

What You Need to Know About

CONTEMPORARY ANGLOPHONE LITERATURE

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A Brief Introduction

This booklet aims at introducing the students of the compulsory fourth-year subject (BA in English Studies, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) 'Contemporary Anglophone Literature' to the 1990-2025 period. It is subdivided into two main sections, one called 'An Overview of the Contemporary World' and the other simply 'Authors and Works.' The first section is subdivided into segments on 'Politics and Economy,' 'Scientific and Technological Innovation,' 'Social and Personal Life' and 'Arts and Culture' (excluding Literature). This first section provides a few notes on these topics, timelines, and lists. It is common in current education to disregard memorization, but this is a view I strongly dispute. Students are invited, then, to memorize as much as they can, using Wikipedia as a prop to understand what each name, title or event refers to. Indeed, I have myself used Wikipedia abundantly to give students an impression as accessible as possible of what has been happening in the world generally in the last three and a half decades.

As a teacher and researcher of (Anglophone) Literature I firmly believe that texts must be approached with knowledge as complete as possible of the societies and cultures shaping them. Writers may never refer to specific historical events, but they are always part of the history of their times, which is why a Cultural Studies approach is indispensable. This extends to the material conditions under which literature is published today, much more so when literary ambition has been clearly replaced by commercial aspirations. All authors aspire to make a living off their trade and are making themselves as visible as they can through collaborating in the marketing of their works (through book presentations, festivals, traditional media, social media…) in ways that would baffle the authors of the pre-digital past. The inability of literary critics to generate new labels for our still Postmodern times, and the reluctance of writers to be grouped in schools, results in a very confusing (also very rich) panorama in which arguably only genres help to understand how literature operates today, always accepting that literary fiction is in itself a genre. The subject, which excludes drama and poetry, focuses on four categories, represented in the corresponding sections: US and UK literary fiction, transnational literary fiction, popular fiction, and non-fiction.

I hope to update regularly the contents of the booklet as the 21st century moves on. Enjoy!

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(3rd edition)

An Overview of the Contemporary World 1990-2025

Politics and economy

- The period 1990-2025 is defined by the loss of confidence in constant progress. Although the **fall of the Berlin Wall** in November 1989 put an end to the Cold War (1945-89) and caused eventually the downfall of most Communist governments (with the exception of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba), the radical Islamist attacks against the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Arlington (Virginia) on **9/11** 2001, started a new period of international tension.

- The first **Gulf War** (1990-91), the wars in the former Yugoslavia known as the **Balkan Wars** (1991-2001) which resulted in the disintegration of the country, and the conflicts in **Afghanistan** (2001-21) and **Iraq** (2003-11) stand out in a long list of confrontations in many other countries (such as **Yemen** or **Syria**, just to mention two).

- **Israel's** conflict with **Palestine** is also a major source of political instability and of human suffering, with episodes as significant as the **First Intifada** (1987-93) or the practical occupation of the Gaza strip after **Hamas's** terrorist attacks of October 2023.

- The **Islamic State**'s establishment of a caliphate in the Middle East (2015-19) must also be mentioned as the occasion for a major conflict. **ISIS** (a.k.a. **DAESH**) almost scaped control and has left a legacy of radicalism and repression in the Middle East, above all in countries such as Iraq.

- At the time of writing Vladimir Putin's attempt to occupy **Ukraine**, started in February 2022, has led to a stalemate with no easy solution, and the threat of a possible nuclear war between Russia and NATO. The USA have started (in February 2026) a war with **Iran** that instead of destroying the Ayatollahs' regime, has strengthened its position.

- All these wars and conflicts have led to an enormous growth in the number of **refugees**, in a catastrophic diaspora which joins the even bigger diaspora caused by poverty in Africa, Asia and South America. The **migrants**, though absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the host countries, are being exploited by local mafias, ill-treated by law-enforcement Western agencies and used by **right-wing** politicians to increase **xenophobia** and **racism**.

- Since the **2008 crisis**, caused by the uncontrolled malpractice of US financial banks, economic instability has become endemic, with the **younger generations** facing many difficulties to afford higher education, find minimally well-paid stable jobs,

access housing and form families. **Precariousness** is now a common fact of life, while poverty affects not just the **unemployed,** but also workers forced to accept low-paying jobs and even combine two or three of them.

- All these problems are the breeding ground for **populist right-wing politics** now spreading around the world and threatening to end democracy in nations such as the United States or others within the European Union (already debilitated after the UK's abandonment or Brexit in 2020). **Fascism** is rearing its head again, as if the lessons of WWII (1939-45) had been forgotten, supported by the interests of **rampant capitalism** and disregarding the possibility that **climate change** or **AI** may end human civilization for good in a few decades, if not years.

A Timeline of Major Political Events

1990s

- February 1990, South African president F.W. de Klerk ends **apartheid** (Nelson Mandela is released from prison)
- 2 August 1990, Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait, starting the **Gulf War** (1990-91)
- 28 November 1990, Margaret **Thatcher** resigns (Prime Minister since 1979); **John Major** appointed new PM
- 15 March 1991, **German reunification** ends (1990-91)
- 25 June 1991 - April 1992, Yugoslavia disintegrates into different national states (the **Balkan wars** extend to 2001)
- 31 December 1991, collapse of the **U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)**
- 26 February 1993, **World Trade Center** bombing by Islamic radicals (Al Qaeda)
- 7 April-19 June 1994, **Rwandan genocide** (Tutsis mass-killed by Hutus)
- 10 May 1994, Nelson **Mandela** elected first Black President of South Africa
- 19 April 1995, **Oklahoma City bombing** by right-wing radicals Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, the most important attack on US territory apart from 9/11
- July 1995, **Srebenica** massacre (Bosnia) of Muslim men by the Serbians Army
- 19 December 1998, US President **Bill Clinton**'s impeachment (ends in 1999), following his denial of his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinski
- 6 May 1999, new **Scottish Parliament** opens consolidating Devolution (voted in referendum in 1997)

2000s

- 7 May 2000, Vladimir **Putin** first appointed President of Russia
- 12 December 2000, US Supreme Court stops the recount of the votes in Florida; George W. **Bush** is elected President with a suspicion of fraud (Al **Gore** concedes)
- 11 September 2001, **9/11** attacks (against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon) by Islamic radicals inspired by Osama Bin Laden (Al Qaeda's leader)
- 7 October 2001, **Afghanistan War** begins (NATO against the local Taliban militias)

- 2001 Silvio **Berlusconi**, elected Italian PM; rise of the Italian **right-wing**
- 1 January 2002, **euro** launched replacing local currencies in the EU (except UK)
- 2002, **Guantanamo** detention camp established by the USA in Cuba for suspects of terrorism (many are tortured and imprisoned with no trial)
- 20 March 2003, **Iraq War** begins (ends 18 Dec 2011) with the false excuse that dictator Saddam Hussein conceals weapons of mass destruction
- 11 March 2004, **Madrid** train bombings (José María **Aznar** loses election to José Luis **Zapatero** after falsely claiming ETA, and not radical Islamism, is responsible); worst terrorist attack in Europe so far
- 22 November 2005, East-German born Angela **Merkel** elected German PM (resigns in 2021)
- 30 December 2005, Iraq's deposed dictator Saddam **Hussein** is executed
- 2006, **Wikileaks** scandal (Julian **Assange** starts being persecuted judicially for leaking thousands of US Government and Army secret documents)
- December 2007, **global financial crisis** begins with the failure of the main US financial banks after investing in dodgy financial products
- 20 January 2009, Barack **Obama** sworn US President, the first Black person to hold that position

2010s

- 2010-11 **Arab Spring** revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, as well as uprisings in Yemen and Bahrain, and protests in several other Arab countries against the local dictators
- 2 May 2010, Osama **bin Laden** is shot dead by US Navy SEALs in Pakistan, where he was hiding (his body is thrown in the sea to prevent his followers from building a shrine to honour him)
- 15 March 2011, **Syrian civil war** begins, causing a major refugee crisis (ends in December 2024 with the victory of the rebels against Russian-supported dictator Bashar al-Ássad)
- 19 June 2012, Julian **Assange** seeks shelter at the London Equator's Embassy (he is arrested and imprisoned in 2019, freed in 2024)
- 19 June 2014, **King Juan Carlos I** (crowned in 1975) abdicates; his son Felipe VI is crowned. Juan Carlos self-exiles to Abu-Dhabi in 2020, following financial and personal scandals
- 18 September 2014, **Scottish referendum of independence** authorized by David Cameron's Tory Government (Scots vote to remain in the UK)
- 3 April 2016, **Panama Papers scandal** reveals information of 214,888 offshore companies providing major tax evasion by companies and individuals through these fake shell businesses
- 23 June - 13 July 2016, **Brexit** referendum campaign for the UK to abandon the EU
- 8 November 2016, Donald **Trump** wins his first US presidential election (against Hillary Clinton)

- 25 November 2016, Cuba's dictator Fidel **Castro** (since 1959) dies; the Cuban Communist government continues with his brother Raúl **Castro**
- 2018, **China's** National People's Congress votes to abolish presidential term limits, allowing **Xi Jinping** (its President since 2013) to rule for life
- 2019, 12 **Catalan independence** movement leaders found guilty of sedition (October 2017 events) and misuse of public funds and sentenced to 9 to 13 years in prison

2020s

- 31 January 2020, the **UK** withdraws from the European Union, completing **Brexit**
- 6 January 2021, Trump supporters storm the **Capitol**, falsely claiming the presidential election has been stolen (Biden is sworn President on 20 January)
- 22 January 2021, **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, the first legally binding international agreement comprehensively to prohibit nuclear weapons, comes into effect
- 15 August 2021, the **Taliban** return to power in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of NATO troops ordered by President Biden, unleashing brutal misogynistic policies
- 24 February 2022, **Russia invades Ukraine** expecting a short war
- 8 September 2022, **Queen Elizabeth II** dies; **Charles III** crowned
- 7 October 2023, **Hamas** attacks Israel; start of Israel's invasion of Gaza and the West Bank, causing a genocide among **Palestine's** civilians (as a UN report acknowledges on 20 October 2025)
- 15-17 March 2024, Vladimir **Putin** is re-elected President of Russia for a fifth term
- 30 May 2024, former US President Donald **Trump** is found guilty on 34 counts in his hush money trial, the first time any American President has been found guilty of a crime and has become a felon. He is not sent to prison.
- 24 June 2024 WikiLeaks founder Julian **Assange** leaves the United Kingdom for his native Australia after being freed from prison in a plea deal with the United States.
- 4 July 2024 UK, Sir Keir **Starmer** leads the Labour Party to a landslide victory, returning the party to government for the first time in 14 years.
- 5 November 2024 USA, Donald **Trump**, is elected for a second non-consecutive term, the first candidate to be so since Grover Cleveland in 1892. He is sworn in on 20 January 2025.
- 28 April 2025, Canadian federal election following Justin Trudeau's resignation and replacement as Liberal Party leader; Mark Carney new Canadian PM
- 10 September 2025, US right-wing activist assassinated during a public act in a Utah college

