

CAL Undergraduate Research Scholarships Scheme 2017
Project Proposal Form

Project Proposer/s:	Asha Rogers
School/Dept:	EDACS / English Literature
Project Title:	State Sponsored Literature: Britain after 1945
Project Summary	
<p>State Sponsored Literature is a project that explores the public value of literature by investigating how the British state has funded, protected, and defended literature since 1945. Combining research in public archives with literary analysis, it seeks to complicate widely held beliefs about literature's relationship to the state. The modern state not only kept a watchful eye on literature (as George Orwell feared in <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i>) it also protected its autonomy: the right for literature to exist free from ulterior motives. This project seeks to change how we think about literary freedom in two ways. Firstly, by documenting the changing pressures on, and justifications for, the funding of writers and writing in post-war Britain. And secondly, and by revealing the unintended consequences of official sponsorship. The academic book arising from this research (in process) includes chapters on the British Council, the Arts Council, the Rushdie Affair, and GCSE English anthologies.</p> <p>I also hope to produce an ancillary website featuring additional resources that might be of a broader public interest. I anticipate that this will include documents from the public archive (such as applications for Arts Council grant); a chronology of key 'moments' of state-literary interaction; and several short case studies on writers in Britain. The focus of the research for summer 2017 will be the Arts Council's Literature programme (1960-) which also represents the largest and most accessible archive.</p> <p>Due to the historical and archival skills involved, the project may be of special interest to students with Joint Honours English and History as well as other combinations. Please note that the project meetings for weeks 3 and 4 will take place in London (travel expenses will be paid).</p>	
What the researcher will do	
<p>Timings and tasks are suggested can be adjusted in negotiation with the student scholar:</p> <p>Week 1. Intro to the project. Conduct a literature review of academic research or secondary literature on literature and the modern state in Britain from 1920-present, and compile a brief bibliography. Produce a chronology from 1945-1990 featuring highlights in politics, publishing, and culture.</p> <p>Week 2. Create a database. Carry out a word search for references to literary subsidy in the online Parliamentary records and log data. Conduct a survey of the references to literary subsidy in <i>The Times</i> and log data. Input ACGB literary expenditure and funding priorities for that year using Arts Council annual reports.</p> <p>Week 3. The first of two visits to the Arts Council archive at Blythe House in Kensington with AR. Scan and create pdfs of the Literature Panel minute. Produce an accompanying document cross-referencing each meeting with keywords. Collect and scan additional original documents including the different versions of Arts Council application forms, the text of the 1965 UK White Paper and other legislation.</p> <p>Week 4. Second visit to ACGB archive. Consult bursary files and scan documents of successful/unsuccessful bursary schemes. Create a document featuring writers and their literary sponsors. Write brief biographical data of key figures on the Arts Council Literature Panel. Produce a bibliography of links to other relevant online sources</p> <p>Week 5. Complete any outstanding work. Write a short report on the research undertaken for the project and key findings. Select at least one writer/editor/publication from the bursary files and write up a short case study on the justifications for subsidy and its effects or consequences.</p>	

Skills required by the Scholarship holder

1. Good communication skills (written and interpersonal).
2. Ability to work independently and to a deadline.
3. Ability to conduct a literature review.
4. Ability to use Microsoft Excel.
5. Close attention to detail.
6. Ability to handle original documents with care.
7. An interest in post-war literary history/the modern state

How will your Project benefit the Scholarship holder?

1. Develop expertise in an understudied area of post-war British literary history.
2. First-hand experience in handling archival documents and in working in an archive.
3. Development of critical thinking and analytic skills.
4. Practice in report writing which is useful for final year UG projects and employability.
5. Opportunity to write/publish a short report for the website.
6. Opportunity to develop interests in post-war British literature or history towards a final year dissertation/extended essay in dialogue with the project leader.

How will the Scholarship benefit your Project?

The scholarship will enable the project to develop from its primarily academic (and thereby inevitably restricted) goal, to one that is open to public interest as well as further scholarly research. Without the important foundational work done by the student scholars (scanning documents, compiling a chronology, documenting expenditure) the website aspect of the project would be on hold until the monograph is complete.