

Centre for New Writing



The Centre for New Writing



The Centre for New Writing is a dedicated contemporary writing hub within Manchester's English and American Studies subject area, in the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures. It offers postgraduate students specialised teaching and supervision, world-class resources, a strong interdisciplinary orientation and a stimulating intellectual environment.

The Centre is home to the MA and PhD in Creative Writing and the MA in Contemporary Literature and Culture, as well as nine academic staff and up to 46 taught and 15 research postgraduates. It has been designed as a place where writers and critics of contemporary literature and culture meet and exchange ideas and opinions, and is founded on the principle that good writing and good reading go together.

Students based in the Centre enjoy the following opportunities:

- Fortnightly master classes and regular events with world-renowned novelist Martin Amis
- Workshops in fiction- and poetry-writing led by published writers
- Intensive, one-to-one instruction from two writers in residence
- Free entry to 'Literature Live', a regular reading series bringing some of the best contemporary novelists and poets to Manchester
- A range of seminars focusing on the literature and culture of the last twenty five years.

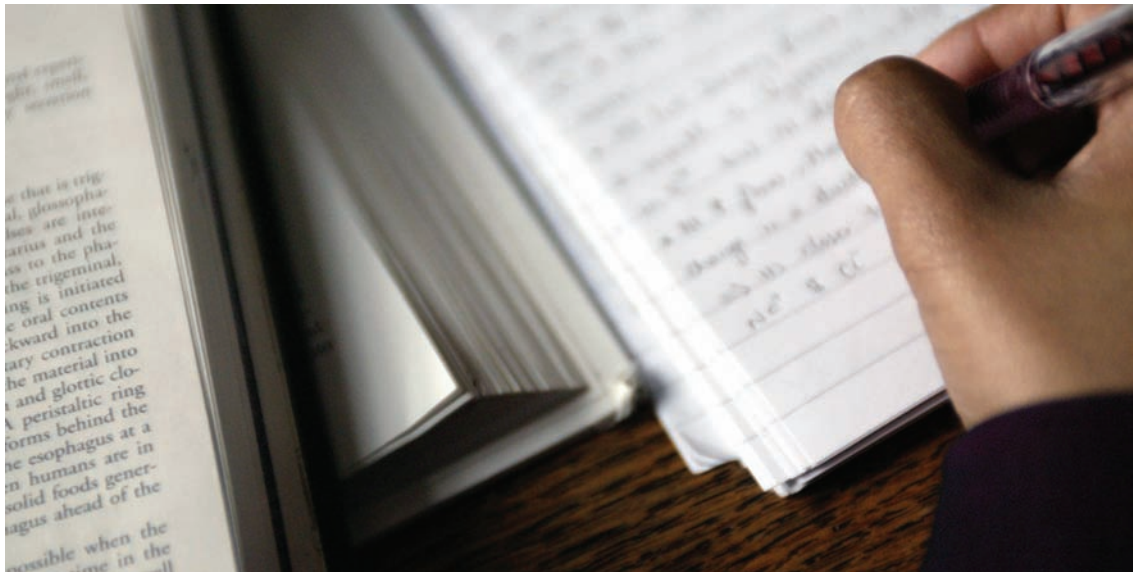
The Centre is also home to a new online journal, *The Manchester Review* (www.themanchesterreview.co.uk). Its distinguished teaching staff includes novelists Martin Amis, M.J. Hyland, Geoff Ryman and Ian McGuire, poets John McAuliffe and Vona Groarke and literary and cultural critic Kaye Mitchell.

Taught programmes

To achieve an MA, students must gain a total of 180 credits: normally four course units, each worth 30 credits, plus a dissertation, worth 60 credits. Full-time students take two courses in semester one, and two courses in semester two, and complete a dissertation of 15,000 words between the end of semester two and mid-September. Part-time students take one course per semester over two years, and write their dissertation between the end of semester two of the second year and 1 May in the third year.