USA PRESIDENTS

George H. W. Bush (1924–2018)	1989 - 1993, Republican
Bill Clinton (b. 1946)	1993 - 2001, Democratic
George W. Bush (b. 1946)	2001 - 2009, Republican
Barack Obama (b. 1961)	2009 - 2017, Democratic

Donald Trump (b. 1946)	2017 - 2021, Republican
Joe Biden (b. 1942)	2021 - 2025, Democratic
Donald Trump (b. 1946)	2025- (2029), Republican

BRITISH MONARCHS

Elizabeth II (1926-2022, crowned 1952)
Charles III (b. 1948, crowned 2022)

BRITISH PRIME MINISTERS

Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013)	1979-1990, Conservative
John Major (b. 1943)	1990-1997, Conservative
Tony Blair (b. 1953)	1997-2007, Labour
Gordon Brown (b. 1951)	2007-2010, Labour
David Cameron (b. 1966)	2010-2016, Conservative
Theresa May (b. 1956)	2016-2019, Conservative
Boris Johnson (b. 1964)	2019-2022, Conservative
Liz Truss (b. 1975)	2022, Conservative
Rishi Sunak (b. 1980)	2022-2024, Conservative
Keir Starmer (b. 1962)	2024-2026, Labour
Andy Burnham (b. 1970)	2026-, Labour

Scientific and technological innovation

The main trends in science and technology developed between 1990 and 2025 are:

BIOLOGY AND MEDICINE

- Constant discovery of new **animal and plant species** (but also constant loss); efforts to reintroduce extinct or almost extinct species
- Full sequencing of the human **genome** and other animal and plant genomes
- **Cloning** of plants and animals (human cloning limited because of ethical controversies)
- **Gene editing** with CRISPR techniques (applications in human Medicine and genetic engineering of animals and plants)
- Development of **vaccines** (most spectacularly for SARS-COVID-19 and cervix cancer, but not yet for HIV)
- Further development of **IVF techniques** (fuelled by growing concern about difficulties to reproduce)
- Advances in **organ transplant** (personalization using stem cells, artificial organs)

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Providing massive **evidence** of anthropogenic climate change
- Development of **alternative sources of energy** (wind, solar, waves, hydrogen)
- Development of **warning systems** to prevent the losses caused by increasingly bigger catastrophes

COSMOLOGY AND SPACE EXPLORATION

- Establishment of the **International Space Station** (ISS) on orbit 400 kms above Earth
- Detection of the first **gravitational waves**, opening up a new way to 'listen' to extremely distant events in the universe
- Discovery of thousands of new **exoplanets** beyond the Solar System (with telescopes Hubble and James Webb)
- Detection of **black holes**, search for **dark matter**
- Discovery of **water** on the Moon, Mars, and other planets and moons of the Solar System, through the uses of robotic **probes** and **rovers**
- **Private companies** (like Space X) start competing with public-funded companies like NASA

COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ROBOTICS ENGINEERING

Development of

- the **World Wide Web** (WWW) and the **Internet**
- PC machinery (**hardware**) and programmes (**software**) for work and leisure
- **online** business and e-commerce
- **search** engines

- **videogames**
- **smartphones**
- **social networks** and **media**
- Artificial Intelligence (**AI**)
- **robots** for use on Earth and in space exploration, and in factories
- **3-D printing**
- **quantum computing**

PALEOANTHROPOLOGY

- Discovery of **new species of humans** (Homo Denisovan, Homo Floresiensis, Homo Naledi) thanks to application of DNA studies to fossils; constant correction of the human family tree
- Evidence of **interrelation among species** (Neanderthal and Sapiens, Neanderthal and Denisovan)
- Constant **correction of dates**, with evidence showing that writing and art evolved much earlier than supposed

PHYSICS

- Tracking down of the **Higgs boson**, the essential particle
- Further development in **quantum physics** (leading to quantum computing)

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Development of the **electric car** and the **hydrogen battery**
- Development of **autonomous driving**
- Elimination of **ultra-sonic commercial aviation** such as Concorde (search for cheaper replacements)
- Development of **high-speed trains**

A Timeline of Major Scientific and Technological Innovations, Climate-Change Related Events and Pandemics

NOTES:

1) Wikipedia has a page for each year in science with far more detailed information. You may begin with https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1990_in_science
2) The specific dates mostly correspond to the day when the discoveries were announced

1990s

- **1990**, the term '**rewilding'** is first used in print
- 24 April 1990, **telescope Hubble** launched (in orbit beyond the atmosphere)
- 1 October 1990, **Human Genome Project** started (completed 2003)

- 6 August 1991, first **website** (CERN, Tim Berners-Lee)
- 29 October 1991, the **Galileo probe** becomes the first spacecraft to visit an asteroid (951 Gaspra)
- 9 January 1992, Aleksander Wolszczan and Dale Frail observe the first **pulsar planets** (first confirmed discovery of **exoplanets** outside the Solar System)
- 31 March 1993, a bug in a program written by Richard Depew sends an article to 200 newsgroups simultaneously. The term **spamming** is coined by Joel Furr to describe the incident
- 30 April 1993, CERN puts the **World Wide Web** software created by Tim Berners-Lee in the public domain
- 15 June 1993, Adobe publishes the first version of the **PDF** format together with version 1.0 of its PDF product line Adobe Acrobat
- 6 May 1994, the **Channel Tunnel**, opens between England and France, enabling passengers to travel by rail between the two countries in 35 minutes
- 18 May 1994, the Flavr Savr, a genetically modified tomato, is deemed safe for consumption by the FDA, becoming the first commercially grown **genetically engineered food** to be granted a license for human consumption
- 5 July 1994, **Amazon** launched (owned by Jeff Bezos)
- 16 August 1994, the world's first **smartphone**, the IBM Simon, goes on sale
- 19 September 1994, Andrew Wiles proves **Fermat's Last Theorem**
- 16 July 1995, **Amazon.com**, sells its first book
- 22 November 1995, *Toy Story*, the first feature film created using only **computer-generated imagery (CGI)**
- 7 December 1995, NASA's **Galileo Probe** enters Jupiter's atmosphere
- 10 February 1996, computer **Deep Blue** defeats chess champion Gary Kasparov
- 5 July 1996, Roslin Institute, Scotland: Dolly, a sheep, the first **cloned animal** is born
- 7-12 July 1996, XI International **AIDS** Conference, announces combination therapy (the 'triple cocktail') using protease inhibitors to keep **HIV** controlled, allowing patients to survive
- 7 November 1996, NASA launches the **Mars Global Surveyor** to map all of Mars from above
- 27 March 1997, **Viagra** approved by FDA (Federal Drugs Administration) helps to solve the problem of erectile disfunction
- 4 July 1997, rover **Mars Pathfinder** lands on the surface of Mars
- 4 September 1998, **Google** founded (by Sergey Brin and Larry Page)
- 23 September 1998, the world's first medically successful **hand transplantation** is carried out by French surgeons
- 1998, Supernova Cosmology Project and the High-Z Supernova Search Team: discovery of the **accelerated expansion of the universe and dark energy**
- 19 January 1999, the first **BlackBerry** is released
- 1999, the term **'Web 2.0'** is coined by Darcy DiNucci

2000s

- 1 January 2000, the fight against the **Y2K bug** effect succeeds, avoiding the mass crashing of computers all over the world due to an error in programming
- 11 March 2000, the **dot-com bubble** bursts, wiping off money invested in frail online companies
- 14 March 2000, Stephen King's horror story 'Riding the Bullet' is published in **e-book** format only, the world's **first mass-market electronic book**
- 2 November 2000, the **International Space Station** (ISS) starts operations
- 15 January 2001, **Wikipedia** launched (by Larry Sanger and Jimmy Wales)
- February 2001, the publicly funded **Human Genome Project**, led by Francis Collins and the privately funded Celera effort, led by Craig Venter, simultaneously publish their decoding of the human genome (in *Nature* and *Science*, respectively)
- 23 October 2001, Apple launches the **I-pod**, which ends up replacing Sony's Walkman
- 1-2 December 2001, the Budapest **Open Access** Initiative launched to make scientific publication available online for free
- 26 May 2002, the Mars Odyssey finds signs of huge water ice deposits on **Mars**
- November 2002, severe acute respiratory syndrome (**SARS**) epidemic begins in the Guangdong province of China
- 1 February 2003, the **Space Shuttle** Columbia disintegrates over Texas upon re-entry killing all seven astronauts on board
- 11 February 2003, NASA's WMAP satellite completes the first detailed cosmic microwave background radiation map of the **universe** (13.7 billion years old)
- 1 July 2003, **Tesla** founded (by Martin Eberhard and Marc Tarpenning); Elon Musk becomes main shareholder and CEO in 2004, displacing the founders
- 1 August 2003, social networking service **MySpace** launched (by Tom Anderson, Chris DeWolfe)
- 29 August 2003, Microsoft's **Skype** launched
- 24 October 2003, supersonic airliner **Concorde** (launched in 1962) withdrawn
- 4 January 2004, NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Mission **Spirit** (MER-A) lands
- 25 January 2004, NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Mission **Opportunity** (MER-B) lands successfully
- 4 February 2004, **Facebook** launched (by Mark Zuckerberg et al.)
- 1 April 2004, **Gmail** launched by Google
- 27 October 2004, remains of an unknown human species discovered in Indonesia, **Homo Floresiensis**
- 26 December 2004, Indian Ocean **tsunami** (227,898 dead)
- 16 January 2005, Netflix (founded in 1997) begins streaming, starting the new platform era that replaced conventional and cable TV
- 27 January 2005, the climateprediction.net project, a distributed computing project run from Oxford University, announces a **global warming** of between 2 and 11 degrees Celsius as a consequence of doubling carbon dioxide levels

