



INSTITUTE OF
ENGLISH
STUDIES

SCHOOL OF
ADVANCED STUDY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

2025

Postgraduate programmes

Prospectus

ies.sas.ac.uk

World class. Worldwide.

Join the World Class

1 Quality of learning

Learn from international experts in the field, drawn from the Institute's teaching staff and its internationally distinguished fellows.

2 Unparalleled resources

Enjoy access to some of the best resources for the academic study of English and book history in the UK, including Senate House Library, the British Library, and other outstanding collections.

3 Investing in your future

Join a prestigious network of alumni, who have gone on to careers in academic librarianship, museum curatorship, the rare book trade and publishing, as well as PhD study.

4 An intellectual hub

Study in Bloomsbury, the intellectual heart of London, where you will have easy access to world-class facilities and training opportunities, such as the London Rare Books School.

5 Join the World Class

Join a longstanding community of world-leading rare book specialists, including writers, researchers and librarians.



Contents

Institute of English Studies

Join the World Class	2
The Institute of English Studies	4
The School of Advanced Study	5
Studying at the Institute of English Studies: The History of the Book	6
Why study with us?	8
MA/MRes in the History of the Book	10
MPhil/PhD in English Studies or Book History	12
Supervisors: areas of interest	14
Entry requirements and further information	16

The Institute of English Studies

The Institute of English Studies (IES) occupies a position at the heart of the academic study of English in the United Kingdom. The Institute offered the world's first degree in Book History and was founded to help establish it as a discipline.

Today, the Institute is recognised nationally and internationally as a centre of excellence for its research activities, and in the provision of resources to the academic community as a whole. A vibrant, interdisciplinary research culture is fostered within the IES, and more broadly within the School of Advanced Study (SAS).

The Institute's core activities include providing supervision for postgraduate research students in specialist areas of English studies and related disciplines; delivering the long-established master's degree in the History of the Book; hosting major collaborative research projects; providing

essential research training in book history and palaeography; and facilitating scholarly communities in all areas of English studies. It specialises in the history of the book, manuscript and print studies, textual scholarship and digital editing with a growing interest in creative and practice-based research.

Founded over 20 years ago, the Institute now runs multiple events each year, including research seminars, lectures, conferences, short courses and a series of international summer schools which run for several weeks each year.



The School of Advanced Study



The School of Advanced Study, University of London, is a unique institution in UK higher education.

Comprising eight internationally renowned research institutes and a variety of central academic initiatives, it is located within the Bloomsbury precinct of the University in the intellectual heart of London.

Founded in 1994, the School of Advanced Study is the only institution in the UK that is nationally funded to promote and facilitate research in the humanities. It performs a vital role as a driving force for knowledge sharing across the humanities in the UK and beyond, and receives special funding for this

purpose from the Office for Students (formerly the Higher Education Funding Council for England). The School works in collaboration with other organisations, notably the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the British Academy, other UK universities, independent research organisations, learned societies and government agencies.

The eight institutes of the School, many of which have long and distinguished histories of their own, are dedicated to serving the research communities of their disciplines, both nationally and internationally. Together they complement the work of others by offering a broad research base and providing a range of services that far exceed the capacity of any one

individual university to support, inspire and advance research activity. The School also enhances the dissemination of that research beyond what an individual or their institution could achieve alone.

Underpinning the School's national role is the research and scholarship undertaken by its academic staff. The process of undertaking challenging research in order to extend the boundaries of knowledge across disciplines and in collaboration with researchers from around the world is critical to the School's function as an innovative space for advanced study and its commitment to the highest standards of scholarship.

Studying at the Institute of English Studies: The History of the Book



MA

The History of the Book is concerned with the making, manufacturing, distribution and reading of books, and thus offers a unique way of understanding different literary, cultural, social, intellectual and technological processes in history. The subject extends to include newspapers, magazines, chapbooks, ephemera, digital text and all kinds of printed or written media. It also includes the manuscript book in all its forms from the pre-classical, classical and medieval periods.

The University of London's MA degree in the History of the Book is the oldest postgraduate programme in this growing area in the humanities. Students study six taught modules and complete a dissertation of 15,000 words.