Contact hours for each course unit normally constitute 22-30 hours, comprising tutorial or seminar work, with supplementary library visits, private discussion of assessed work, video showings, or other contact opportunities as appropriate to the specific course unit. Each MA student is assigned a personal tutor.

MA course units are generally taught in seminar or tutorial groups of 8-12 people (though groups may be larger or smaller than this). Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.



MA in Contemporary Literature and Culture

The MA in Contemporary Literature and Culture covers a range of literature written in English over the last twenty five years, and is taught by seminar and dissertation. The programme is available on a full-time basis over one year or part-time over two.

It has a truly contemporary perspective, considering literature produced from 1970 to the present day but with a particular focus on the period since 1990.

Courses

The course units change from year to year, but students will usually take one compulsory core module and a number of option modules chosen from a list.

The core module, Reading the Contemporary, introduces key ideas and concepts in the study of contemporary literature and culture. It considers a range of critical perspectives but also the material contexts in which contemporary literature is produced and received, along with topical themes such as identity, nationalism, history, trauma culture, and literature and terrorism.

Option modules will generally focus upon a specific theme or genre within contemporary writing, such as contemporary life-writing or the treatment of history in contemporary literature. A diverse range of options is on offer, allowing students to work on contemporary British, American, Irish and Postcolonial literature and culture, specific topics such as gender or sexuality, or specific forms such as film, poetry or the novel.

Options include:

- The American Body: Race and Sexuality in the Twentieth Century
- Black Cultural Studies in Post-Civil Rights America
- Contemporary Fiction
- Contemporary Poetry
- Contemporary Irish Fiction
- Postcolonial Narratives: Space, Mobility and Diaspora
- Queer Cinema and Beyond

As the MA is located in the Centre for New Writing, students have a unique opportunity to learn from and interact with the very writers they are studying by attending Literature Live events and Martin Amis's master classes. Our aim is to create synergies rather than barriers between creative and critical writing.

Dissertation

As part of the MA, students will produce a dissertation of approximately 15,000 words on a topic of their choosing, within the field of contemporary literary studies.

The tutors

Course units for the MA in Contemporary Literature and Culture will be taught by staff based in the Centre for New Writing, as well as colleagues in English and American Studies.

Course director **Kaye Mitchell's** research focuses particularly on gender and sexuality, critical theory and narratology. Recent publications have included books on theories of intention and authorship (Continuum 2008) and the fiction of A. L. Kennedy (Palgrave 2007), and chapters and articles contemporary writers including B. S. Johnson and Alan Hollinghurst.

She has burgeoning interests in popular fiction, the relationship between gender and genre, and the dialogue between the creative and the critical. Having taught for several years at the University of Westminster, she joined The University of Manchester in 2007.

MA in Creative Writing

The MA in Creative Writing is a one-year full-time or two-year part-time programme, with eight tutors and up to 36 students. The programme consists of two strands, novel-writing and poetry, and both are focused on practice; the courses provide regular deadlines and a committed, supportive readership among fellow students and tutors.

The programme is taught by a dedicated staff of publishing writers. We see students through the year for consultation and advice, in both group and individual sessions.

It also features our Literature Live series of reading events, which in 2008-09 included student sessions with Andrew O'Hagan, Colm Toibin, Ciaran Carson, DBC Pierre and Elaine Feinstein.

Our alumni include the poets Sophie Hannah and Ian Pople, and novelists Joe Pemberton, Anna Davis, Jonathan Trigell, Charlene Sawit, Susan Barker, Tod Wodicka and Chris Killen.