- 16 February 2005, the **Kyoto Protocol** enforced (adopted in 1997 by 192 countries) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- 23 April 2005, the first video is uploaded to the online video hosting service **YouTube** (launched by Jawed Karim, Steve Chen and Chad Hurley)
- 29-31 August 2005, **Hurricane Katrina** floods New Orleans when the levees break
- 27 November 2005, Dr. Bernard Devauchelle and colleagues perform the world's first partial **face transplant** on a living human
- 21 March **2006**, **Twitter** launched (by Jack Dorsey)
- 15 April 2006, Anthony Atala and team at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center successfully transplant the first **laboratory-grown organs**, bladders, into human patients
- 8 June 2006, Gardasil (the cervix cancer **vaccine**) launched
- 1 February **2007**, **Tumblr**, the micro-blogging platform, is launched
- 29 June 2007, Apple launches **I-Phone**
- 23 August 2007, Chris Messina proposes the use of the **hashtag** on Twitter
- 19 November 2007, Amazon launches e-book reader **Kindle** (Sony was already manufacturing e-books)
- 10 September **2008**, **Large Hadron Collider** tested at CERN
- 24 September 2008, the world's first commercial **wave farm** to produce energy begins operation off the coast of Portugal
- 3 January **2009**, the **Bitcoin** cryptocurrency network is created by developer Satoshi Nakamoto
- February 2009, **Whatsapp** launched (by Brian Acton and Jan Koum)
- 7 March 2009, the **Kepler space observatory** is launched, and begins its search for **exoplanets**
- 5 August 2009, **HIV genome** sequence decoded (no vaccine yet)

2010s

- 27 January **2010**, Apple introduces the **I-Pad**
- 1 March 2010, NASA announces that the **Moon's** northern pole contains millions of tons of **water** ice
- 27 March 2010, a genetic analysis of a pinkie finger bone found in Siberia indicates it to be that of a distant and previously unknown relative of Homo sapiens, **Homo Denisovan**
- 14 April 2010, human embryos containing **DNA** from three people are produced
- 20 April 2010, Gulf of Mexico major **oil spill** by Deepwater Horizon (BP-operated)
- 7 May 2010, scientists conducting the **Neanderthal** genome project at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology discover strong evidence of substantial **interbreeding** between Neanderthals and Homo sapiens (modern humans)
- 20 May 2010, American researchers led by Craig Venter announce the creation of a **synthetic living cell**, with an entirely artificial genome
- 6 October 2010, **Instagram** launched (by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger)

- 8 December 2010, **SpaceX**'s Dragon spacecraft, first commercial spacecraft ever to be successfully retrieved from orbit
- 11 March **2011**, earthquake triggers a tsunami and the meltdown of the **Fukushima** nuclear power plant in Japan
- 12 March 2011, surgeons in Houston, Texas, successfully implant the world's first continuous-flow **artificial heart** in a human patient
- 18 March 2011, NASA's Messenger spacecraft successfully enters orbit around the planet **Mercury** – the first probe to do so
- 12 May 2011, Gliese 581d the first confirmed **exoplanet** that could potentially support Earth-like life
- 7 July 2011, surgeons in Sweden carry out the world's first **synthetic organ transplant**, using an artificial windpipe coated in stem cells
- 21 July 2011, Space Shuttle **Atlantis** completes STS-135, the 135th and final mission of the Space Shuttle programme started in 1981
- 5 October 2011, **Steve Jobs** (b. 1955) dies, Apple's co-founder with Steve Wozniak
- 12 October 2011, online communication software **Zoom** launched (by Eric Lluan)
- 8 November 2011, Honda revamps its **humanoid robot**, Asimo, giving it enhanced artificial intelligence, and the ability to move without being controlled by an operator
- 10 January **2012**, the Consumer Electronics Show (Las Vegas) introduces large-screen **OLED televisions**, quad-core **tablet** computers and **3D printers**
- 4 February 2012, Dutch doctors successfully fit the first **artificial jaw made with a 3D printer**
- 7 March 2012, **Higgs boson** possibly discovered at CERN; nick-named the God particle because it gives mass to all other fundamental particles in the universe that have mass, like electrons and protons
- 19 April 2012, led by British scientists, a consortium including American, Belgian and Danish scientists successfully develop **synthetic DNA** compounds, dubbed XNA
- 25 May 2012, Elon Musk's aerospace company, **SpaceX**, send the first-ever commercial spacecraft to dock with the **International Space Station** (ISS)
- 17 August 2012, Jennifer Doudna and her colleagues at UC Berkeley (as well as Feng Zhang and colleagues at the Broad Institute) file a patent on the CRISPR-Cas9 **gene editing system**
- 25 August 2012, NASA's **Voyager 1** probe (launched in 1977) leaves the solar system and crosses into interstellar space
- 22 January **2013**, a scientific study reveals that the **glaciers** of the Andes are melting at an unprecedented rate
- 15 February 2013, a 10-tonne **meteoroid** impacts Chelyabinsk, Russia, injuring over 1200 people. It is the most destructive meteor to strike Earth since 1908 in Siberia
- 19 March 2013, German scientists sequence the full **genome** of the **Neanderthal**
- 3 April 2013, NASA reports that the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer has detected possible signs of the elusive phenomenon known as **dark matter**
- 20 May 2013, whistleblower Edward **Snowden**, an NSA analyst, discloses global surveillance methods through digital devices (and ends up exiled in Russia)

- 27 May 2013, scientists successfully **resurrect** bryophyte specimens frozen inert in glacial ice for 400 years
- 6 June 2013, an **artificially grown blood vessel** is transplanted into an American patient for the first time
- 13 June 2013, the US Supreme Court rules that **non-synthetic genes cannot be patented** by medical companies
- 3 July 2013, bone marrow transplants are found to eliminate all traces of **HIV** (virus particles pictured) in two male patients
- 6 July 2013, the Solar Impulse aircraft, the first entirely **solar-powered airplane** to complete a flight across the United States
- 2014-16, **Ebola** epidemic in West Africa
- 3 April **2014**, evidence of an underground ocean of liquid water on Saturn's moon **Enceladus**
- 17 April 2014, discovery of Kepler-186f, an Earth-sized **exoplanet** in the habitable zone of its host star
- 12 November 2014, The European Space Agency's Rosetta space probe lands on a **comet** 372 million miles from Earth called 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko
- 14 September **2015**, **gravitational waves** detected a century after their existence was predicted by Albert Einstein
- 10 September 2015, anthropologist Lee Berger's team announces the discovery of a new human ancestor species called **Homo Naledi** in South Africa
- 16 September 2015, probe **Cassini** finds global ocean in Saturn's moon **Enceladus**
- 8 October 2015, NASA announces that the **New Horizons** spacecraft has detected blue skies and water ice on **Pluto** (now regarded as a dwarf planet)
- 27 January **2016**, an **artificial-intelligence** program from Google's DeepMind division, AlphaGo, beats the world champion of the strategy game Go
- 21 March 2016, total **carbon emissions** due to humans 10 times greater than at any time since the extinction of the dinosaurs
- 4 July 2016, NASA announces the arrival of the Juno spacecraft at the planet **Jupiter**
- 20 September 2016, Chinese company ByteDance launches **TikTok**
- 21 September 2016, all non-African humans currently on Earth traced back to a **single group that exited Africa** about 50,000 years ago
- 4 November 2016, 195 nations agree to lower **carbon emissions** by signing the Paris agreement
- 22 February **2017**, discovery of seven Earth-sized **exoplanets**, which may all be in the habitable zone, orbiting TRAPPIST-1, an ultra-cool dwarf star
- 10 April 2017, the **Great Barrier Reef** is hit by a second consecutive mass coral bleaching event
- 26 April 2017, an **artificial womb** successfully grows a baby sheep at the Center for Fetal Diagnosis and Treatment at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)
- 9 May 2017, evidence of the **earliest known life on land** may have been found in 3.48-billion-year-old geyserite
- 2 August 2017, **CRISPR** (a gene-editing technique) first used to remove faulty DNA from human embryos

- 10 October 2017, a tenfold increase in childhood and adolescent **obesity** since 1975 is reported
- 15 September 2017, NASA's Cassini-Huygens spacecraft, launched in 1997, dives into **Saturn**
- 28 October 2017, 'Oumuamua, the first known **interstellar object**, is identified by NASA observers in Hawaii
- 17 March **2018** the Cambridge Analytica Scandal proves **Facebook** is manipulating voters
- 25 July 2018, discovery of a large subglacial lake on **Mars**, the first known stable body of water on the planet
- 1 August 2018, Swedish activist **Greta Thunberg** stops attending class in protest against climate change, soon to become a leading activist
- 22 August 2018, genetic analysis uncovers a **human hybrid**, a direct descendant of two different groups of early humans, Neanderthal and Denisovan
- 8 October 2018, IPCC releases Special Report on **Global Warming**, noting the need to keep global warming below 1.5°C
- 30 November 2018, scandal around Chinese scientist He Jiankui's claim that he had created the world's first **genetically edited babies** (so they could not contract HIV)
- 23 January **2019**, five identical **cloned gene-edited monkeys** created, in order to study several medical diseases
- 13 February 2019, **Mars** Opportunity rover mission ends after nearly 15 years
- 10 April 2019, the Event Horizon Telescope takes the first ever image of a **black hole**, in the galaxy Messier 87
- 25 September 2019, **largest iceberg** in 50 years breaks off from the Amery Ice Shelf in Antarctica
- 23 October 2019, engineers at Google claim their **quantum computer** can perform a computation in just over 3 minutes that would take the world's fastest supercomputer 10,000 years to achieve
- 26 October 2019, Botswana in south central Africa found to be the **birthplace of all modern humans** 200,000 years ago, based on genetic studies

2020s

- 16 January **2020**, the extinction of the non-avian **dinosaurs** about 66 million years ago (mostly) a result of a meteorite impact, the Chicxulub impactor, not volcanism
- 31 January 2020: Scientists and journalists report overviews of the novel **coronavirus** SARS-CoV-2. Lockdowns begin in early March
- 4 March 2020, the World Weather Attribution project claims that human-caused **climate change** had an influence on the 2019–20 Australian wildfires
- 1 June 2020, a study using data on vertebrates on the brink to extinction concludes that a human-caused potential **sixth mass extinction** is likely accelerating
- 13 August 2020, melting of the Greenland **ice sheet** is shown to have passed the point of no return, based on 40 years of satellite data

