What do you particularly enjoy about studying English Literature?

My favourite aspect of this subject is the lack of restriction when studying a particular piece; there are multiple critical approaches that can be applied while reading, which I believe, makes work more personal, and definitely more enjoyable. Class discussions are always interesting and thought provoking, and are beneficial in broadening analytical skills in a highly engaging environment. Alongside the classwork, the coursework component of the course provides a freedom to explore your own interpretations and be fairly creative and independent—which I believe is a beneficial preparation for university.

How much work is involved? (hours in lessons / outside of lessons)

There is a fair amount of course content, which requires some hours of work outside of lessons, but these hours are mostly assisted and guided by work booklets and homework tasks set. There have been to optional sessions online (that are recorded to be revisited) that are excellent sources of to strengthen familiarity with a topic.

If you studied the subject at GCSE how different is studying it at A Level?

A greater depth in analysis is definitely the main difference from GCSE. At A Level there are additional components such as considering other critical approaches within your argument, along with a more comprehensive understanding of contextual factors. There is more emphasis on the critical aspect of your argument, which influences a more analytical debate within your work. This also encourages an exploration of your own interpretations which is what makes the subject more individual and exciting.
How are you assessed and how regularly?

In each component there are informal assessments and practise questions set. These are a great way of measuring progress and development throughout the course. There is always a class feedback, which is a great opportunity to see your progress, where you could improve, and also gain insight into different interpretations from peers. There are more formal mocks usually at the end of each term, and these are also markers of your progress. A large part of the course is coursework, which is completed independently over a couple of months, and assessed by your tutor. Although this is an independent piece, support and guidance is offered throughout the process of reading, researching and writing.

What support have you received?

I have received lots of support from my tutor when completing my coursework. I picked a novel that was different from the recommended text and my tutor provided support by directing me to different reading lists and helped with forming an appropriate question. Guidance is always offered if there are misunderstandings or worries when approaching a piece of work, and there is a general atmosphere of support and encouragement throughout the subject.

Have you received careers support and what are your future plans?

When applying to university and writing my personal statement, the English department gave me incredible support and guidance. I was recommended books that matched those on my personal statement to strengthen my knowledge and wider reading. This really reflects the personal care and support offered to English Literature students. They offered mock interviews and advice that helped me through my application to university. I am constantly reassured and encouraged in my subject by my tutor, which has thoroughly increased my confidence in my abilities. This will definitely help me in my academic future as I aspire to study a Master’s degree in English Literature.