Courses

The novel-writing and poetry strands focus on weekly workshops, during which the work-in-progress of two or three students is discussed. The other elements of the course are:

- weekly seminars in Contemporary Fiction and Contemporary Poetry, for which one text (a novel or poetry collection, depending on which strand you choose) is read per week and one essay (6,000 words) written
- fortnightly seminars with Martin Amis, on *The Novella* and Nabokov and Bellow
- regular skills-related sessions during the second semester focusing on approaching agents and publishers, including a series of visits from authors and professionals in the publishing industry. This has included agents Mulcahy & Conway and Curtis Brown, and publishers including Bloomsbury, Tindal Street Press and Comma Press
- fortnightly workshops and Q & As with writers, previously including Sarah Waters, Colm Toibin, Paul Muldoon, Jorie Graham, Michele Roberts, Will Self, Hilary Mantel and John Banville
- a choice of first semester options including Forms of Fiction and Poetics, as well as optional modules on research skills and an introduction to the Modern Literary Archive at the John Rylands Library.

Dissertation

This consists of an extract from a novel of at least 15,000 words, or an equivalent amount of poetry. The major literary agency Mulcahy & Conway awards an annual prize of £1,000 for the best work in fiction by a graduating student.

The tutors

Martin Amis is one of the most influential and innovative voices in contemporary fiction. He has written 11 novels and is best known for the loose trilogy *Money* (1984), *London Fields* (1989) and *The Information* (1995).

He is also the author of three collections of essays and two collections of short stories, and is a regular contributor to publications including the New York Times, the Sunday Times, The Observer, Granta, The New Yorker and the Times Literary Supplement.

Centre co-director **John McAuliffe's** poetry collections include *A Better Life*, shortlisted for the Forward First Prize in 2003, and *Next Door* (2007). He was RTE Poet of the Future in 2000, and Sean Dunne National Poetry award winner in 2002.

He previously taught at Birkbeck and UCD, and from 2004-2007 was programme director of Ireland's leading poetry festival, Poetry Now, in Dún Laoghaire.

Centre co-director **Ian McGuire** has published stories in *The Paris Review*, *The Chicago Review* and other journals. His first novel, *Incredible Bodies*, was published in 2006, and he has also published work on Whitman, Melville and Howells.

He was previously a lecturer in American Studies at The University of Manchester, and is particularly interested in the American realist tradition since the 1880s.

Canadian author **Geoff Ryman's** science fiction includes *The Unconquered Country* (winner of the World Fantasy Award and British Science Fiction Association Award), *The Child Garden* (Arthur C. Clarke Award, John W. Campbell Memorial Award and British Science Fiction Association Award) and *Air* (John W. Campbell Memorial Award).

His mainstream fiction includes *Was*, a novel about the American West via *The Wizard of Oz*, 253, which won the Philip K. Dick Memorial Award for best novel not in hardback, and *The King's Last Song*. He was previously Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Northumbria.

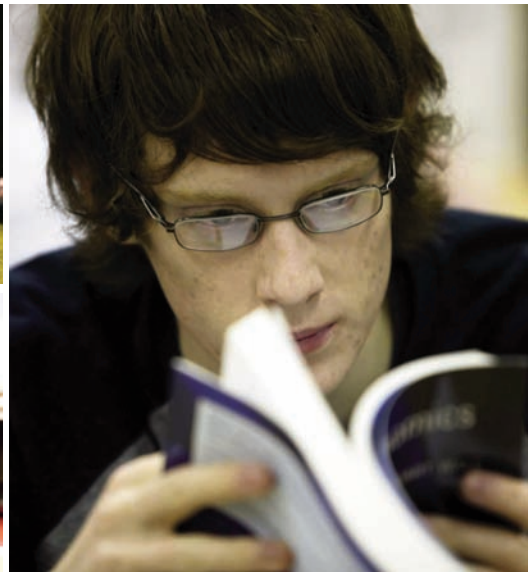
Vona Groarke has published poetry collections including *Shale* (1994), *Other People's Houses* (1999), *Flight* (2002, shortlisted for the Forward Prize in 2002 and Michael Hartnett Award winner in 2003), and *Juniper Street* (2006). Her other prizes include the Hennessy Award, Brendan Behan Memorial Prize, Strokestown International Poetry Award and Stand Magazine Poetry Prize.