- 2 December 2020, the UK is the first country to approve a Covid-19 **vaccine**, Pfizer-BioNTech
- 22 January **2021**, **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, the first legally binding international agreement comprehensively to prohibit nuclear weapons, comes into effect
- 11 March 2021, the Amazon basin currently emits more **greenhouse gases** than it absorbs overall
- 24 August 2021, a bioprinting method to produce steak-like **cultured meat** in labs is presented
- 2 September 2021, the WHO adjusts its air quality guidelines after studies found that **air pollution** is associated with substantially increased mortality even below current WHO guideline values
- 24 September 2021, the first **CRISPR-edited food**, tomatoes, goes on public sale
- 25 December 2021, the **James Webb Space Telescope**, the long-awaited successor to the Hubble Space Telescope, is launched (it orbits the Sun)
- 10 January **2022**, the first successful **xenogeneic heart transplant**, from a genetically modified pig to a human patient, is reported
- 14 April 2022, Elon Musk buys **Twitter**
- 12 May 2022, researchers identify the 425 biggest **fossil fuel extraction projects** globally that threaten climate change mitigation of global climate goals (40% of which haven't yet started extraction)
- August 2022, **Artificial intelligence** art becomes highly sophisticated and popular and starts winning art prizes
- 28 September 2022, a breakthrough in treating **Alzheimer's disease** is reported by pharmaceutical companies Eisai and Biogen, using a drug called lecanemab
- 15 November 2022, a 62% decline in **sperm count** is found to have occurred since the early 1970s
- 30 November 2022, OpenAI launches **ChatGPT**
- 13 December 2022, in a major milestone for the field, scientists at the National Ignition Facility report a net energy gain in the development of **fusion power**
- 14 December 2022, a WHO study comprehensively estimates excess deaths from the **COVID-19 pandemic** during 2020 and 2021, concluding ~14.8 million excess early deaths occurred
- 5 January **2023**, notational signs from ~37,000 years ago in caves, apparently conveying calendaric meaning about the behaviour of animal species drawn next to them, are the first known (proto-)**writing** in history
- 15 February 2023, cosmologists report results that suggest **black holes** are the astrophysical origin of **dark energy**
- 12 April 2023, researchers demonstrate an **'AI scientist'** that can rediscover physical laws from axioms and data
- 1 May 2023, A new **brain-reading** method demonstrated. The non-invasive system, based on 16 hours of fMRI data per participant and a transformer, translates a person's neural activity into a continuous stream of text

- 14 June 2023, researchers report creations of **synthetic human model embryos** from stem cells, without the need for sperm or egg cells
- 28 July 2023, Hazard research: an analysis relating to the Rotterdam Convention shows illegal trade of **highly hazardous chemicals** continues
- 23 August 2023, India's Chandrayaan-3 becomes the first spacecraft to land near the south pole of the **Moon**, where frozen water is believed to exist
- 31 October 2023, Plan S publishes a proposal to the scientific community for moving scholarly communication towards **open science** practices for better communication
- 16 November 2023, Casgevy, a world-first gene therapy that aims to cure sickle-cell disease and transfusion-dependent beta thalassemia, is approved by the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, becoming the first drug using **CRISPR** to be licensed
- 17 January **2024**, Greenland **ice sheet** is melting 20% faster than previously estimated. The loss of 30m tonnes of ice an hour can affect ocean circulation and the distribution of heat energy around the globe
- 17 February 2024, a global review of harms from personal car automobility finds cars have killed 60–80 million people through diverse pathways, largely arising from **car-centrism**
- 13 March 2024, **The Artificial Intelligence Act**, the world's first comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for artificial intelligence, is passed by the European Union
- 9 May 2024, a cubic millimetre of the **human brain** is mapped at nanoscale resolution by a team at Google. This contains roughly 57,000 cells and 150 million synapses, incorporating 1.4 petabytes of data
- 24 June 2024 WikiLeaks founder **Julian Assange** leaves the United Kingdom after being freed from prison in a plea deal with the United States
- 14 august 2024, human **aging** is found to progress in two accelerated bursts from the ages of 44 and 60, rather than being a gradual and linear process
- 14 November 2024, **AI-generated poetry** is shown to be indistinguishable from human-written poetry and is rated more favourably
- November 2024, massive migration from Elon Musk's X to **Bluesky** (and **Threads**), following his support of Donald Trump.
- 7 December 2024, a study in *The Lancet* finds that **life expectancy** progress in the United States is slowing, as the country falls below nearly all high-income and some middle-income countries in the global rankings.
- 7 September 2025, Charles Darwin University researchers warn that AI is altering laws and rules very fast for humans to protect privacy, freedom, and fairness.
- 5 December 2025, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and University of Michigan create the world's smallest fully programmable, autonomous robots

Social and personal life

DIGITALIZATION

- The period beginning in 1990 has seen an immense revolution in all fronts of personal life, caused above all by the impact of the **digital technologies**. By the beginning of the period, it was already common for upper and middle-class homes to own a **PC**, but the veritable revolution came with the commercialization of **internet access** in the mid-1990s.
- Digitalization not only helped to make this period of **globalization** far more dynamic than any other similar period before in terms of politics and economy, but also as regards how human beings relate to each other.
- The internet promised to be initially a place for open communication, but it eventually became with the rise of **social media** already in the 21st century and the widespread availability of **smartphones** a generator of both connection and anxiety for the younger generations, and of general manipulation and surveillance for everyone.
- The **apps** have changed many social patterns and habits, including how individuals meet for sex or romance, whereas social media are being used to expose **private life** as never before, often to monetize it. Today, most young persons dream of being professional **influencers**, peddling products online or their own private lives.

IDENTITY

- The last 35 years have seen a consolidation of **identity** as the major personal category of expression. Grassroots activism and academic work have teamed up to help individuals defend their right to express who they are in terms of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, (dis)ability, age, nationality, class and other markers. There is widespread consensus that identity is necessarily **intersectional**, a concept introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, meaning that a person cannot be reduced to a single identity.

BODIES

- The constant monitoring effected through the social media and the traditional media of bodies has resulted in an immense anxiety about the **normal body**, leading to an epidemic of **eating disorders** such as bulimia and anorexia, and also to the bullying and rejection of persons with bodies considered abnormal (from the disabled to the fat).
- Individuals have learned to cheat about their actual looks (using the filters of smartphone cameras) or to modify their appearance, from taking up sports to using **cosmetic surgery**.
- There is a constant demand for **variety** to be respected, and although some curvy models or celebrities are leading the way, there is in fact **scant tolerance** for physical diversity and a constant celebration of the young, thin, wrinkleless body, and in the case of men of the muscled body sculpted at the gym. Technoscientific research is

working in two directions: **stopping aging** and facilitating the separation of body and mind for possible **digital uploading** of the immortal mind (or 'soul').

GENDER

- After the conservative anti-feminist **backlash** of the 1980s, the period starting in 1990 has been seen as a third (or even fourth) feminist wave, marked by Judith Butler's ideas about individual **agency** and **gender performativity** (which, indeed, also affect men).
- Western women have fully embraced their right to an education and employment, which are feminist aims, though they have often **rejected feminism**, seeing it as an ideologically-charged, radical androphobic current they don't identify with.
- As regards **women**, the main ongoing revolution started in 2006, when sexual assault survivor and activist Tarana Burke started using the phrase 'Me Too'; this became in 2017 the hashtag **#MeToo**, used to report on social media instances of **abuse** (beginning with the case of infamous film producer Harvey Weinstein). The outing of many male powerful men as abusers in all personal and professional areas continues today, with survivors being increasingly open about their experiences.
- To this we need to add the cases of rape by chemical submission, including the major scandal around the Gisèle Pelicot case, a French woman raped by dozens of men invited by her husband, Dominique, as she remained unconscious.
- All this has certainly created a **sharp divide between men and women**, of deep consequences as regards romantic relationships, sex, the couple, families, reproduction and so on.
- The right-wing's patriarchal demands for stricter controls over women's reproductive capacities is also poisoning heterosexuality. The overturning in June 2022 by the US Supreme Court of **Roe vs. Wade** has allowed US states to make abortion and even contraception illegal, including cases of rape and those in which the mother's life is in danger.
- The label '**toxic masculinity**', wrongly used to criticize masculinity, when the real enemy is **patriarchy**, has done a good deal of damage. The men who have felt interpellated have retrenched into even more misogynistic positions, which are growing immensely in the so-called **manosphere**, the origin of the **incel** phenomenon among others.
- The rise of the right wing all over the planet is a clear sign of **patriarchal backlash**, which also includes many **anti-feminist women** who wish to return to the **traditional roles** of wife and mother (popularized by the figure of the 'tradwife').
- A major phenomenon is the rise of **non-normative gender categories** in an attempt to break away from the **gender binary**. Advances in hormone therapy and surgery have allowed many **trans persons** to adopt their desired gender identity in public, not without many controversies (regarding, for instance, trans women's participation in sports in the USA or their banning from women's spaces in the UK). On the other hand, the younger generations are working for **non-binary, gender-neutral and gender-fluid** identities to be acknowledged, and even for the complete **abandonment of gender** as a defining category.

SEXUALITY

- In general terms, **heterosexuality** is now in deep trouble, as the enormity of the abuses to which children and adults have been subjected is reported. Women can also abuse sexually (and indeed psychologically) but it is evident that 90% of abuses are committed by heterosexual men, in some cases at an astonishing large scale (which may include murder in the case of serial killers). Legislation and feminist campaigning are proving to be quite ineffective to curb down abuse, though social awareness against it is now widespread.
- In general, it could be said that heterosexual women are looking for men who do not exist yet, while heterosexual men are looking for women who no longer exist. The ambiguity and mutual mistrust present in sex and romance is perhaps best seen in the new word '**situationship'**, used to describe a fluid, perhaps inexistent bond.
- Outside heterosexuality, the **LGTBIAQ+** community has been struggling to see their rights guaranteed by legislation. The Netherlands was the first state to legalize **gay marriage** (in 2001), although it is important to recall that many countries apply the death penalty or prison sentences to LGTBIAQ+ persons.
- The adjective **queer**, an old slur vindicated in the 1990s by activists as a badge of pride, is now used to express sexual freedom and fluidity beyond any normative categories. It seems obvious that the more progressive segments of the younger generations are embracing it.

