such as Marxist and Feminist readings of texts.

- The coursework unit (20% of the A-level) is a fabulous opportunity for students to improve their close analysis skills as well as their appreciation of 21st century literature.

Examination Results 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>% of students that achieved A*/B grade</th>
<th>% of students that achieved A*/C grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-Level English Literature</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This course attracts students who enjoy reading, debating and analysing a wide range of poetry, plays and novels. The course naturally develops the skills of debate and independent research. In addition, it provides an excellent foundation for the study of literature at undergraduate level.

To enhance the study of this course, the English Area has offered enrichment opportunities which have included theatre performances and visiting guest lecturers. Additional extension lessons have also been offered in past years for those students keen to broaden their experience, particularly where considering English as a degree. Popular revision courses have also run prior to the exam period.

Students should not underestimate the challenge of this course, particularly in the second year; they should be prepared to read independently and develop a mature written style. This course effectively complements other essay-based subjects such as Psychology, Philosophy, History, Classics and Modern Foreign Languages as well as Performing Arts courses.
Some reflections from students who have studied with the English Department

“English Lit requires thoughtful yet analytical responses and applying this to my other subjects, Philosophy & History, in the same manner has been really useful, giving my approach to other study more depth. A-Level involves examining the contextual side of the novel/poetry being studied, which is fascinating in itself and gives way for different interpretations to be made. It’s really interesting to consider the extent to which the text is a projection of the author/poet’s own story…”
Eloise Lowe

“I feel that literature shows the beauty of human nature, even when its content can be harrowing, barbaric and dishonourable, and I found that studying the poems of Wilfred Owen mirrored this sentiment entirely. Although the A-Level course is relatively new to me, I am already finding studying Shakespeare and Chaucer intellectually invigorating, especially when considering the contextual elements that influenced the texts. English Literature has complemented my other A-Level courses, Economics and Philosophy, very well. The analytic nature of literature is echoed strongly within Economics, especially when looking at extracts and applying them to economic theories.”
Evie Wilson

“I have found English Literature to be a great help in understanding how to structure an essay and so it has been applicable to my other subjects. It has allowed me to expand my reading to literature I would not ordinarily choose to read myself and that I have found to be most enjoyable. English Literature has also helped me not to take written words at face value and has encouraged me to try and look deeper for a better understanding of the author’s intentions.”
Harry Frostick

“I chose the course as I love being able to express myself and my opinions on literature and the course has allowed me to do just that.”
Jess Duke

“I’m really enjoying the contrast between the different texts we’re studying at A-Level. The essay writing also complements my other courses which are all essay-based, therefore improving my grades across my timetable.”
Emily Smith

“Loved the coursework last year. I felt like I was able to write my own piece from scratch with much more scope to do something different and less rigidly structured.”
Philippa Cole

“I have enjoyed the range of different books allocated to the course. This reading helps to further develop your capabilities in other subjects.”
Laurence McWhinnie

“For further information contact: Mr P Wilson
Email: pwilson@swchs.net

Sixth Form at Saffron Walden County High
Audley End Road, Saffron Walden CB11 4UH
Tel: 01799 513030 Fax: 01799 513031
www.swchs.net