

Our Reference: 2550

FOI Request dated 26/01/2022 as follows –

Please note that I am interested in information which applies to any and or all of the following undergraduate degree courses.

*BA History
BA (Hons) English course
BA (Hons) English Language and Literature
BA (Hons) Creative Writing and English*

Please note that the definition of trigger warnings and or content warnings and or content notes should extend to the following kinds of advice and or warning and or note and or guidance. It should be guidance and or warning (s) and or advice and or note (s) designed to...

(i)...Protect and prewarn students who may be at risk of suffering stress and or discomfort and or anxiety and or emotional upset and or trauma and or distress when they are confronted with and or asked to study/explore stories and or plots and or ideas and or issues and or topics and or characters and or episodes and or images and or artworks and or films and or photographs and or historical and religious writings and or historical artefacts which may in some way reflect their own personal experiences and or other real life experiences.

and or

(ii)...Warn students that the content of courses and or modules and or specific teaching materials and or individual works and or ideas and or writings and or artefacts and or images either contain sexually explicit and or violent content and or have the potential to cause offence because they reference and or deal with and or include issues and depictions relating to age and or disability and or death and or birth and or gender and or sexuality and or race and or religious belief and or political belief and or prejudice and or discrimination and or income and or social background.

Please note that the reference to teaching materials both above and in the questions below should be taken to mean particular novels and or particular plays and or particular poems and or particular pieces of music and or particular musicals and or particular songs and or particular recordings and or particular photographs and or particular paintings and or particular statues and or particular sculptures and or particular busts and or particular drawings and or other kind of artworks and or cartoons and or other animated works. The reference should also include examples of historical writings and historical texts and or any writings from antiquity and or the classical period and or Ancient Greece and or Ancient Rome and or sacred religious works (including but not limited to the Bible) and or religious writings and or philosophical works and or political theories/writings. They should also include historical artefacts and or any pieces of armour or weaponry and or human remains and or any fossils and or any historical finds. They should also include cinema films (live action or animated) and or television dramas and or TV documentaries and or TV programmes (live action or animated) and or individual academic textbooks.

Please redact the names of any students, teaching staff, faculty employees and researchers from the documents and information provided.

I am interested in all information generated and or held by the faculty / department/school which relates to its own actions and decisions as well as the actions and decisions of its academic staff and

or employees and or anyone acting on its behalf. I am also interested in all relevant information held by the faculty/department/school which relates to the actions and decisions of other individuals and or bodies within the University.

1...Are any of the above degree courses currently issuing trigger warnings and or content warnings and or content notes which cover entire degree courses and or specific modules and or specific topics and or specific seminars and or specific literary/dramatic/artistic/poetic traditions and or the work of particular authors/novelists/poets/dramatists and or particular artistic schools and traditions and or particular genres of film and or the works of particular filmmakers/artists/photographers AND OR particular issues and subjects and or particular historical time periods and or particular historic events and or particular historic figures and or particular religious figures and or particular religious works.

2...If the answer to question one is yes can you please provide the following details. In the case of each trigger warning and or content warning and or content note (s) can you provide a copy of the actual warning and or note. In the case of each warning and or note can you identify what it relates to. Please see the definitions above. In the case of each warning and or note can you identify the degree and the module In the case of each warning and or note can you state when it was introduced and why. In the case of each warning and or note can you state how it is communicated to the student (s). For instance, is it communicated in writing and or verbally.

3...Are any of the above degree courses currently issuing trigger warnings and or content warnings and or content note (s) which apply to specific teaching materials. Please see the definition of teaching materials above.

4...If the answer to question three is yes can you provide a copy of the specific trigger warning and or content warning and or content note (s). In the case of each warning and or note can you provide the title of the teaching material (s) it relates to. In the case of the teaching materials can you identify the relevant novelist and or playwright and or poet and or thinker and or author and or film maker and or documentary film maker and or artist and or photographer and or musician and or historical figure and or religious figure. In the case of each warning and note can you state when it was introduced and why. In the case of each warning and note can you state which module and degree course it relates to. In the case of each warning and note can you state how is it communicated to students. For instance, is it communicated verbally or in writing.

5...Since 1 February 2021 and Irrespective of whether the faculty routinely issues trigger warnings and or content warnings and or contents notes has the University and or staff on any of the degree courses felt the need to rest and or drop individual teaching materials (see definition above) and or remove material from those teaching materials. If the answer is yes, can you identify the specific teaching materials. In the case each of these teaching materials can you identify the relevant author and or writer and or novelist and or playwright and or poet and or filmmaker and or TV dramatist and or artist and or photographer and or musician and or historical figure and or religious figure. In the case of each of these teaching materials can you state whether it has been dropped from the course altogether or whether it has been rested. If information has been withdrawn, can you identify the information which has been withdrawn. In the case of each work that has been dropped and or rested and or has had material withdrawn can you state when this action was taken and why.

Response

1. Yes

2. One module has an overall trigger warning: Childhood Trauma and its Aftermath in Contemporary Literature (L6)

Text: 'IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT TRAUMA MATERIAL

Some of these texts - particularly the first two on the above list) which are memoirs rather than novels) are explicit about the trauma suffered by the main characters. As a result they can be painful and harrowing to read. After the first two texts this becomes less of an issue, but it is important for our study of this genre to cover the autobiographical material first. If you are struggling with this please let me know and we will find ways around the problem.'

In general content/trigger warnings are provided for specific texts but these are provided orally. For example: A session on writing death with the second year students, and used the end of the preceding session to give them that warning.

There are few written warnings beyond the verbal ones given, though "PLEASE NOTE: This play includes sexually explicit language and content. Please contact your tutor or the module leader if you have any concerns." is an example of one.

We have no existing complete list of the texts which we provide trigger warnings for either oral or written, though examples include: Gladiator, Titus Andronicus, Voyage in the Dark, The Hate U Give.

We have no written materials linked to the reasoning the introduction of each of the trigger warnings, when they were introduced, or the reason for why they were introduced.

We also provide wording covering student pieces e.g. "The Creative Writing workshop is a safe environment in respect to the vulnerability of new writing. Work that may cover sensitive topics should be introduced beforehand to provide context and any notes on content. Imagination is boundless and respect and courtesy remain the key terms regardless of personal opinion. However, any work that is deliberately racist, sexist, homophobic or in any way intentionally inflammatory/inappropriate will be dealt with in line with university policy."

3. As above
4. As above
5. No