RACISM

- Racism is rampant in the whole world and is likely to increase with the rise of the right wing. **White supremacism** is no doubt a major root of racism, but it must be noted that racism is also present in many areas of the world and/or situations which do not involve white persons. This is a human problem with no single nation or community completely free of racism.
- A major turning point in the history of racism in the USA were the **Rodney King riots** in Los Angeles (29 April 1992) caused by the exoneration of the police officers who beat up this Black truck driver, almost killing him. Although police brutality has always been common, the incident was caught on video and widely publicised.
- The last 35 years have witnessed many other similar incidents and a rather high number of deaths caused by the police in the USA and other countries. On 25 May 2020 the murder of **George Floyd** by a white police officer while resisting arrest, captured by a bystander on a smartphone, sparked nationwide protests and the start of the **#BlackLivesMatter** movement.
- US activists are at the foreground of **anti-racist activism**, but this campaign has raised worldwide social awareness about racism, involving cases as different as the ill-treatment of migrants (the infamous photo of the white woman reporter kicking a Syrian father carrying his child on the Hungarian border) or the harassment of Black football stars on the pitch. Currently, under Trump's second mandate, ICE raids are targeting so-called illegal migrants (and US citizens) on racist grounds.
- It seems, in any case, that **racism is linked to class**, as it diminishes in the cases of higher-class persons. Thus, former Tory UK Home Minister Suella Braverman, herself

of Indian descent, attempted to apply extremely racist measures to curb down illegal migration (of non-white persons, mainly).

- In the current vocabulary it is common to refer to persons as being **racialized**, rather than belonging to a specific race, as indeed, **race is a socio-cultural invention** that has never been backed by scientific evidence.

GENERATIONAL AWARENESS

- The novel by US author Douglas Coupland, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture* popularized in 1991 a **new way of referring to generations**. Until then it was common to speak of the generation born in the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and so on.
- Generation X (born 1965-1980) was preceded by the post-WWII Baby Boomers (1946-1980) and followed by the Millennials (1981-1996). They were followed by Generation Z (1997-2012), or Zoomers. Having run out of alphabet letters, Generation Alpha (2013-mid 2020s) has now come onto the stage.

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

- Even though scientific evidence indicates that life on planet Earth might be on the brink of extinction due to **anthropogenic climate change**, the right wing insists on maintaining that the events we're experiencing are natural. Their view is that there is no reason to stop economic development which, in their opinion, is not affecting the planet (though, to begin it, it is **depleting it of natural resources**).
- Social awareness of climate change in our time, the **Anthropocene**, has grown enormously and, indeed, many persons apply to their lives new strategies to protect the planet, from recycling to curbing down consumption of meat. Activists such as Greta Thunberg head an activism struggling to convince legislators of the need to protect human life, odd as this may sound.
- The problem is that many practices which are highly polluting continue, among them intensive travelling as **tourism** (also for business purposes). Although the recent Covid-19 pandemic with its ensuing lockdown demonstrated that wildlife regenerates quickly in the absence of human presence, there has been an immense surge in travelling afterwards.
- **Travelling** not only entails direct pollution but also has a negative impact on local economies, as shown by how **overtourism** destroys the local property and rental market, pushing the local inhabitants out (as it is happening in Venice). Platforms like Airbnb or even Instagram are eroding local life, as travel is an indicator of social prestige and because tourists have embraced the idea that their target must always be as far home as possible.

DRUGS

- The death on 2 December 1993 of Colombian drug king Pablo Escobar seemed to be a major turning point in the history of **drug trafficking** but was instead just one episode no matter how major.

- 1990s rave culture normalized the use of so-called **club drugs** such as empathogens MDMA (ecstasy) or 2C-B ('nexus'), inhalants (nitrous oxide and poppers), stimulants (amphetamine and cocaine), depressants/sedatives (Quaaludes, GHB, Rohypnol) and psychedelic and hallucinogenic drugs (LSD and DMT)
- The contradiction is that as more resources are used to stop trafficking, more are needed. Since the **stigma against legalization** persists, there is no reason for the black market to diminish; in contrast, alcohol and tobacco are legal and a source of taxation for governments all over the world, despite the damage their consumption causes.
- In the USA the widespread use of **fentanyl**, a potent opioid, and of the less potent semi-synthetic opioid **oxycodone** (most popular brand name OxyContin) as common prescription drugs for pain has caused a very deep crisis, with millions affected, as patients often turned to illegal drugs such as heroine. Many have entered a life of criminality and/or died.

CRIME

- **Drug trafficking** is, no doubt, a major area of criminality, affecting whole states (Mexico and Colombia are significant cases). Yet, digitalization has brought on other forms of white-collar criminality that often pass unnoticed because they may cause persons or business to be ruined, but don't cause bloodshed. **Cyberfraud** and **cyberattacks** for ransom are now common.
- Regarding bodily harm, the high incidence of **sexual and psychological abuse** has been already noted here. Of great concern are the **mass shootings** perpetrated by young angry males, such as the one that took place on 20 April 1999 at Columbine high school. This type of crime has spread beyond the USA, most notably in the mass murder by a Norwegian neo-Nazi terrorist in July of 2011, in Sweden.
- Instead of resulting in legislation firmly prohibiting the free use of weapons, however, mass shootings and serial killers have generated a high interest, reflected in the popularity of **true crime** both in print and in audiovisual productions, and of horror, with works as emblematic as the Hannibal Lecter saga and hundreds of increasingly gory films and series.

CELEBRITY CULTURE

- The celebrity of criminals is just one branch of the larger **allure of celebrity** in general, from which the phenomenon of the influencer also depends.
- Fame has always been an aspiration for many persons, but what distinguishes the more recent decades is the rise to celebrity of persons who are famous for being famous. The most significant case is that of the **Kardashian sisters** who are wealthy and much admired even though they do not follow any specific professional career, except celebrity.
- Celebrity is, in short, a type of meta-fame which attracts much income from **advertisers** and that obscures the merits of persons who should deserve public honours instead. It is absurdly accepted that entertainers and influencers should

enjoy extreme **luxury**, whereas researchers struggle to find funds to work for the good of all humankind.

SPORTS AND THE HEALTHY BODY

- Sports are split into two main areas: **amateur** and **professional**.
- Professional sport is now based on celebrity. Whereas in the 20th century the Olympic Games rejected **professional sportspersons**, it is now near impossible to find amateurs participating in them. Professionalization is the aim in all disciplines, aided by the prizes in competitions but, above all, by the sportsperson's ability to attract sponsorship from businesses or direct advertising. Stars, from football player Cristiano Ronaldo to the recently retired tennis champion Rafa Nadal, are major **celebrities**, though the degree of exposure of their private lives varies very much.
- **Amateur** sports have been thriving in recent decades, when the idea that practising a sport is indispensable for a healthy lifestyle has become common sense. This, however, has split the population in two halves, as not everyone has the time, resources, or willingness to train regularly.
- The **cult of the healthy body** is positive, but it is also part of what French philosopher Michel Foucault called **biopolitics**, for the obligation to stay fit and healthy is part of the neoliberal vision of the docile, uniform body which costs less the state less to maintain in healthcare.
- The irony of this situation is that while more and more people lead a healthy lifestyle, taking exercise regularly and eating healthy food, **obesity** is growing and so is **cardiovascular disease**. This could be blamed on the bad habits of a great deal of the population, but the case is that illnesses such as **cancer** are affecting all segments of the population, including those who take good care of their bodies. Pollution and the manipulation of food at all levels are being blamed for this situation, leaving aside tobacco and other noxious substances freely consumed.

RELIGION

- Although recent decades are seeing a steady growth of **atheism**, religion still constitutes a major worldwide force today.
- Of all denominations, **Islam** is no doubt the force that has impacted most directly recent decades. Islam has entered many Western countries through migration, often causing friction (as an example France's banning of hijab from schools). In the worst-case scenario Islam has been connected with terrorism through its most radical branches, the main events being the 9/11 attacks of 2001, the rise of the ISIS caliphate in the Middle East and the takeover of power by the Taliban in Afghanistan.
- Religion is still the main focus of instability in the Mediterranean because of the ill-treatment of the Palestinians Muslims by the Israeli Jewish state, with the more recent episode being the attacks against the Gaza strip and the West Bank following the attacks by Hamas of October 2023.
- Although the Israeli state does not represent **Jewishness** itself nor all the Jews in the country or in the world, the conflict has caused **antisemitism** to escalate. On the

other hand, pro-Palestinian declarations and demonstrations are wrongly seen as pro-Muslim antisemitic actions when in fact they intend to defend human rights.

- It is important to note that the rise of the **right-wing** is closely connected to Christian **religious fundamentalism**, this time of a more covert kind than in the past era dominated by Protestant televangelists of diverse denominations. The restrictive policies that, for instance, **Project 2025**, a product of the thinktank Heritage Foundation, seeks to implement in the USA (and elsewhere) have been inspired by the radical Catholic group Opus Dei through direct personal links.
- As regards **Catholicism**, none of the recent Popes (Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis) have significantly altered the structures of the Church. The Catholic Church has been rocked in the last decades by thousands of scandals involving the **abuse of children by priests** in schools or in connection to local churches in many different countries. The scandal has been deepened by the revelation that the abusers have been protected by their superiors, who did not report them to the lay authorities and concealed their crimes. The survivors have been promised compensation that, in most cases, will never reach them. It is still to be seen what Pope Leo XIV (elected 8 May 2025) will do about this matter.

Arts and culture

- In the period 1990-2025 cultural consumption has been completely altered by the rise of the **internet** and the **digitalization of texts** (books, music albums, videogames, films, series) which allows for the growth of **illegal downloading** at the expense of artists' copyright and earnings. **AI** abuse of artists' copyright is also highly concerning.

- Although legal measures are taken to curb down illegal sharing of files (a landmark was the case against **Napster**, 1999-2002), audiences' habitual consumption of illegally obtained files has a major impact on the cultural industry, particularly on music.

- The new TV **streaming platforms** (beginning with Netflix) have managed to erode in part illegal downloading but they affect above all the capacity of the film industry to generate innovative productions (specially at an indie level).

- The sales of **VHS** and later **DVD** and **Blu-Ray** are very much affected by platform subscription, although by 2026 it is unclear whether the platforms can subsist without increasing fees or extensive advertising.

- As regards music, **Spotify** makes practically all music available to the detriment of musicians' earnings, as Taylor Swift (the main pop star together with Madonna and Beyoncé) has complained.

- At the beginning of the 2010s, the **videogame industry** surpassed in worth the film and the music industry combined once the gamers' home equipment reached a remarkable level of excellence and became affordable for most households.

- The **performative arts** (theatre, ballet, contemporary dance, opera, classical music, musicals, pop and rock concerts) generally thrive, despite frequent cuttings in public subsidies.