The programme aims to:

- give you a broad understanding of book history from the medieval period to the present, with opportunities to study the book in the ancient world and many international contexts
- introduce you to the range of disciplines that make up the subject, including bibliography and textual editing; palaeography and codicology; history of authorship, publishing, and reading; and library history
- provide frequent opportunities to handle manuscripts, rare books and other printed objects
- give you the ability and confidence to deal with primary sources for book history (both manuscript and printed).

MRes

Students who are interested in undertaking a larger independent research project can consider the MRes, which leads to an equivalent master's qualification. You will study three taught modules and complete a 30,000-word dissertation.

The programme will:

- provide you with a foundation of three appropriately specialised taught modules, which will equip you to undertake a more extensive programme of master's-level research
- provide the opportunity for you to write an extended dissertation on a subject that requires treatment at a greater length and depth than the usual MA topic
- offer you a degree programme that provides a platform for further research at MPhil or PhD level.

Postgraduate Certificate /Postgraduate Diploma

Students seeking an alternative award can take modules from this course to gain either a Postgraduate Certificate (three modules) or a Postgraduate Diploma in the History of the Book (six modules). Modules can also be studied via the London Rare Books School (see page 11).

MPhil/PhD

The IES provides a unique scholarly community in which to pursue doctoral research. We offer research supervision in a number of literature-related subject areas, ranging from book history to creative and practice-based research.

The programme can be undertaken on a full-time (up to four years) or part-time (up to seven years) basis, with entry in October or January.

The IES offers doctoral research supervision in the following broad areas:

- History of the book
- History of authorship
- History of publishing
- History of printing
- History of readers and reading
- History of collectors and collecting
- The history of the manuscript and rare book trades
- History of libraries and collections
- Textual scholarship
- Digital Humanities
- Radical print cultures
- Medieval literature
- Early Modern literature and print culture
- Victorian literature
- Aspects of Modern and Contemporary Literature
- Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century American literature
- Scottish literature
- Creative writing and practice based research.



Why study with us?



A scholarly community

As part of the School of Advanced Study (SAS), University of London, you will benefit from a collaborative, interdisciplinary research environment. SAS is a national research hub, and the Institute enjoys close links with its other members, including the Institute of Historical Research and the Warburg Institute. Cross-institute collaboration is actively encouraged, making us an ideal location for interdisciplinary research.

You are also encouraged to participate in the wider activities of the University and are able to use the libraries of other colleges in addition to the internationally renowned Senate House Library. With more than two million books and 1,200 archival collections, Senate House is one of the UK's largest academic libraries focused on the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Investing in your future

Many of our alumni go on to establish successful careers in related fields, including academic librarianship, museum curatorship, publishing, and second-hand and antiquarian. Our MA students can participate in this professional network through our Internship module.

Our programmes also provide outstanding training in research skills and equip you with the intellectual framework to undertake independent research with confidence and success. Former students have progressed to PhD study at the Institute and elsewhere.

Internships and placements

Postgraduate taught students have the opportunity to substitute one of their option modules with an internship at a London bookselling firm, museum or special collections library or archive. The internship offers the chance to experience working life in the book world and to undertake projects for a company or institution.

In the past, students have been placed in Maggs Bros., Jarndyce Booksellers, Peter Harrington Ltd., Bernard Quaritch Ltd., Housman's Bookshop, Ash Rare Books, Senate House Library, Dr Williams's Library, the Foundling Museum, the Society of Antiquaries, and the Dickens Museum. Several students undertaking the internship have gone on to secure successful careers in the book trade or the libraries and archives sector.

Be at the heart of a global city

Located steps away from world-renowned research resources such as the British Library and the British Museum, IES is at the centre of academic and intellectual life in London.

IES capitalises on its location by organising optional excursions to antiquarian bookshops, auction houses, and historically significant libraries and collections across the academic year. Past excursions include trips to Peter Harrington Ltd., Sotheby's, St Bride Foundation, the Stationers' Company, the Royal College of Surgeons in England, the Wellcome Collection, the British Jesuit Archives, Lambeth Palace Library, the Guildhall Library, UCL Special Collections, The National Gallery, and the London Archives.

