

MPhil in English Studies

Sample Pathway: Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Studies

The MPhil in English Studies offers a strong foundation for students with a developed interest in, and commitment to studying the literature and culture of the long eighteenth-century.

Students interested in this area are supported by a range of internationally excellent researchers, who supervise dissertations and teach seminars in this period. The researched seminars aim to introduce postgraduate students to the field of eighteenth-century and Romantic literature, one of the most transformative, experimental, and richly diverse periods in British cultural history. They offer the chance to deepen and extend knowledge through the study of both canonical and non-canonical authors working in any number of different genres and forms.

Every year, a choice of 'B' seminar courses can be taken by those wishing to deepen their understanding of the historical contingencies of ideas within this period. 'B' seminar courses offered change from year to year but have recently included:

Dr Rebecca Barr, *Changeable Forms: Eighteenth-Century Embodiment*

Dr Phil Connell and Dr Mina Gorji, *Literature and Popular Culture*

Dr Sarah Haggarty, *Now Then: Present Time and Action in a long Romantic Age*

Dr Louise Joy, *Education and Freedom*

Dr Fred Parker, *Writing the Self*

Dr Corinna Russell, *Poetic Representation: Non-Citizens and the Republic, 1773-1886*

Dr Christopher Tilmouth, *Passion and Sentiment in Enlightenment Thought and Literature*

Dr Ross Wilson, *Inventing Criticism, 1660-1840*

There is also the opportunity to select 'B' seminars from across the whole range on offer for the MPhil in English Studies.

Alongside this, 'A' seminar courses develop conceptual frames and a sophisticated historical and/or theoretical understanding of lines of enquiry. For example, students taking the 'B' seminar option, 'Changeable Forms', might also follow the 'Bodies, Performance, Gender' 'A' seminar, to support their wider understanding of questions in the study of gender. Students taking the 'B' seminar 'Poetic Representation' might study the history of lyric in the 'A' seminar 'Poetry and Poetics', and the theory and practice of decolonisation in the 'A' seminar 'Culture and Politics'. Equally, students interested in literature and philosophy could move from the 'A' seminar of that name to specialise in long-eighteenth century thinkers and materials, opting for the 'B' seminars 'Writing the Self', 'Passion and Sentiment', and 'Now Then'.

Members of the Faculty range very widely in their interests but some particular research strengths include literature's relationship to philosophy and intellectual culture; lyric, and the history, theory and practice of poetic forms; literature's interactions with material and visual culture; and the history and theory of gender and sexuality. Amongst the members of the Faculty working on these and many other eighteenth-century and Romantic subjects are:

Ruth Abbott, Rebecca Anne Barr, Paul Chirico, Philip Connell, Laura Davies, Peter de Bolla, Alexander Freer, Caroline Gonda, Mina Gorji, Sarah Haggarty, Timothy Heimlich,

[Sarah Houghton-Walker](#), [Michael D. Hurley](#), [Ewan Jones](#), [Louise Joy](#), [Amy Morris](#), [Mary Newbould](#), [Fred Parker](#), [Sophie Read](#), [Corinna Russell](#), [Christopher Tilmouth](#), [Marcus Tomalin](#), [Anne Toner](#), [Jennifer Wallace](#), [Claire Wilkinson](#), [Ross Wilson](#)

In recent years students have pursued dissertation projects on an extremely broad range of topics, including for example: encyclopaedias and museum culture; Alexander Pope and interdisciplinarity; John Clare's rhymes; eighteenth-century Ovids; travel writing and antiquarianism; literary personae and the female writer; Romantic writing and theorists of the Anthropocene; punctuation in eighteenth-century prose; literary tourism; Adam Smith's moral psychology; political rhetoric in the 1790s; Coleridge and vision; conversation and disinterestedness in the Romantic essay.

An [Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Studies Postgraduate Research Seminar](#) meets fortnightly and is open to all Cambridge students and academics working in this field. Recent and forthcoming guest speakers at this seminar include Professors Karen O'Brien (King's College, London), James Chandler (University of Chicago), Christine Gerrard (University of Oxford), and Paul Hamilton (Queen Mary, London). There is an on-line [research group](#) which keeps students up-to-date with forthcoming events and the latest developments in the field. Other relevant research groups within the Faculty include the [Centre for Material Texts](#) and the [Centre for John Clare Studies](#)

The unique resources Cambridge offers to those working on the long eighteenth century include, besides the magnificent University Library (one of the few copyright libraries in the country), the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Trinity College's collection of Milton, Swift and Tennyson manuscripts, Pembroke College's Smart and Gray papers, rare books and manuscripts associated with Wordsworth and Coleridge held at St John's and King's Colleges, and the Fitzwilliam Museum's unrivalled William Blake collection. Trips to some of these places (the Pepys Library and the Fitzwilliam, for example), and to other venues such as Sir John Soane's Museum in London, are often features of the M.Phil. programme.

For comments by previous students, and further information on the graduate seminar and conference, please visit the Cambridge [Research Group for Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Studies](#).