- A peculiar phenomenon is how the sales of tickets through digital platforms, such as **Ticketmaster**, alter prices responding to demand so that working-class audiences often find it impossible to afford pop and rock concerts. The increasing popularity of **festivals**, which frequently demand a considerable expense, also limits access to many popular performers.

- The **plastic arts** (painting, sculpture, performance art) attract more admirers than ever, both to museums and exhibitions, though the world of modern art is twisted out of all logic in a market dominated by investors with little interest in artistic excellence. Even those who try to fight the capitalisation of art, such as street artist **Banksy**, end

up being swallowed up with their work transformed into expensive commodities from whose sales they do not benefit.

Indispensable Anglophone Films

1990, *Godfellas*, Martin Scorsese / *Edward Scissorhands*, Tim Burton
1991, *The Silence of the Lambs*, Jonathan Demme
1992, *Malcom X*, Spike Lee
1993, *Schindler's List*, Steven Spielberg / *Jurassic Park*, Steven Spielberg
1994, *Pulp Fiction*, Quentin Tarantino / *The Shawshank Redemption*, Frank Darabont / *Forrest Gump*, Robert Zemeckis
1995, *Toy Story*, John Lasseter / *The Usual Suspects*, Bryan Singer
1996, *Hamlet*, Kenneth Branagh
1997, *Titanic*, James Cameron
1998, *Saving Private Ryan*, Steven Spielberg / *The Truman Show*, Peter Weir
1999, *Magnolia*, Paul Thomas Anderson / *The Matrix*, The Wachowski Sisters
2000 *Gladiator*, Ridley Scott
2001 *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, Peter Jackson / *A Beautiful Mind*, Ron Howard
2002 *Signs*, M. Night Shyamalan
2003 *Lost in Translation*, Sofia Coppola
2004 *Million Dollar Baby*, Clint Eastwood
2005 *Brokeback Mountain*, Ang Lee
2006 *Children of Men*, Alfonso Cuarón
2007 *No Country for Old Men*, Joel and Ethan Coen
2008 *The Dark Knight*, Christopher Nolan / *Wall-e*, Andrew Stanton / *Gran Torino*, Clint Eastwood
2009 *Avatar*, James Cameron
2010 *The Social Network*, David Fincher / *Inception*, Christopher Nolan
2011 *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, Rupert Wyatt
2012 *Zero Dark Thirty*, Katherine Bigelow
2013 *The Wolf of Wall Street*, Martin Scorsese / *Frozen*, Jennifer Lee, Chris Buck
2014 *Boyhood*, Richard Linklater
2015 *Spotlight*, Tom McCarthy
2016 *Moonlight*, Barry Jenkins / *La La Land*, Damien Chazelle
2017 *Get Out*, Jordan Peel / *Coco*, Lee Unkrich, Adrián Molina
2018 *Black Panther*, Ryan Coogler
2019 *Joker*, Todd Phillips / *1917*, Sam Mendes
2020 *The Father*, Florian Zeller
2021 *The Power of the Dog*, Janet Campion
2022 *Everything, Everywhere, All at Once*, Daniel Scheinert, Daniel Kwan

2023 *Poor Things*, Giórgos Lánthimos/ *Barbie*, Greta Gerwig / *Oppenheimer*, Christopher Nolan
2024 *Emilia Perez*, Jacques Audiard / *The Brutalist*, Brady Corbet
2025 *Sinners*, Ryan Coogler / One Battle After the Other, Paul Thomas Anderson

Indispensable Anglophone Series

1989–1998 *Seinfeld* / 1989 – *The Simpsons*
1990–1991 *Twin Peaks*
1990–1995 *Northern Exposure*
1990–1996 *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*
1993-2001, 2016, 2018 *The X-Files*
1993–2005 *NYPD Blues*
1994–2004 *Friends*
1995 *Pride and Prejudice* (miniseries)
1997–2003 *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*
1997–2007 *Stargate SG-1*
1997 – *South Park*
1998–2020 *Will and Grace*
1999–2006 *The West Wing*
1999–2007 *The Sopranos*
2000–2024 *Curb Your Enthusiasm*
2001 *Band of Brothers* (miniseries)
2002–2008 *The Wire*
2004–2009 *Battlestar Galactica*
2004–2010 *Lost*

2004-2012 *House*
2005 – *Grey's Anatomy*
2005–2013 *The Office* (US version)
2005–2007 *Rome*
2007–2015 *Mad Men*
2007–2019 *The Big Bang Theory*
2008–2013 *Breaking Bad*
2008-2014 *True Blood*
2010-2015 *Downtown Abbey*
2010–2017 *Sherlock*
2011– *Black Mirror*
2011–2019 *Game of Thrones*
2013–2022 *Peaky Blinders*
2014-2024 *Fargo*
2018–2023 *Succession*
2019 *Chernobyl* (miniseries)
2020 *The Queen's Gambit* (miniseries)
2023– *The Last of Us*
2024 *Shōgun* (miniseries)
2025- *The Pitt*

Indispensable Albums (Lyrics in English)

1991 Nirvana, *Nevermind*
1991 Red Hot Chili Peppers, *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*
1992 R.E.M., *Automatic For The People*
1995 Alanis Morissette, *Jagged Little Pill*
1995 Oasis, *(What's The Story) Morning Glory?*
1996 Rage Against The Machine, *Evil Empire*

1997 Radiohead, *OK Computer*
1998 Massive Attack, *Mezzanine*
1998 Madonna, *Ray of Light*
2000 Eminem *The Marshall Mathers*
2000 Linkin Park, *Hybrid Theory*
2002 Coldplay, *A Rush Of Blood to The Head*
2003 Alicia Keyes, *The Diary of Alicia Keys*

2003 The White Stripes, *Elephant*
2004 Green Day, *American Idiot*
2006 Artic Monkey, *Whatever People Say I Am Thats What I Am Not*
2006 Amy Winehouse, *Back to Black*
2007 Britney Spears, *Blackout*
2008 Taylor Swift, *Fearless*
2010 Kanye West, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*
2011 Adele, *21*
2011 The Weeknd, *House of Balloons*
2011 Lady Gaga, *Born This Way*

2012 Frank Ocean, *Channel Orange*
2016 Beyoncé, *Lemonade*
2016 Rihanna, *Anti*
2019 FKA twigs, *MAGDALENE*
2019 Billie Eilish, *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*
2020 Fiona Apple, *Fetch the Bolt Cutters*
2022 SZA, *SOS*
2023 Lana Del Rey, *Did You Know That There's A Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd*
2024 Charli XCX, *Brat*
2025 Lady Gaga, *Mayhem*

Main Videogame Franchises

Space Invaders (1978)	Pac-Man (1980)	James Bond (1982)
Mario (1983)	Star Wars (1983)	The Legend of Zelda (1986)
Batman (1986)	Castlevania (1986)	Final Fantasy (1987)
Metal Gear (1987)	Street Fighter (1987)	Megaman (1987)
Tetris (1988)	Prince of Persia (1989)	Sonic the Hedgehog (1991)
Civilization (1991)	Mortal Kombat (1992)	FIFA (1993)
DOOM (1993)	Need for Speed (1994)	The Elder Scrolls (1994)
LEGO (1995)	Pokémon (1996)	Resident Evil (1996-)
Grand Theft Auto (1997)	Diablo (1997)	Fallout (1997)
Half-Life (1998)	NBA 2 K (1999)	Tony Hawk's (1999)
The Sims (2000)	Animal Crossing (2001)	Wizarding World (2001)
Halo (2001)	Battlefield (2002)	Call of Duty (2003)
Monster Hunter (2004)	Red Dead (2004)	God of War (2005)
Guitar Hero (2005)	Gears of War (2006)	Assassin's Creed (2007)
Bio-shock (2007)	Mass Effect (2007)	The Witcher (2007)
Uncharted (2007)	Borderlands (2009)	Just Dance (2009)
Minecraft (2011)	Dark Souls (2011)	The Walking Dead (2012)
The Last of Us (2013)	Spiderman (2018)	Elden Ring (2022)

Authors and works

What Do We Mean by Literature?

- Literature is the art of using writing to produce **beauty**.
- In that sense, **poetry** has a certain advantage over prose, which is mainly functional.
- In the English Literature degrees, we teach mostly **prose**: primarily novels and, occasionally short fiction, rarely theatre.
- **Drama** is mostly written in prose, but it used to be composed mainly in verse (Shakespeare often mixed blank verse with prose).
- The **novels** we teach are mostly literary, though this does not mean necessarily that their prose aims at producing beauty.
- Literary fiction is also judged by the **author's skill** in composing stories, offering realistic characterization and insight into the characters' psychology, and choosing 'serious' topics of high impact in human life.
- In fact, the prose of the literary novel can be similar in quality to that of the popular novel or the prose in non-fiction. It is assumed (though this is not always the case) that literary novelists possess **artistic ambition** beyond commercial aims.

The Publishing Market: Main Trends

- Although many foretold the death of the printed book when the first e-books were commercialized, most readers still prefer **print books**, usually disliking e-book readers. **Audiobooks** are quite popular with readers who wish to combine storytelling with other activities (such as sports or driving).
- The current market mixes increasingly bigger **corporations** for which book selling might be just a minor activity, with **independent publishers** and self-publication. Many platforms, from Amazon to Wattpad, offer aspiring writers the chance to self-publish for free, while others charge a fee. **Self-publication**, however, has not changed significantly the professional sector, with authors still relying on agents to access independent or corporate publishers.
- The book market in English is dominated by the **Big Five**: Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, Macmillan Publishers, Penguin Random House, and Simon & Schuster.
- Although there are more **readers** than ever in absolute terms, they are not a growing percentage of the population. Children and teenagers are using leisure time mostly for TV, videogames, and social media while **reading** is increasingly seen as a compulsory activity tied to education rather than pleasurable leisure.
- Most readers read mainly **novels**, and among them they prefer middlebrow or lowbrow fiction, rather than highbrow (or literary).