London is regularly named the best university city in the world for its welcoming attitude, diversity and vibrant, student-friendly culture.

‘London is probably the perfect place to study the history of the book! I was definitely drawn to this programme by the opportunity to live and study in an area with such a rich history in the publishing world as well as many amazing artefact collections. We’ve had classes at the British Library and other book-related institutions where we got to go behind the scenes and get up close and personal with rare, antique books, some over a thousand years old.’

Bonnie Walker
MA in the History of the Book

MA/MRes in the History of the Book



About the degree

In this programme we explore the different material forms the book has taken over time, from clay tablets to computer screens. A research methodologies module introduces you to different approaches to the subject and the range of resources in the field.

Core modules provide a comprehensive overview of the book from the medieval period to the present day. Optional modules studied during the course of the year, or on the London Rare Books School, allow for in-depth analysis of the history of specific components of the book, such as bindings and book illustration, as well as focused modules on key topics, including

textual editing, provenance in books and the history of reading.

There is an exciting opportunity to work as an intern in a special collections library or the London rare book trade. There are also a number of opportunities to experience the wider book world in London and beyond with visits to libraries, antiquarian bookshops and auction houses.

All of our graduates are awarded a University of London degree.

Teaching, learning and assessment

Our teachers are recognised experts drawn from the Institute, the British Library, the Victoria and Albert

Museum, Lambeth Palace Library, and other institutions, at which some of the teaching takes place.

The MA consists of six taught modules (including one compulsory module and two or three core modules) plus a dissertation of 15,000 words.

The MRes consists of three taught modules and a 30,000-word dissertation.

Core and optional modules are typically examined by one 5,000-word essay or project on a topic to be agreed with the tutor.

The compulsory research methodologies is examined by a combination of a bibliographical exercise and a shorter research essay.

Distance or blended learning options are available. For more information visit: ies.sas.ac.uk/study-training

Programme structure

Compulsory module
Research Methodologies and Resources for the History of the Book
Core modules (you will select a minimum of two)
The Medieval Book
The Book in Early Modern Europe
The Book in the Industrial Age
Sample optional modules
Technologies of the Book
Provenance in Books
Students can also choose options from the London Rare Books School (see below)

The degree can be taken full-time over one year, or part-time over two or three years, with entry in October only.

Part-time students normally complete at least four taught modules before embarking on the dissertation which is taken in the final year.

In order to accommodate part-time study for students with other commitments we try to arrange for most modules to be taught on one or two days in the week.

London Rare Books School

The MA and MRes programmes are run in conjunction with the London Rare Books School (LRBS), which offers a range of individual week-long postgraduate courses in book history and related subjects, taught by distinguished international scholars during the summer. MA and MRes students can take an LRBS module as one of their optional modules and submit a 5,000-word essay or project for assessment.

Sample LRBS courses include:

- Anatomy of the Book: Printed Books 1450–1800
- Artists’ Books
- Bookshops and Bookselling
- Digital Book History
- Early Modern Typography
- English Bookbinding Styles
- European Bookbinding 1450–1820
- History of Book Collecting
- History of Maps and Mapping

- Marginalia in Books
- Medieval Illumination
- Political Pamphlets
- Provenance in Books
- The Book in the Ancient World
- The Book in the Renaissance
- The Early Modern Book in England
- The Medical Book
- The Modern Rare Book Trade
- Using Publishers’ Archives.

Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma in the History of the Book

Students seeking an alternative award can take modules from the MA programme or the London Rare Books School to gain either a Postgraduate Certificate or a Postgraduate Diploma in the History of the Book. To enrol, you will still be required to meet all the School of Advanced Study’s standard entry requirements.

For the Postgraduate Certificate, you must successfully complete three modules. For the Postgraduate Diploma, you must successfully complete six modules.

MPhil/PhD in English Studies or Book History

About the degree

As a PhD student in the Institute, you will enjoy the personal attention of our academic staff, who will guide you through the programme and supervise your thesis project.

