

## **The avantgarde in English: 2025/6 seminar overview**

*For 4A, 4B, 6S, O8A and O8B students*

*Teacher: Gene Prior, MA*

That which is truly innovative is often unacceptable to the establishment of its time. It is outrageous and even offensive, and it challenges the conventions of its day. It is often regarded as mad or genius, profane or profound, of great value or of none whatsoever – and it may well be all of these. Whatever determines its worth in the end, it is compelling, and it moves us forward because it manifests ingenuity and creative spirit.

This course is a survey of the avantgarde. It examines and discusses the new and experimental through case studies of works and styles as well as ideas and philosophies. Case studies may include literature on the index or speculative fiction; jazz, alternative and underground music; modern movements in fine art; and revolutionary thought and discovery. Such will necessarily include those forward-thinking individuals who were inspired to go beyond their times. Its aim is to expose students to the cutting edge and the new forms shaped in the face of tradition; to make them think about what is groundbreaking and talk about their thoughts and, hopefully, to open windows and even doors to a positive experience of what has been unusual and exciting.