- While some best-selling authors are making plenty of money, most writers are finding it **increasingly difficult to become full-time professionals**. This is due to a combination of diverse factors: a) so many books are published daily that readers flock towards the better publicized authors; b) illegal digital downloading is common; c) sales of lesser-known volumes are very low (many publishers survive on the earnings of their A-list authors).
- **Women authors** have today a bigger presence than male authors mainly because women read more than men, which means that publishers have learned to increase the number of women they publish. Since men are less willing to read women's works, **male readers** are turning to other forms of leisure and education than reading.
- **Diversity** has increased very much with authors of all identities being welcomed. This is particularly visible in the new **openness of the major awards** to authors other than white, male, cisgender, middle-class men. The emergence of Post-Colonial and Gender Studies in 1990s academia has helped very much to increase this diversity and undermine the canon.
- Postmodernism and the valuation of popular fiction thanks to Cultural Studies have also helped to give the **popular genres** a new respectability. There are, still, differences. While detective fiction is very much respected (as a realistc genre), the genres less grounded on the mundane are less respected, from romance to science fiction, passing through gothic/horror or fantasy. Some genres like the western seem to be disappearing while new genres, such as romantasy have quickly conquered a solid position.
- Professional **reviewing** and criticism published in the traditional media (newspapers, magazines, journals) is at risk of disappearing, given the preference of the younger generations for the social media. The social network GoodReads must be mentioned as a major source for unpaid amateur reviewing together with book blogs, YouTube (booktubers), TikTok (booktokers), or Instagram (bookstagrammers).
- The **awards** circuit is today indispensable for writers, with the Nobel Prize at the top. The British Man Booker Prize and the US Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award are major accolades for literary fiction, whereas each popular genre has its own awards (the Hugo and Nebula for science fiction, the Edgar Awards for mystery, the Bram Stoker for horror and so on). Awards, however, do not necessarily guarantee popularity in the long term, though they may increase sales in the short term.
- It is practically mandatory for authors to make themselves **available to readers** in book presentations (often part of book tours), festivals, conventions and social media. The fetishism of the autograph is now bigger than ever.
- The **academic world** has lost its reluctance to dealing with the work of living authors, often making them a subject of teaching or research when they are still far from being consolidated in their careers. Many scholars work today to ensure that living writers are acknowledged, but it might also be argued that authors and academic live in separate worlds. This results in a still **very limited understanding of how writers create** fiction in any genre, and even non-fiction (which is closer to journalism).

The Literary Novel in the UK and the USA: A Selection

- 1990 The Buddha of Suburbia, Hanif Kureishi UK / The Things They Carried, Tim O'Brien US
- 1991 Regeneration (Regeneration, #1), Pat Barker UK / Time's Arrow, or the Nature of the Offence, Martin Amis UK / American Psycho, Bret Easton Ellis US
- 1992 Poor Things, Alasdair Gray UK-SCT / The Secret History, Donna Tartt US
- 1993 Trainspotting, Irvine Welsh UK-SCT / The Shipping News, Annie Proulx US
- 1994 Captain Corelli's Mandolin, Louis de Bernières UK
- 1995 High Fidelity, Nick Hornby UK / The Blue Flower, Penelope Fitzgerald UK
- 1996 The Beach, Alex Garland UK / Fight Club, Chuck Palahniuk US
- 1997 Cold Mountain, Charles Frazier US / American Pastoral, Philip Roth US
- 1998 Tipping the Velvet, Sarah Waters UK / The Hours, Michael Cunningham US / The Poisonwood Bible, Barbara Kingsolver US
- 1999 The Soldier's Return, Melvyn Bragg UK / Our Fathers, Andrew O'Hagan UK-SCT / Girl with a Pearl Earring, Tracy Chevalier US

- 2000 White Teeth, Zadie Smith UK / The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay, Michael Chabon US
- 2001 Atonement, Ian McEwan UK / The Constant Gardener, John le Carré UK / The Bonesetter's Daughter, Amy Tan US
- 2002 Middlesex, Jeffrey Eugenides US
- 2003 Brick Lane, Monica Ali UK / What Was She Thinking? [Notes on a Scandal], Zoë Heller UK
- 2004 Cloud Atlas, David Mitchell UK / The Line of Beauty, Alan Hollinghurst UK / Small Island, Andrea Levy UK / Gilead (Gilead, #1), Marilynne Robinson US / Oracle Night, Paul Auster US
- 2005 Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro UK / Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close, Jonathan Safran Foer US
- 2006 The Road, Cormac McCarthy US
- 2007 The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, Junot Díaz US / Call Me by Your Name, André Aciman US-EG / The Yiddish Policemen's Union, Michael Chabon US
- 2008 From A to X, John Berger UK / Unaccustomed Earth, Jhumpa Lahiri (stories) US
- 2009 Wolf Hall (Thomas Cromwell, #1), Hilary Mantel UK / The Help, Kathryn Stockett US

- 2010 A Visit from the Goon Squad, Jennifer Egan US / Freedom, Jonathan Franzen US
- 2011 Mr. Fox, Helen Oyeyemi UK-NIG / Open City, Teju Cole US
- 2012 Home, Toni Morrison US / The Orphan Master's Son, Adam Johnson US / The Round House, Louise Erdrich US

- 2013 Life After Life, Kate Atkinson UK / The Circle, Dave Eggers US / Americanah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie NIG-US
- 2014 All the Light We Cannot See, Anthony Doerr US / Redeployment, Phil Klay US
- 2015 The Sympathizer, Viet Thanh Nguyen US-VIET / A Spool of Blue Thread, Anne Tyler US
- 2016 The Underground Railroad, Colson Whitehead US / Autumn (Seasonal Quartet #1), Ali Smith UK-SCT / The Noise of Time, Julian Barnes UK
- 2017 Lincoln in the Bardo, George Saunders US / Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine, Gail Honeyman UK-SCT
- 2018 My Year of Rest and Relaxation, Ottessa Moshfegh US / The Friend, Sigrid Nunez US
- 2019 Girl, Woman, Other, Bernardine Evaristo UK / Fleishman Is in Trouble, Taffy Brodesser-Akner US

- 2020 Hamnet, Maggie O'Farrell UK / Shuggie Bain, Douglas Stuart UK-SCT
- 2021 Hell of a Book, Jason Mott US / The Sweetness of Water, Nathan Harris US / Detransition, Baby; Torrey Peters, US
- 2022 Trespasses Louise Kennedy UK / Young Mungo, Douglas Stuart UK-SCT /The Marriage Portrait, Maggie O'Farrell UK-NIR
- 2023 Yellowface, R.F. Kuang US / Blackouts, Justin Torres US / In Memoriam, Alice Winn UK
- 2024 Orbital, Samantha Harvey US / Night Watch, Jayne Anne Phillips US / Percival Everett, James US
- 2025 David Szalay, Flesh UK / Ocean Vuong, The Emperor of Gladness USA

The Literary Novel in Other Anglophone Areas: A Selection

- 1990 Circle of Friends, Maeve Binchy IR / Once Were Warriors, Alan Duff NZEA
- 1991 Cloudstreet, Tim Winton AUS / The Famished Road, Ben Okri NIG
- 1992 The English Patient, Michael Ondaatje SRI-CAN / Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree (Islam Quintet #1), Tariq Ali PAK
- 1993 The Stone Diaries, Carol Shields CAN / Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha, Roddy Doyle IR
- 1994 Open Secrets: Stories, Alice Munro CAN / Bulibasha: King of the Gypsies, Witi Ihimaera NZ / Paradise, Abdulrazak Gurnah TANZ
- 1995 A Fine Balance, Rohinton Mistry IND / The Moor's Last Sigh, Salman Rushdie IND
- 1996 Alias Grace, Margaret Atwood CAN / Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence, Doris Pilkington AUS
- 1997 The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy IND / Barney's Version, Mordecai Richler AUS

- 1998 Breakfast on Pluto, Patrick McCabe IR / Abyssinian Chronicles, Moses Isegawa UGA
- 1999 Disgrace, J.M. Coetzee SAFRC / Fasting, Feasting, Anita Desai IND

- 2000 True History of the Kelly Gang, Peter Carey AUS / The Glass Palace, Amitav Ghosh IND
- 2001 Life of Pi, Yann Martel CAN / Half a Life, V.S. Naipaul TRI&TOB
- 2002 Star of the Sea, Joseph O'Connor IR / Shroud (The Cleave Trilogy #2), John Banville IR
- 2003 The In-Between World of Vikram Lall, M.G. Vassanji TANZ-CAN / The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini AFG / A Distant Shore, Caryl Phillips ST KITTS & NEVIS - UK
- 2004 Maps for Lost Lovers, Nadeem Aslam PAK / The White Earth, Andrew McGahan AUS
- 2005 The Inheritance of Loss, Kiran Desai IND / The Secret River, Kate Grenville AUS
- 2006 Mr Pip, Lloyd Jones AUS / My Name Was Judas, C.K. Stead NZEA
- 2007 The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Mohsin Hamid PAK / The Book of Negroes (Someone Knows My Name) Lawrence Hill CAN
- 2008 The White Tiger, Aravind Adiga IND / The Secret Scripture, Sebastian Barry IR
- 2009 Brooklyn, Colm Tóibín IR / Galore, Michael Crummey CAN

- 2010 Room, Emma Donoghue IR-CAN / The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives, Lola Shoneyin NIG
- 2011 Half Blood Blues, Esi Edugyan CAN/ Far to Go, Alison Pick CAN
- 2012 Philida, André P. Brink SAFRC / No Time like the Present, Nadine Gordimer SAFRC
- 2013 We Need New Names, NoViolet Bulawayo ZBW
- 2014 The Narrow Road to the Deep North, Richard Flanagan AUS / The Lives of Others, Neel Mukherjee IND
- 2015 The Kindness of Enemies, Leila Aboulela SUDAN / The Fishermen, Chigozie Obioma NIG
- 2016 Do Not Say We Have Nothing, Madeleine Thien CAN / Homegoing, Yaa Gyasi GHANA
- 2017 Home Fire, Kamila Shamsie PAK / Stay with Me, Ayọ̀bámi Adébáyọ̀ NIG
- 2018 Normal People, Sally Rooney IR / Boy Swallows Universe by Trent Dalton AUS
- 2019 There Was Still Love, Favel Parrett AUS / Everything Inside, Edwidge Danticat HAITI

- 2020 Apeirogon, Colum McCann IR / Sorrow and Bliss, Meg Mason NZ / The Mermaid of Black Conch, Monique Roffey TRI&TOB
- 2021 The Promise, Damon Galgut SAFRC / A Passage North, Anuk Arudpragasam SRI
- 2022 The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida, Shehan Karunatilaka SRI LANKA / Small Things Like This, Claire Keegan IR

- 2023 Prophet Song, Paul Lynch IR / Sunburn, Chloe Michelle Howarth IR / The House of Doors, Tan Twan Eng MAL
- 2025 Kiran Desai, The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny IND

Popular Anglophone Fiction: A Selection

NOTE: this list includes science fiction, fantasy, romance, gothic, mystery, detective fiction, YA and children's fiction.