Our PhD students have access to a rich and varied programme of subject-specific research training, as well as general training on research skills and methodologies. You are encouraged to attend the Institute's broad range of research seminars, conferences, world-leading summer schools, and guest lectures, which

offer opportunities to hear and discuss papers by leading scholars as well as to meet others interested in a particular field of study. You will benefit from the Institute's substantial network of colleagues and organisations associated with the book trade and the literary world and will be able to explore career development opportunities across a range of different areas.

The primary activity of the PhD programme is the writing of a thesis of up to 100,000 words. Although this is primarily an independent piece of work, you will receive

extensive research training, and our supervisors will be on hand to support and encourage you.

After submission of the thesis, you will attend an oral examination conducted by an internal examiner from the University of London, and an external examiner, normally from another British university.

PhD students are strongly encouraged to present their work at seminars held in the Institute and elsewhere and are given support in developing their presentation skills. In your first year you are required to attend training sessions designed to develop your research and career potential. You are also encouraged to participate in the regular seminars held at the Institute during the academic year.

Programme structure

The degree can be taken full time over up to four years or part time over up to seven years, with entry in either October or January. Students have the option of one additional writing-up year. You'll initially be registered for our MPhil and, providing your progress has been satisfactory, you will then be upgraded to our PhD programme.



Distance learning

IES offers students the opportunity to pursue an MPhil or PhD by distance learning. This allows you to study wherever you are, arranging your studies around your work or family life. You will be required to attend our London campus on three set occasions: at the start of your studies for an intensive induction programme, for an external review of your progress (the upgrade panel), and for the final oral exam (viva).

The programme is run on the same basis as campus-based programmes. You will maintain regular contact with supervisors via video conferencing. You will need to demonstrate that you have the appropriate local resources, IT equipment and infrastructure before you can commence study.

As a distance-learning student, you will benefit from the School's extensive research training portfolio, online e-resources, podcasts, video recordings, transcriptions, and live streaming of research seminars on a wide range of topics to help you complete your research degree. Research modules will include, but are not limited to: Organising Successful Academic Events, Getting Research Published, Public Speaking, Research Data and Ethics.

Areas of research

The Institute of English Studies offers doctoral research supervision in the following broad areas:

- History of the book
- History of authorship
- History of publishing
- History of printing
- History of readers and reading
- History of collectors and collecting
- The history of the manuscript and rare book trades
- History of libraries and collections
- Textual scholarship
- Digital Humanities
- Radical print cultures
- Medieval literature
- Early Modern literature and print culture
- Victorian literature
- Aspects of Modern and Contemporary Literature
- Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century American literature
- Scottish literature
- Creative writing and practice based research.



Sara Charles

MPhil/PhD

‘Studying at the Institute means you have access to the excellent Senate House Library and its Special Collections, which is enormously beneficial. The Institute offers a fabulous range of seminars and workshops, which are great at cementing collegiate relationships and opening up new lines of research.’

Supervisors: areas of interest

Professor Sarah Churchwell

Professorial Fellow in American Literature and Chair of Public Understanding of the Humanities
Email: sarah.churchwell@sas.ac.uk

- F. Scott Fitzgerald and his circle
- Henry James and his circle
- The American 1920s and 1930s
- American modernism and the marketplace
- American cinema in the 1930s, 40s and 50s
- Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes
- American bestsellers (from the 18th century to the present)

Dr Laura Cleaver

Senior Lecturer in Manuscript Studies
Email: laura.cleaver@sas.ac.uk

- Medieval illuminated manuscripts
- The rare book trade in the 19th and 20th centuries
- Medieval historiography
- 20th-century medievalism
- Manuscripts as didactic tools

Dr Cynthia Johnston

Senior Lecturer in History of the Book
Email: cynthiajohnston@sas.ac.uk

- Late medieval book historical topics
- History of book collecting and book cultures

Professor Clare A. Lees

Professor of Medieval Literature and Director of the Institute of English Studies
Email: clare.lees@sas.ac.uk

- Early medieval literatures
- Languages and cultures of Britain and Ireland
- Gender and sexuality studies
- Histories of place and belief
- Creative and practice-based research

