

An introduction to the School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies

Dr Luke Kennard introduces the postgraduate opportunities available in the School of History and Cultures.

Duration: 4:17mins

The School of EDACS comprises the departments of English, Drama, American and Canadian Studies. I want to give you some idea of the range and variation of what we offer and what would be available to you if you came here to study.

The taught Masters programmes offered by English include Shakespeare Studies, which is run by the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford, linked to the Birthplace Trust and boasting unrivalled resources in its collection of playbills, manuscripts, translations and criticism. Really, if you're going to work on Shakespeare there's nowhere else you ought to be considering.

The English courses run the gamut to contemporary literature and creative writing with its focus on placing your own work in a literary context, and putting you in contact with successful writers as well as publishers and industry professionals. While an MPhil in your subject area directly prepares you to move into doctoral research, I would say that the taught MAs are equally useful in preparing you for further study through core scholarship skills and practice and guiding you into specialising on what motivates and engages you most, whether that's contemporary Irish fiction or Victorian decadence. The Centre for English Language Studies offer MAs in Applied and Literary Linguistics and translation studies as well as TEFL and TESL courses.

Whatever you pursue you'll be joining a lively intellectual community, which is really enriched by the diversity and cross-disciplinary nature of the School, forming links with academics and professional practitioners. All of the taught MA programmes can be taken in one year, full-time, or spread over two years part-time. Some of our MAs and modules are also available as online study.

The Drama department has a broad research base in theory and practice which includes the relationship between society and dramaturgy in post-colonial theatres, the late 19th and early 20th century, Shakespeare in performance, issues of sexuality and gender in drama. Drama also offers an MPhil (B) in Playwriting Studies, which is taught by the award-winning dramatist Steve Waters and offers students expert advice in undertaking and completing a full-length stage play. It leads to a final performance of the student's work by professional actors in front of an audience including agents and industry professionals. It has quite a pedigree in that Sarah Kane, one of the most acclaimed playwrights in contemporary theatre took it.

American and Canadian Studies is a great department, which recently oversaw the original scroll of Kerouac's *On The Road* being displayed in the Barber Institute. Specialism's range from Beat writing and mid-19th c. African American writing. The MA programmes are exciting and led by staff interest, including the MA in History, Film and Television and the US Intelligence Services.

All of the departments I've mentioned maintain a journal and seminar series to which research students are encouraged to contribute – a valuable stage in your development as an academic. The School also offers teaching opportunities to doctoral students – so if you were taking your PhD here you'd have the chance to teach on the undergraduate programme, running your own seminars based on the weekly lectures, and this might be on introductory first year modules or it might be something specific to your research area. The high calibre of research students we have here means that we're able to offer you teaching on higher level modules with great student satisfaction.

So due to the teaching opportunities, a PhD from UoB puts you in a uniquely strong position when it comes to your career. All of the departments mentioned have a strong tradition of British Academy and AHRC funding for post-doctoral work and you'd be fully supported with expert advice if you chose to take that direction. Outside of academia, past students of mine have gone on to work for Apple and the BBC, copywriting and advertising, as well as going on to publish their own creative work and take an active part in the poetry scene, performance and page.

CELS offer distance learning MAs, and our staff make use of cutting-edge technologies, offering podcasts and discussion forums to ensure that you feel fully involved in the intellectual community of the university. That said, if you choose to live here you'll be moving to one of the most underrated places in the world – a vibrant, culturally diverse city where you can go out any night of the week and find something, whether it's theatre, orchestral music, ballet, poetry recitals, contemporary music or comedy.