- 1990 Moving Pictures, Terry Pratchett UK / Jurassic Park (Jurassic Park #1), Michael Crichton US
- 1991 Outlander (Outlander, #1), Diana Gabaldon US / Body of Evidence (Kay Scarpetta, #2), Patricia Cornwell US
- 1992 The Children of Men, P.D. James UK / Fatherland Robert Harris UK / The Pelican Brief, John Grisham US / The Bridges of Madison County, Robert James Waller US
- 1993 Parable of the Sower (Earthseed, #1), Octavia E. Butler US / Red Mars (Mars Trilogy, #1), Kim Stanley Robinson US
- 1994 The Alienist (Dr. Laszlo Kreizler, #1), Caleb Carr US / Fools, Pat Cadigan US
- 1995 The Golden Compass (His Dark Materials, #1), Philip Pullman UK / Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West (The Wicked Years, #1), Gregory Maguire US
- 1996 Bridget Jones's Diary (Bridget Jones, #1), Helen Fielding / Neverwhere (London Below, #1), Neil Gaiman UK / The Green Mile, Stephen King US / The Notebook (The Notebook, #1), Nicholas Sparks US
- 1997 Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (Harry Potter, #1), J.K. Rowling UK / Black and Blue, Ian Rankin UK / A Game of Thrones (Song of Ice and Fire #1), George R. R. Martin US
- 1998 Chocolat (Chocolat, #1), Joanne Harris UK / Inversions (Culture, #6), Iain M. Banks UK-SCT
- 1999 The Perks of Being a Wallflower, Stephen Chbosky US / The Bad Beginning (A Series of Unfortunate Events, #1), Lemony Snicket US / Hannibal, Thomas Harris US

- 2000 Tears of the Giraffe (No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency, #2), Alexander McCall Smith ZBW-SCT / The Duke and I (Bridgertons, #1), Julia Quinn US
- 2001 The Eyre Affair (Thursday Next, #1), Jasper Fforde UK-WLS / Mystic River, Dennis Lehane US
- 2002 Altered Carbon (Takeshi Kovacs, #1), Richard K. Morgan UK / City of Bones (Harry Bosch, #8; Harry Bosch Universe, #11), Michael Connelly US
- 2003 The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time Mark Haddon UK / The Da Vinci Code (Robert Langdon, #2), Dan Brown / The Time Traveler's Wife, Audrey Niffenegger US / Lois McMaster Bujold, Paladin of Souls US

- 2004 The Last Kingdom, Bernard Cornwell UK / My Sister's Keeper, Jodi Picoult US / The Truth About Forever Sarah Dessen US
- 2005 Twilight (The Twilight Saga, #1), Stephenie Meyer US / Old Man's War (Old Man's War, #1), John Scalzi US
- 2006 Spin, Robert Charles Wilson CAN / Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic, Alison Bechdel (graphic novel) US / World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War, Max Brooks US
- 2007 City of Bones (The Mortal Instruments, #1), Cassandra Clare US / The Name of the Wind (The Kingkiller Chronicle, #1), Patrick Rothfuss US / The Terror, Dan Simmons US
- 2008 The Hunger Games (The Hunger Games, #1), Suzanne Collins US / Remember Me?, Sophie Kinsella UK
- 2009 The Maze Runner (The Maze Runner, #1), James Dashner US / The Windup Girl, Paolo Bacigalupi US

- 2010 The Lost Hero (The Heroes of Olympus, #1), Rick Riordan US / Zoo City, Lauren Beukes SAFRC / The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms, N.K. Jemisin US
- 2011 Embassytown, China Miéville UK / 11/22/63, Stephen King US / Ready Player One (Ready Player One, #1), Ernest Cline US / Divergent (Divergent, #1), Veronica Roth US
- 8 Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?, Jeanette Winterson UK
- 2012 The Fault in Our Stars, John Green US / Gone Girl, Gillian Flynn US / Wonder, RJ Palacio US
- 2013 The Humans, Matt Haig UK / We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves, Karen Joy Fowler US
- 2014 Big Little Lies, Liane Moriarty AUS / The Martian, Andy Weir US
- 2015 The Girl on the Train, Paula Hawkins US / Uprooted, Naomi Novik US
- 2016 It Ends with Us, Colleen Hoover US /The Paper Menagerie and Other Stories, Ken Liu (short fiction) US
- 2017 The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo, Taylor Jenkins Reid US / All Systems Red (The Murderbot Diaries #1), Martha Wells US
- 2018 Circe, Madeline Miller US / The Hate U Give, Angie Thomas US
- 2019 The Light Brigade, Kameron Hurley US / Mexican Gothic, Silvia Moreno-Garcia MEX

- 2020 Piranesi, Susanna Clarke UK / The Ministry for the Future, Kim Stanley Robinson US / Ring Shout, P. Djèlí Clark US
- 2021 The Final Girl Support Group, Grady Hendrix US / The Last House on Needless Street, Catriona Ward US / A Desolation Called Peace (Teixcalaan, #2), Arkady Martine US
- 2022 The Last Devil to Die, Richard Osman UK / Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, Gabrielle Zevin US / Babel, R.F. Kuang US / Nettle & Bone, T. Kingfisher USA
- 2023 Fourth Wing, Rebecca Yarros US / Translation State, Anne Leckie US

Anglophone Non-fiction: A Selection

NOTE: this list includes memoirs, autobiography, reportage, travel writing, the essay, and academic volumes.

- 1990 Gender Trouble and the Subversion of Identity, Judith Butler US / The Journalist and the Murderer, Janet Malcolm US
- 1991 The Beauty Myth, Naomi Wolf US / There are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America, Alex Kotlowitz US
- 1992 Women Who Run With the Wolves, Clarissa Pinkola Estés US / Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest, Stephen E. Ambrose US
- 1993 Dead Man Walking, Sister Helen Prejean US / The McDonaldization of Society, George Ritzer US
- 1994 Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, John Berendt US / Prozac Nation, Elizbeth Wurtzel US / Long Walk to Freedom, Nelson Mandela SAFRC
- 1995 The Railway Man, Eric Lomax UK / Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance, Barack Obama US / The Making of the Atomic Bomb, Richard Rhodes US
- 1996 Angela's Ashes (Frank McCourt, #1), Frank McCourt IR / Into the Wild, Jon Krakauer US / Tuesdays With Morrie, Mitch Albom US / The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea, Sebastian Junger US
- 1998 The Orchid Thief, Susan Orlean US / A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail, Bill Bryson US
- 1999 Seabiscuit: An American Legend, Laura Hillenbrand US / In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex, Nathaniel Philbrick US

- 2000 Bad Blood, Lorna Sage UK / On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft, Stephen King US / Me Talk Pretty One Day, David Sedaris US
- 2001 Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting, in America, Barbara Ehrenreich US / Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal, Eric Schlosser US
- 2002 The Midwife: A Memoir of Birth, Joy, and Hard Times, Jennifer Worth UK / The Demon in the Freezer Richard Preston US / American Ground: Unbuilding the World Trade Center, William Langewiesche US
- 2003 Moneyball, Michael Lewis US / Regarding the Pain of Others, Susan Sontag US / Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers, Mary Roach US
- 2004 Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power, Rebecca Solnit US / Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare, Stephen Greenblatt US
- 2005 The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls US / The Year of Magical Thinking, Joan Didion US
- 2006 Eat, Pray, Love, Elizabeth Gilbert US / My Life in France, Julia Child with Alex Prud'homme US

- 2007 The World Without Us, Alan Weisman US / Identical Strangers: A Memoir of Twins Separated and Reunited, Elyse Schein US
- 2008 Wishful Drinking, Carrie Fisher US / Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations, Clay Shirky UK
- 2009 Columbine, Dave Cullen US / The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon, David Grann US

- 2010 The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot US / Just Kids, Patti Smith US
- 2011 Bossypants, Tina Fey US / How to Be a Woman, Caitlin Moran UK / Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?, Jeanette Winterson UK
- 2012 Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail, Cheryl Strayed US / Unorthodox, Deborah Feldman US / I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot, the Taliban, Malala Yousafzai PAK
- 2013 The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Daniel James Brown / Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief, Lawrence Wright US
- 2014 The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History, Elizabeth Kolbert US / Bad Feminist, Roxane Gay US / Men Explain Things to Me, Rebecca Solnit US
- 2015 H Is for Hawk, Helen Macdonald UK/ Landmarks, Robert McFarlane UK / Between the World and Me, Ta-Nehisi Coates US
- 2016 Girls & Sex: Navigating the Complicated New Landscape, Peggy Orenstein US / How to Survive a Plague, David France US / Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood, Noah Trevor SAFRC / Hidden Figures, Margot Lee Shetterly US / Hillbilly Elegy, JD Vance US
- 2017 Jane Austen at Home, Lucy Worsley UK / The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America's Shining Women, Kate Moore US / Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How It Changed the World, Laura Spinney US /
- 2018 Fascism: A Warning, Madeleine K. Albright US / Becoming, Michelle Obama US / Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company that Addicted America, Beth Macy US / To Be a Machine, Mark O'Connell UK
- 2019 Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators, Ronan Farrow US / In the Dream House, Carmen Maria Machado US / She Said: Breaking the Sexual Harassment Story That Helped Ignite a Movement, Jodi Kantor, Megan Twohey US

- 2020 All Boys Aren't Blue, George M. Johnson US / Greenlights, Matthew McConaughey US
- 2021 Empireland: How Imperialism has Shaped Modern Britain, Sathnam Sanghera IND-UK / Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty, Patrick Radden Keefe US / Man Enough: Undefining My Masculinity, Justin Baldoni US / Crying in H Mart, Michelle Zauner KOR /

- 2022 This is Going to Hurt: Secret Diaries of a Medical Resident, Adam Kay UK / I'm Glad My Mom Died, Jennette McCurdy US / Finding Me, Viola Davis US / The Storyteller: Tales of Life and Music, Dave Grohl US
- 2023 Spare, Prince Harry UK / Strong Female Character, Fern Brady UK-SCT / Doppelganger: A Trip into the Mirror World, Naomi Klein CAN / Pageboy, Elliot Page, US /
- 2025 Mother Mary Come to Me, Arundhati Roy

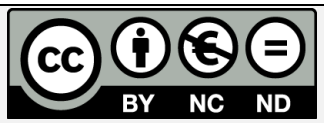
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Sara Martín
Barcelona, July 2026

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