Dr Andrew Nash

Reader in Book History
Email: andrew.nash@sas.ac.uk

- The publishing and book trade from the 19th century to the present

- The history and economics of authorship from the 1850s to the present

- Victorian fiction
- Scottish literature since 1750
- Selected authors, including J.M. Barrie, Robert Louis Stevenson, Hugh MacDiarmid and Muriel Spark
- Modern literary archives and manuscripts

Dr Christopher Ohge

Senior Lecturer in Digital Approaches to Literature
Email: christopher.ohge@sas.ac.uk

- Scholarly editing, digital publishing, textual criticism, and bibliography (particularly of 19th- and 20th-century literary texts)
- Studies of Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Transcendentalism and Transatlantic Romanticism
- Literary biography
- Text analysis and stylometry with the R programming language
- Using "distant reading" to enhance "close reading" (and vice versa)
- Network analysis and visualising social and literary networks
- The impact of digital research on English studies

Dr David Pearson

Distinguished Senior Fellow
Email: david.pearson@sas.ac.uk

- Private or institutional library history between the 16th and 19th centuries
- Marginalia, annotations, signs and marks of the reading and use of books
- Patterns of book ownership or collecting
- Bookbinding history and development, and its application to book history

Dr Pragya Dhital

Lecturer in Collections, Archives, and the Study of the Book
Email: pragya.dhital@sas.ac.uk

- Radical print, DIY and cheap print (newspapers, pamphlets, zines, ephemera)
- Censorship and surveillance
- Propaganda and information warfare
- Archives and collections (official, unofficial, grassroots)
- Curation and practice-based research
- South Asia

Dr Michael Durrant

Lecturer in Book History
Email: michael.durrant@sas.ac.uk

- Early Modern literature and book history
- Early Modern printers
- Publishing in the Early Modern Anglophone World
- Book Use and the Creative Functions of Early Modern Paratexts
- Politico-Religious Radicalism and Early Modern Print Culture



Entry requirements and further information

MA/MRes/PGCert/ PGDip requirements

The normal minimum entrance requirement is a First or Upper Second Class Honours degree from a university in the UK or an overseas qualification of an equivalent standard. We may consider applications from candidates who do not meet the formal academic requirements but who offer alternative qualifications and/or relevant experience.

English is the language of instruction and you will be required to demonstrate an appropriate level of proficiency.

MPhil/PhD requirements

Applicants to our PhD programme are usually required to hold a master's degree. However, we will consider applications from candidates who do not meet the formal academic requirements but who offer alternative qualifications and/or relevant experience.

English is the language of instruction and you will be required to demonstrate an appropriate level of proficiency.

For more information on entry requirements, please visit: bit.ly/SAS_entry-reqs

MA/MRes

Applications should be made online via the SAS website. For full details of the application process, please visit: bit.ly/sas-how-to-apply

MPhil/PhD

We accept applications throughout the year for entry in October or January.

All applications are made online. Students must first contact a potential supervisor who will discuss and agree your research proposal which is submitted with your application. For details, visit: bit.ly/SAS_how-to-apply

Fees

For up-to-date fees and funding opportunities, please visit: bit.ly/SAS_fees-funding

Funding opportunities

Our students fund their studies in a variety of ways including scholarships, bursaries and fellowships, as well as government loans and postgraduate loans.

The School of Advanced Study also offers a range of bursaries and studentships for applicants

on our programmes, including Institute and course specific scholarships. For further information visit: bit.ly/SAS_fees-funding

Applicants to the MA/MRes History of the Book programme are eligible for a studentship funded by the antiquarian bookseller Maggs Bros Ltd. For more information visit: bit.ly/IES-Maggs

The University of London reserves the right to alter or withdraw courses and amend other details without prior notice. For up-to-date fees and funding opportunities, please visit: bit.ly/SAS_fees-funding

Accommodation

Full-time students, and part-time students with disabilities, may apply for accommodation in one of the University of London's award-winning intercollegiate Halls of Residence. Our Registry office will send you housing information after you have been offered a place.

To learn more about accommodation options, please visit: halls.london.ac.uk/our-accommodation



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