

University of Bristol

Programme in Comparative Literatures and Cultures

Congratulations on your offer to come and study Comparative Literatures and Cultures at Bristol! We are delighted that you have chosen to study with us and look forward to working with you from this autumn to help you pursue your interests, develop your knowledge, and refine your skills in preparation for a life of discoveries. The programme in Comparative Literatures and Cultures allows you to explore various forms of cultural expression (textual and visual) across a broad range of countries, peoples, and communities.

1. Comparative Literature as a Discipline

To begin developing an understanding of the discipline of Comparative Literatures and Cultures, we have a few suggestions below, which are also on the recommended reading list of our introductory unit “What is Comparative Literature: What is it and How can we practise it?”

Hutchinson, Ben, *Comparative Literature. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 2018) – our top choice, from a Bristol graduate. Ebook available.

Apter, Emily, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006)

Bassnett, Susan, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993)

Booker, Christopher, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (London: Continuum, 2005)

Figueira, Dorothy M, ‘Comparative Literature versus World Literature’, *The Comparatist*, 34 (2010), 29-36

Melas, Natalie, *All the Difference in the World: Postcoloniality and the Ends of Comparison* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006). One chapter available here:  
<https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=1282>.

Prawer, Siegbert Salomon, *Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction* (London: Duckworth, 1973)

## 2. Primary Texts

There is so much you can choose from here! At this stage we suggest you read the authors and genres you are passionate about, while keeping in mind some of the ideas about comparison you can explore from the list above. For specific suggestions on particular language areas, you can refer to the tips offered by our language departments. And for contemporary literature, we recommend exploring the translations made available at <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/>.

### 3. Making the Transition into Higher Education

University study is different from school. In making the journey from being a pupil to being a student you may find it helpful to look at some of the following books and websites about the kind of academic and personal development this transition involves.

#### **Study Skills:**

Stella Cottrell, *The Study Skills Handbook*, 5th edition (Palgrave, 2019) – especially the first couple of chapters

David Mikics' *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2013)

Joe Moran, *First You Write A Sentence* (2019)

Bryan Greetham, *How to Write Better Essays* (Macmillan, 2018)

You can also follow the links to advice on academic reading and writing that are listed at the [University of Bristol Study Skills webpages](#) and this [new work on managing the step into higher education](#).

#### **On Education and Inclusive Learning:**

[Paulo Freire, \*Pedagogy of the Oppressed\* \(London: Continuum, 2000\)](#), especially Chapter 2. This influential analysis explains how education can be an empowering journey for individuals and communities alike.

[bell hooks, \*Teaching to Transgress. Education as the Practice of Freedom\* \(1994\)](#) [Accessible via this link as an e-book from the University of Bristol Library once you are fully registered] A powerful discussion of how to address sexism and racism in the classroom and beyond, drawing on the author's personal experience in the American South and her friendship with the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire.