

MA Shakespeare and Creativity

This new programme offers a unique approach to the study of Shakespeare's life and work, fusing traditional scholarly approaches with the thrill of being involved in new creative work. It makes the most of the unrivalled resources of Shakespeare's Stratford and involves expert tuition from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the new Library of Birmingham. This programme will attract aspiring academics, actors, writers, directors, arts administrators, as well as anyone with a lively interest in Shakespeare.

We also offer the option to follow this programme at PhD level, combining the taught modules with a doctoral dissertation; please see [Shakespeare and Creativity PhD with integrated study \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/research/english/shakespeare-and-creativity.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/research/english/shakespeare-and-creativity.aspx).

[Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

Type of Course: Taught

Study Options: Full time

Duration: 12 months

Start date: September

Contact

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[Shakespeare Institute \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx)

[Follow us on Twitter \(http://twitter.com/shakesinstitute\)](http://twitter.com/shakesinstitute)

[Contact us on Facebook \(http://facebook.com/shakespeareinstitute\)](http://facebook.com/shakespeareinstitute)

Details

This programme brings together academic, theatrical and civic interests in Shakespeare and creativity, generating a comprehensive and forward-looking conversation about what Shakespeare is and can be in today's world. You will produce traditional academic essays as well as creative work, all of which will explore Shakespeare's potential in the modern world.

You will study four core modules: [full descriptions available below]

- Shakespearience
- Shakespeare and Theatre Practice (*formerly Shakespeare and Creative Practice*)
- The Shakespeare Ensemble
- Shakespeare and Society

You will also choose two optional modules from a range of Shakespeare Institute modules, and complete the MA with a 15,000-word dissertation.

Shakespearience and optional modules are each assessed by one 4,000-word essay; Shakespeare and Theatre Practice is assessed by either two performance assignments and a 2,000-word research paper, or a 4,000-word research paper; Shakespeare Ensemble and Shakespeare and Society both combine shorter written assignments with creative work.

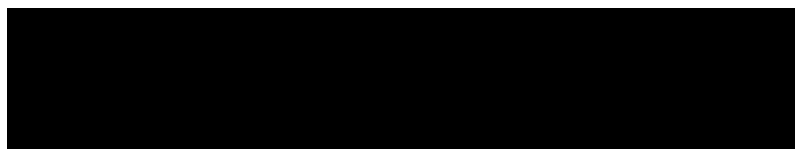
You will also attend [weekly Thursday Seminars \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/events/seminars.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/events/seminars.aspx) at the Shakespeare Institute (term-time only), which feature papers presented by a range of established visiting scholars as well as Institute and University of Birmingham staff.

Visiting the Shakespeare Institute

We welcome prospective students to visit the Shakespeare Institute. We usually arrange open afternoons to coincide with two of our weekly Thursday seminar series a term which gives you a good opportunity to experience the Shakespeare Institute and to meet our staff and students. The [next open afternoon \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/events/2015/open-afternoon-mar.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/events/2015/open-afternoon-mar.aspx) will take place on Thursday 12 March 2015. If you would like to visit us at another time, please contact us.

- [View our interactive virtual tour of the Shakespeare Institute \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/virtual-tour.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/virtual-tour.aspx)
- [Watch our videos about the Shakespeare Institute, our specialist library and student life in Stratford-upon-Avon \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/videos.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/videos.aspx)

Why study this course



Modules

You will study the following four core modules:

Shakespeareance

This module considers the ways in which Shakespearean language and drama bears on experience, with a view to making the experience of Shakespeare more available to contemporary Shakespeare scholarship and creative practice. It is, above all, a shared experiment in experientially alert and susceptible close reading. "Shakespeareance" will be about reading as process rather than product, and as such, at least potentially, experientially exciting and adventurous.

Shakespeare and Theatre Practice (*formerly Shakespeare and Creative Practice*)

This module will provide you with experiential knowledge that will inform the way that you interrogate and interpret performance evidence in a variety of media. Through a series of workshops and performance assignments, you will explore three different systematic approaches to performing the language of Shakespeare: the first approach is rooted in the verse and text work of John Barton, Peter Hall, Cicely Berry and Patsy Rodenberg; the second approach explores the legacy of Stanislavski in the Shakespearean work of 20th/21st century practitioners including Katie Mitchell and Mike Alfreds; the third approach brings the devising techniques of prominent physical theatre practitioners to a creative examination of Shakespeare's text.

The Shakespeare Ensemble

In this module you will work as part of an ensemble of creative artists – actors, directors, writers, designers – exploring and testing the theory and practice of performing Shakespeare today, culminating in an assessed performance of a re-imagined Shakespearean text. The module seeks to equip students with a range of skills pertaining to creating a new piece of work - creative dramatic writing, devising as an ensemble and music in the ensemble as well as including sessions with the RSC on new writing, the ensemble, design and lighting.

