



Syllabus

Course Title: The Cottagecore Canon: British Literature and the Dream of Pastoral Living [aka The Cottagecore Tradition in British Literature]

Program and Date: London Maymester: May 16-30, 2027

Instructor Name: Professor Sarah Blackwell

Instructor Home Institution and Department:

Thomas More University, English & Creative Writing Department

Instructor Email and Phone:

Campus email: blackws@thomasmore.edu, Personal email: prof.sarah.blackwell@gmail.com

Cell phone: 859-391-0319

Get to Know Your Professor

Professor Blackwell is known at Thomas More University for teaching distinctive and entertaining literature courses. Some of her favorites are: Supernatural and Gothic Literature and Themed Contemporary Literature Courses (Cottagecore, Fairy Tales, Mythology, Witches). In addition to teaching and reading, Professor Blackwell loves to travel, hike, and spend time with her husband and two schnoodles. Over the last 15 years, she's explored India, Nepal, England, Scotland, Ireland, and nearly every National Park in the United States.

This course combines several of Professor Blackwell's loves into one amazing class. Lush gardens, old bookshops, woodland cafes, and lots of reading and wandering in nature. This will be her fourth course with CCSA. She previously led a course on Shakespeare for the London Summer Program in 2016, a Gothic Lit course in London for the Winter Program in 2018-19, and a Short Fiction course in London / Dublin for the Winter Program in 2023-24.

Course Description

Long winding walks along the Thames. Walled gardens heavy with roses. Moss-soft woodland paths. Weathered bookshops and candlelit cafés. Today we might call it cottagecore — but before it was an aesthetic, it was everyday life in Romantic and Victorian Britain. In this course, students will trace the literary roots of the cottagecore aesthetic through poetry, short fiction, and nature writing — discovering how Britain's pastoral past continues to shape its charming, garden-filled present. Students will keep a course journal and compose original creative pieces, experimenting with nature writing, reflective prose, and poetry, inspired by slow, unhurried attention to what we encounter on class excursions to such sites as Kew Gardens, Hampstead Heath, and Queen Mary's Rose Garden, as well as the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Garden Museum.



Syllabus

Course Level and Credit Hours

Undergraduate, Honors Option, 3 credit hours

Prerequisite(s)

100-level English preferred

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of all coursework with a passing grade and full participation in course activities, students shall be able to:

- Knowledgeably discuss a curated collection of short readings and poems by 19th-century British writers
- Explain how experiencing the physical context of literary works deepens one's understanding of those works
- Articulate their thoughts and arguments regarding British literature and the cottagecore aesthetic both orally and in properly formatted written assignments
- Reflect on and articulate how their exposure to British culture has contributed to their personal development

Required Readings and Materials

- 10-20 piece curated poetry collection with Romantic and Victorian poems like "I Wander Lonely As A Cloud (Daffodils)" by William Wordsworth
- Selections from 2-3 19th-century British nature diaries
- Selections from Romantic and Victorian authors such as: Jane Austen, Kenneth Grahame, and Elizabeth Gaskell
- Selections from relevant biographies of Beatrix Potter and Jane Austen

Assignments and Grades

The final grade will be assessed as follows:

- Pre-departure Readings and on-site reading quiz 20%
- Course Presentations on a piece of literature and a site visit* 20%
- Active Participation in all classes and excursions (including pre-departure Zoom) 15%
- Daily Course Journal with guided prompts* 15%
- Creative Writing Assignments 10%
- Cottagecore Field Journal (to be completed after the course)* 20%



Syllabus

*Students taking the course for Honors credit will have additional expectations for their course presentations, their course journals, and the final Cottagecore Field Journal.

Grading Scale

The following scale will be used to compute your grade.

A+: 97-100	C+: 77-79
A: 94-96	C: 74-76
A-: 90-93	C-: 70-73
B+: 87-89	D+: 67-69
B: 84-86	D: 64-66
B-: 80-83	D-: 60-63
F: 60 and below	

Onsite Learning Experiences and Activities

Onsite learning experiences in this class will likely include the following site visits. This is a tentative list which will be replaced with a detailed daily itinerary of class meetings and field trips prior to the departure date.

- Museum visits to: The Victoria & Albert Museum and The Garden Museum
- Kew Gardens
- 2-3 Victorian Manor Houses
- Visits to several prominent (and iconic!) British Gardens including Queen Mary's Rose Garden
- Hampstead Heath
- Out-of-town excursions to either Stratford-upon-Avon or Bath

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory at all scheduled activities and class meetings as well as field trip excursions. This includes any virtual meetings before and after the onsite experience. Repeated absences, including for ill health, will require documentation to be excused.

Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty (see your campus student handbook for definitions) will not be tolerated and will result in failing assignment grades or even a course grade of F. Violations of academic honesty will be reported back to the student's home campus.

Physical Expectations

Program requires walking 3-5 miles per day on uneven pavement in all kinds of weather and long periods of standing. Students must be able to carry their own bags and belongings.



Syllabus

Disability Accommodation

CCSA is committed to providing access to education abroad to the extent possible in a study abroad setting. The earlier CCSA and the faculty know the needs, the more likely we can accommodate them. At a minimum, students seeking accommodations are to contact both the CCSA office and the faculty one month in advance of the program's beginning. Students seeking such accommodation must provide CCSA with a copy of the letter on file with their own Office of Disability Services outlining what services they receive on their home campus.

Title IX Policy

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sexual discrimination violate CCSA policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain support from the Onsite Program Director or the CCSA Executive Director. To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact either of these two officers. Disclosure to faculty instructors or CCSA officers of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on the program or involving a visitor, student or employee is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and other CCSA employees are required to forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the CCSA Executive Director.

Statement about Final Syllabus

Please note that all CCSA syllabi are subject to change, but every effort will be made to ensure participants receive notice of such changes in a timely manner.