Her newest volume, a translation of the *Lament for Art O'Leary*, was published in 2008.

M. J. Hyland is a prize-winning novelist who joined the Centre as a Lecturer in Creative Writing in 2007, having recently been awarded the Hawthornden Prize and the Encore prize for best second novel for *Carry Me Down* (2006). The book was also shortlisted for the Man Booker and the Commonwealth Writers prizes.

Her work has been acclaimed by Ali Smith, Hilary Mantel and J. M. Coetzee, and she is considered one of the leading members of the new generation of British and Irish novelists.

Each year we will also have a novelist and poet in residence at the Centre.



Research study: PhD in Creative Writing

Our PhD in Creative Writing is the next logical step for students who have been successful in this area at undergraduate and/or postgraduate level, although applications will also be considered from writers with a record of publication. It will normally consist of an extended piece of original creative work and a shorter piece of related literary or cultural criticism. The programme lasts three years for full-time students and six years for part-time students.

The total length of the PhD will be around 80,000 words (depending on genre). The creative element could be a novel, a manuscript of poems or a collection of short stories, and the word length will normally be between 50,000 and 65,000 words (or equivalent, depending on genre).

The critical component will consist of a piece of literary or cultural criticism of approximately 30,000 words on a topic relating to the student's creative work. Students may choose to write about an author, genre or theme that is important to them but are not encouraged to simply reflect or meditate on their own creative processes; we are looking for work which is comparable in kind (if not quantity) to the work produced by PhD students in English or American Studies.

Research students work independently but under the supervision of one or more members of staff, with whom they have contact at least once a fortnight.

They are assigned a Research Panel consisting of their supervisor and at least one other academic who works in a related area, which meets twice a year for full-time students (once a year for part-time students). This monitors progress and offers advice and support on both academic and pastoral issues.

Up to 15 PhD students are assigned private work areas in a secure room within the subject area itself. The library also has postgraduate-only space equipped with computers.

The School of Arts, Histories and Cultures is eager for its research students to become able and professional academics, as well as excellent scholars, if they want to take that route. To that end there is training at School level to meet the career needs of PhD students, targeting issues such as the composition of an effective curriculum vitae, conference-going, interview techniques and the publication of work. All postgraduates have access to the valuable career and transferable skills courses organised by the University's Careers Service.

The periodical *ManuScript*, run by and for postgraduates, is produced from within the subject area by a cooperative of graduate students. It provides not only a forum for publications by postgraduates, but also an opportunity to perfect transferable skills in publishing, reviewing, marketing and teamwork.

Our PhDs also form part of the editorial board of our own journal, *The Manchester Review*, contributing regular reviews of the latest books, plays, films, music and visual arts releases.

At an appropriate point in their time at Manchester, PhD students may be offered undergraduate teaching, for which they are paid and given specialist training and mentoring.



Entry requirements and funding

Our usual entrance requirement to our MA programmes is an upper second class honours degree or its equivalent, in either English or a subject closely allied to it. We are very happy, however, to entertain applications from candidates with alternative qualifications.

Please note that applicants to the MA in Creative Writing are required to submit 2,000-3,000 words of their prose-writing (e.g. a short story or chapter of a novel), or an equivalent amount of poetry, with their application form.

Applicants for the PhD in Creative Writing will normally be expected to have completed an MA in Creative Writing, for which they received a Distinction (or the equivalent).

Students from the UK or Europe can apply to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for postgraduate studentships to support MA or doctoral study. Studentships for UK students cover the tuition fee and provide a maintenance grant. Studentships for EU students usually cover fees only. Postgraduates intending to study at the University of Manchester have recently been very successful in the AHRC competition (43 awards in the School in 2006) and we aim to help students prepare their applications carefully. Prospective postgraduates intending to apply for AHRC funding should contact the School of Arts Histories and Cultures as soon as possible, as the internal deadline for the submission of AHRC forms is early March.

