

PhD Studentship

English Literature and the Environmental Humanities

Closing date: Monday 8th June

Interview date: Thursday 2nd July

English Literature research at Worcester is aligned with the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange strategy, which emphasises themes such as identity and inclusion, and the interpretation of culture and heritage. Accordingly, projects with an ethical, inclusive, and/or environmental focus are prioritised. With this PhD studentship, the University aims to further consolidate the work of the Green Voices Research Group. Applications are invited to address one of the following briefs.

Ecologies of Genre

Environmental consciousness is not only to be found in the external contexts of literature, but also embedded and articulated in textual practice. Literary research at Worcester includes notable strength in textual criticism and in the theories of form and genre, which can stimulate a productive dialogue with environmental concerns. Research proposals are invited which address the intersection of ecocriticism and the study of literary forms and genres, including: modern Gothic; historical fiction; fragmentation and open field poetics; the poetry of landscape, place, and space; early modern drama and poetry; and contemporary creative practice, such as spoken word and performance poetry, hypermedia, and creative non-fiction. Critical projects with a creative practice element will also be welcome.

Narratives of environmental injustice

Research proposals are invited on the representation of environmental injustice in British and/or Irish literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While critical attention to environmental injustice has been prevalent in American literatures, the theme has not been as widely explored in relation British and Irish contexts. There is the potential for highly significant new work on a range of related themes, including urban poverty, anti-pastoral and counter-pastoral, famine literature, industrial fiction, the slum, and other material ecologies. Research proposals on historical themes such as migration and diasporic writing, health and ability, in relation to environmentalism would also be welcome.

Supervision

Likely supervisors for the project include Prof. John Parham, Prof Nicoleta Cinpoes, and Prof. Michael Bradshaw. However, depending on the nature of the proposed research, a range of academic staff in the School of Humanities may have supervisory involvement. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to consult staff profiles on the School web pages to find out more about research expertise:

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/academic-schools/school-of-humanities/humanities-staff-profiles.aspx>

Entry requirements for applicants

Applicants should possess a First or Upper Second (2:1) Honours Degree in a relevant critical discipline, such as English Literature or Cultural Studies; graduates of Joint and Combined Honours degree programmes are welcome to apply. A Master's degree (either taught or research-based) is also required; applicants who are currently enrolled on a Master's programme should have completed it by the time of enrolment onto the PhD studentship. Applicants are expected to have excellent communication skills, and reasonable computer literacy. They should be passionate about their subject, highly motivated to undertake doctoral research, and have confident time-management and team-working skills. The research proposal (see below) must demonstrate: (i) relevance to one of the given briefs, and (ii) clear potential to make an original and significant contribution to knowledge.

It is an expectation that the successful candidate will participate fully in the activities of the School of Humanities, and gain additional experience in the teaching and research environment of the University under the guidance of their Director of Studies.

We require an IELTS score of 7 (with at least a 7 in writing) or equivalent from applicants whose first language is not English.

Details of the studentship:

During the period of your studentship you will receive the following:

- a tax free bursary of £15,009 for a period of 3 years
- a fee-waiver for 4 years
- a budget to support your project costs for the first 3 years of the project
- a laptop
- use of the Research Student Study Space in Research School

You will be expected to play an active role in the life of both the Research School and of the School. You will be given opportunities to gain experience in learning and teaching within the School under the guidance of your Director of Studies.

Application Process:

To make an application process for this studentship please go to our webpage www.worcester.ac.uk/studentships and click apply now next to the project you wish to apply for.

Please include a detailed research proposal in your application (max. 1,000 words). Your research proposal should locate your project in relation to appropriate contexts and existing scholarship in the field, making a claim for the originality and significance of your proposed research. An indicative / preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary texts should also be included (excluded from word limit).

All potential applicants are strongly encouraged to make an informal enquiry at the address below, before submitting an application.

The Interview:

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview. The interview will provisionally be held on **Thursday 2nd July 2020**. The interview process normally lasts around one hour in total, beginning with a presentation. The applicant will give a 10-minute presentation outlining their proposed project in appropriate contexts (PC and screen will be available). The interview will concentrate primarily on the quality and viability of the proposed research project; but it may also include discussion of longer-term career plans, including ambitions and aptitude for degree-level teaching (no prior experience is expected). Applicants will also receive an informal tour of the University campus and key facilities.

Research at the University of Worcester:

Research at the University of Worcester has grown significantly over the last 10 years. This growth is reflected in the outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014). Worcester was the most improved University in the UK based on Research Fortnight's "Research Power" measure, reflecting a more than four-fold increase in the number of staff submitted compared to RAE 2008 and a commensurate increase in the quality of the research. The University will submit 50% more staff to REF 2021 than in 2014 and is expecting significant further improvements in its outcomes. It is also reflected in the increase in Research & Knowledge Exchange funding over this period. The University has been successful in winning funding from a wide range of major funders: Research Councils such as AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC and NERC; major charities such as the Leverhulme Trust, the Alzheimer's Society and the British Academy; health-research funders such as the NIHR, the Department of Health and local NHS Trusts; European funding through Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+; and funding from local, national and global businesses.

Research School

The Research School is a focal point for all our research students. It provides:

- day-to-day support for our students, both administrative and practical, through our dedicated team
- a Research Student Study Space with both PCs and laptop docking station
- a comprehensive Researcher Development Programme for students and their supervisors
- a programme of student-led conferences and seminars

School of Humanities

The School of Humanities at Worcester encompasses subject areas including Creative Writing, English Language and Literature, Film Studies, History, Law, Media & Culture, Politics, and Sociology, Law. As an academic community, we are ambitious for our achievements and their impact upon individuals' lives and career prospects. We place a great value on the individual, and creating a friendly and supportive environment in which to work and learn.

By sharing our academic work and collaboration with partners, we aim to make a distinctive contribution to public life in the region, and to international knowledge in our academic subjects. Dynamic interaction with associated professional worlds underpins the day-to-day environment in which learning, teaching and research take place.

Academics from the School of Humanities regularly achieve national and international peer recognition for their contributions to knowledge, and we are committed to sharing the outcomes of their work publicly, and engaging in knowledge transfer, to the benefit of communities in our region and beyond.

The School has a growing community of doctoral research students, and also supports MRes and MA programmes.

Widening Participation:

As part of its mission statement the University is committed to widening participation for its higher degrees. Although most candidates will have an undergraduate and/or a Master's degree, the University is happy to accept applications from candidates with relevant professional qualifications and work related experience.

For further information or an informal discussion on this project, please contact Prof. Michael Bradshaw (Head of the School of Humanities) by email at: m.bradshaw@worc.ac.uk or by telephone: +00 44 (0)1905 85 5280.

Applications can be made at: www.worcester.ac.uk/studentships