1. **Title of the module**

ENGL9000 (EN900) – Illness and Disability in American Culture

1. **School or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module**

School of English

1. **The level of the module (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 7

1. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

30 Credits (15 ECTS)

1. **Which term(s) the module is to be taught in (or other teaching pattern)**

Autumn or Spring

1. **Prerequisite and co-requisite modules**

None

1. **The programmes of study to which the module contributes**

MA English and American Literature; MA American Studies; MA Medical Humanities

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**

8.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the central role of disability and health/illness in literature with a focus on American literature/cultural production;

8.2 Compare and analyse representations of disability and illness in a broad range of genres/media including life writing, fiction, poetry, drama, film, photography, multimedia narrative, and popular culture;

8.3 Explore the ways in which meanings attached to bodies and health are connected to broader questions of American identity and culture and can be articulated within, and against, literary traditions such as American autobiography;

8.4 Synthesize material across periods and demonstrate an awareness of how these relate to preoccupations with health/illness in twentieth- and twentieth-first century American culture;

8.5 Demonstrate advanced skills in the interdisciplinary evaluation of materials in the areas of narrative theory, life writing, American studies, visual culture, disability studies, and medical humanities.

1. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**

9.1 Demonstrate an ability to read and analyse texts critically and make comparisons across a range of literary forms and visual media;

9.2 Demonstrate critical and argumentative skills through short presentations and seminar discussion;

9.3 Demonstrate the ability to conduct interdisciplinary research by evaluating material from different sources;

9.4 Demonstrate the skills to carry out independent research during presentations and essays;

9.5 Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and creatively deploy key theoretical perspectives;

9.6 Demonstrate the ability to construct original, innovative and complex arguments both in class discussions and in writing.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

This module explores representations of illness and disability in American literature and culture, with a particular emphasis on contemporary illness narratives. It encourages students to compare and contrast a range of different genres and media (fiction, life writing, drama, photography, film, popular culture, blogs) and to assess the extent to which they reshape fundamental American ideals and narratives such as the myths of individualism and of everlasting health and happiness. The module follows a thematic rather than chronological framework and is divided into three sections. The first section has a more historical flavour and considers the legacy of the nineteenth-century freak show, prosthetic bodies in post-war and contemporary American culture, and key moments in U.S. disability activism. The second section explores the relationship of illness to language and cultural narratives and, using as case studies cancer narratives and AIDS representations from the twentieth century, examines the aesthetics and politics of illness. It also focuses on the "medicalization” of emotions, statistical panic, and the fear of death as addressed in postmodern fiction and memoirs that consider illness in relation to age (adolescence) and the environment. The final section turns to the depiction of doctors and patients in literature and popular culture, cross-cultural perspectives on health and illness, and the rise of the medical humanities as an academic field.

1. **Reading list (Indicative list, current at time of publication. Reading lists will be published annually)**

Alvord, Lori Arviso (1999) *The Scalpel and the Silver Bear*, (New York: Bantam)

DeLillo, Don (2016) *White Noise* (London: Penguin)

Kushner, Tony (2010) *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes, Part One and Two* (London: Nick Hern)

Linton, Simi (2006) *My Body Politic: A Memoir* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press)

Sontag, Susan (1991) *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors* (London: Penguin)

Wurtzel, Elizabeth (1994) *Prozac Nation: Young and Depressed in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin)

Module is also accompanied with COURSE READER.

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Total Contact Hours: 20

Private Study Hours: 280

Total Study Hours: 300

1. **Assessment methods**
   1. Main assessment methods

* Assignment (5,000 words) – 100%
  1. Reassessment methods
* Like-for-like

1. **Map of module learning outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to learning and teaching methods (section12) and methods of assessment (section 13)**

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| **Module learning outcome** | *8.1* | *8.2* | *8.3* | *8.4* | *8.5* | *9.1* | *9.2* | *9.3* | *9.4* | *9.5* | *9.6* |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Seminar | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Assignment | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The School recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the module is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/ declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.

The inclusive practices in the guidance (see Annex B Appendix A) have been considered in order to support all students in the following areas:

a) Accessible resources and curriculum

b) Learning, teaching and assessment methods

1. **Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered**

Canterbury

1. **Internationalisation**

While focusing on American culture the module explores cross-cultural perspectives to disability, health/illness and within medical practice, in particular through the diverse range of writers studied (for example work by Native American and Cuban American writers). It also encourages students to actively reflect on how wider national contexts are reflected and debated within the genre of the illness narrative.**FACULTIES SUPPORT OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

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| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of the delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
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| Revised FSO Jan 2018 |