1. **Title of the module** EN7050 (EN705) The Contemporary Memoir
2. **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 6
2. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

30 (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**

English and American Literature; English, American and Postcolonial Literatures; English and American Literature with Creative Writing; American Studies; Contemporary Literature

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
2. critically evaluate a variety of contemporary memoirs, primarily from North America, including graphic memoir and docu-memoir (film);
3. demonstrate a systematic understanding of the literary history of the memoir, its connection to other nonfictional forms (for example, autobiography), and of recent developments/variants of the genre;
4. closely engage with a range of established theoretical, aesthetic, and cultural perspectives (including interdisciplinary approaches) to scrutinise the aesthetic and cultural work of the genre and its appeal to present-day mass audiences;
5. demonstrate sophisticated analytical skills, including close textual analysis, to examine the different forms, techniques, and themes (trauma, disability, illness, family relationships, race, sexuality, history) deployed in contemporary memoirs;
6. consolidate and extend their capacity to structure nuanced arguments about debates concerning the ethics of life writing, questions of truth/authenticity, celebrity and (neo)confessional culture, and how contemporary memoirs reconfigure the relationship between the “private” and the “public”.
7. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
8. apply sophisticated close reading techniques to a range of texts and to make productive and complex comparisons between them;
9. display strong presentation skills and an ability to actively participate in group discussions;
10. show an increased capacity for self-directed research and the ability to discuss, evaluate and creatively deploy secondary critical and theoretical perspectives making use of appropriate scholarly sources;
11. frame and identify appropriate research questions and to construct original, clear and well-substantiated arguments.
12. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

Why is the memoir such a popular genre in contemporary literature? Are memoirs individualistic, sentimental and voyeuristic (what is often dismissed as “misery literature”) or can they have strong ethical impulses and powerful real-world effects? This course critically examines the significance of the memoir – a first-person account of a part of one’s life, often written by someone not previously known as a writer– in late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century literature. Through reading a range of recent memoirs we will examine the themes, techniques and debates that have come to characterise this genre. Drawing on a range of aesthetic, theoretical and cultural perspectives, we will approach these memoirs both as literature – as rich sources for critical analysis and capable of transforming academic criticism – and in terms of their appeal, and sometimes controversial reception, within present-day mass audiences. We will also expand our discussion of memoirs to consider graphic narrative and film.

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

Bauby, Jean-Dominique, *The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly* (1997)

Caouette, Jonathan, *Tarnation* (2003) [film]

Couser, Thomas, *Memoir: An Introduction* (2012)

Frey, James, *A Million Little Pieces* (2003)

Kay, Jackie, *Red Dust Road* (2010)

Leavitt, Sarah, *Tangles: A Story about Alzheimer’s, My Mother and Me* (2010)

Nafisi, Azar, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* (2003) Deraniyagala, Sonali, *Wave: A Memoir of Life after the Tsunami* (2013)

Obama, Barack, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (1995)

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

This module will be taught by seminars and further directed sessions.

Total Contact Hours: 30

Private Study Hours: 270

Total Study Hours: 300

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

Seminar Performance (assessed in accordance with criteria published in the School of English Undergraduate Handbook) (10%)

Two 3000-word essays (45% each essay)

* 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* |  |  |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Private Study** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  | **x** |  | **x** | **x** |  |  |
| *Seminar* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |  |
| *Workshop* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Seminar Performance* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |  |
| *Essay 1* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  | **X** |  | **X** | **X** |  |  |
| *Essay 2* | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  | **X** |  | **X** | **X** |  |  |
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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**

This module explores the genre of the contemporary memoir in a variety of cultural contexts drawing on material from the US, Britain, Canada, texts available in translation (for example from France) and in relation to the history of various countries (for instance Iran and Sri Lanka). Students are encouraged to critically explore the genre’s popularity in the West as well as the ways it travels in other contexts by engaging with the various forms it takes and its different reception. The topics they go on to read about in both the primary and secondary material, for example transnational identity, personal and historical trauma, conceptions of the private and the public and the memoir’s ethics in different cultures reflect the module's international scope. Moreover, the class presentation and the essays that students undertake encourage them to develop their critical and close reading skills by comparing memoirs, and assessing their form and function, in relation to these different cultural contexts.

**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) |
| 07/02/18 | Minor | September 2018 | 7, 11, 12 | No |
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