Research students from beyond the EU are generally eligible for Overseas Research Studentships, a national scheme that pays the difference between foreign fees and home fees. In addition, for students who have already been accepted onto a programme of study, The University of Manchester offers a limited number of awards for postgraduate study, usually on an annual basis; however, such awards are few and highly competitive.

Further information on School and University awards is available on our website:

www.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding.

Candidates are urged to enquire and to apply to their chosen degree programme as early as possible and certainly no later than 1 March. Candidates not intending to apply to the AHRC, ESRC, or ORS schemes may apply up to 31 August.

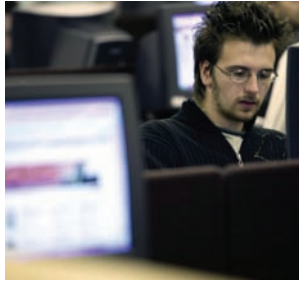
Postgraduate education and skills training: learning in Manchester

The University of Manchester is a wonderful place to learn. In recent Quality Assurance Agency assessments this School's subjects have consistently scored 23 or 24 out of a maximum of 24 points, and its research and teaching are supported by rich resources within the University and the city.

The Skills Awareness for Graduate Education (SAGE) programme offers the opportunity for postgraduates to access skills training tailored towards their own needs.

All postgraduate students are invited to attend an informative Postgraduate Research Festival at the commencement of their course. This is an opportunity to attend presentations and visits provided by local archive departments, libraries and museums, to enable them to be exposed to the immense resources available.

A series of practical workshops are offered throughout the year covering academic skills, research methods, personal effectiveness and other transferable skills. Postgraduate conferences and master classes are also open to all our students, and the opportunity to organise and run conferences is open to PhD students.



The John Rylands University Library, the biggest campus library in the UK, is an internationally renowned scholarly resource, with an enormous variety of rare book and manuscript holdings. Postgraduates not only benefit from the possibility of exploiting unexplored collections, but also from the Library's subscription to more than 7,000 electronic resources, accessible from dedicated postgraduate study rooms located in the Library itself and in the English and American Studies Subject Area.

Our network of partners in research training also includes the following major institutions:

Portico Library

www.theportico.org.uk

Chetham's Library

www.chethams.org.uk

Manchester Art Gallery

www.manchestergalleries.org

Manchester Museum

www.museum.man.ac.uk

Whitworth Art Gallery

www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth

North West Film Archive

www.nwfa.mmu.ac.uk

North West Sound Archive

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Imperial War Museum in the North

www.iwm.org.uk/north

People's History Museum

www.peopleshistorymuseum.org.uk

Working Class Movement Library

www.wcml.org.uk

Lowry Museum and Gallery

www.thelowry.com

Contact Theatre

www.contact-theatre.org

MA in Contemporary Literature and Culture students complete an Enquiry Based Learning project, through which they develop the skills needed to complete their research proposal. These sessions, facilitated by a PhD leader, enable students to explore the resources available to them while addressing the perspectives of several disciplines, sources and methods.

PhD students attend a 'Speed PhD' which aims to debunk all the myths of doctoral research. Over two days attendees go through all the key milestones of doctoral life, from the research outline to the viva and job applications. This 'Speed PhD' is a good way to hit the ground running, to meet other students and to think clearly about the process.

Career prospects

On completion many English postgraduates continue their research to develop a career in academia, but overall career paths are extremely varied: while the Centre's postgraduate programmes produce published novelists and poets, editors, journalists, publishers and copy-writers, other English postgraduates go on to careers in law, teaching, librarianship, retailing, the media and a range of other fields.

The University Career Service provides services specially designed for postgraduates.

To find out more about studying at the Centre for New Writing, please contact our Postgraduate Admissions team using the details on the back cover.

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