Shakespeare and Society

Featuring tuition from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the new Birmingham Library (which has an important Shakespeare collection), this module explores and tests the scope for bringing Shakespeare into the world beyond the academy and the theatre. You will undertake focused study of Shakespearean civic creativity from Garrick's 1769 Jubilee onwards before producing your own piece of civic creativity inspired by Shakespeare. View [Shakespeare Unbared \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/news/2014/unbared.aspx\)](#) – a film of work developed for performance at the Royal Shakespeare Company produced by Shakespeare and Creativity students in 2013 as part of this module. Next year's work will involve a similar project in collaboration with the RSC.

You will also choose two optional modules from the following:

History of Shakespeare in Performance

This module will consider trends of acting and directing Shakespeare from the Restoration to the present day, and will exploit the Stratford archives to undertake studies of individual actors and directors from the eighteenth century onwards. Subjects of study might include Colley Cibber, David Garrick, Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, Laurence Olivier, Peter Brook, John Barton and Sam Mendes. There will be opportunities to analyse and interpret primary evidence and to consider the cultural context(s) of performance. Plays studied include some or all of *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Shakespeare's Legacy

This module considers the adaptation and appropriation of Shakespeare's plays, persona, and possessions from the seventeenth century to the present day. It pays special attention to how changes in theatre practice, aesthetic tastes, politics, and commercial markets have shaped the history of Shakespeare's 'afterlife'. Plays studied include some or all of *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Measure for Measure*.

Shakespeare's Craftsmanship

This module focuses on the construction of Shakespeare's plays and considers the manipulation of source material and genre, the structuring of the dramatic narrative and the use of language for dramatic function and effect. Plays studied include *Romeo and Juliet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, and *The Winter's Tale*.

Shakespeare's Text

The module will develop a critical awareness of the textual foundations of Shakespeare's plays. Topics covered include: the relationship between a modern edition of a play and the earliest printed texts, the nature of the printing process that first made the plays available to readers of books, the characteristics of Shakespeare's dramatic composition, the treatment of the text in the theatre (including censorship, revision and adaptation), and Shakespeare as a collaborator. Plays studied include some or all of *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Sir Thomas More*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II*, *King Lear*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Timon of Athens*.

Fees and funding

We charge an annual tuition fee. Fees for 2015/16 are as follows:

- Home / EU: £6,480 full-time
- Overseas: £14,140 full-time

Tuition fees can either be paid in full or by instalments. Learn more about [postgraduate tuition fees and funding \(/postgraduate/pgt-fees/index.aspx\)](#).

Eligibility for Home/EU or Overseas fees can be verified with Admissions. Learn more about [fees for international students \(/International/students/finance/fees.aspx\)](#).

Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's [Postgraduate Funding Database \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx\)](#).

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

Entry requirements

We ask that you supply evidence of either:

- A bachelors degree (2:1) in a relevant field

OR

- Relevant professional experience. This should be demonstrated in a portfolio which catalogues and contextualises your work in a relevant field (e.g. catalogue of a recent art installation, actor's CV, transcript giving indication of professional training, web-based archive of recent work, folio of published poems, etc)

In addition to the usual supporting documents, all applications must also be supported by:

- Two letters of recommendation
- A statement of purpose which indicates your creative potential, either proposing specific creative projects you intend to pursue on the MA or reflecting on your existing creative work. In particular, the statement should address the following research questions:
 - What were/are the objectives of the piece, and why? What obstacles did you/might you encounter? How might these have been/be avoided?
 - To what tradition does this piece belong? To what critical conversations or bodies of practice does it contribute? What does it contribute to them?
 - What are its implications for future work? What does/might your work initiate in the field of Shakespeare studies more generally?

Learn more about [entry requirements \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx\)](#)

International students

Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications; our [country pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx\)](#) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- by holding an [English language qualification \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx\)](#) to the right level
- by taking and successfully completing one of our [English courses for international students \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx\)](#)

How to apply

Before you make your application

You may wish to [register your interest with us \(https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate\)](#) to receive regular news and updates on postgraduate life within this Department and the wider University.

Making your application

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the [How to apply pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx\)](#)

[Apply now \(https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL150.htm\)](https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL150.htm)

Related news and events

[Shakespeare Unbard: a performance \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/news/2014/unbard.aspx\)](#)

Learning and teaching



This programme will make use of the unrivalled resources of Shakespeare's Stratford, involving expert tuition from the **Shakespeare Birthplace Trust** (<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk>) and the **Royal Shakespeare Company** (<http://www.rsc.org.uk>), and benefiting from a partnership with the new **Library of Birmingham** (<http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com/>).

Students will also have access to the Shakespeare Institute Library, the Library of the Shakespeare Centre that curates the archives of the RSC, and the Shakespeare Collection held at the Library of Birmingham.

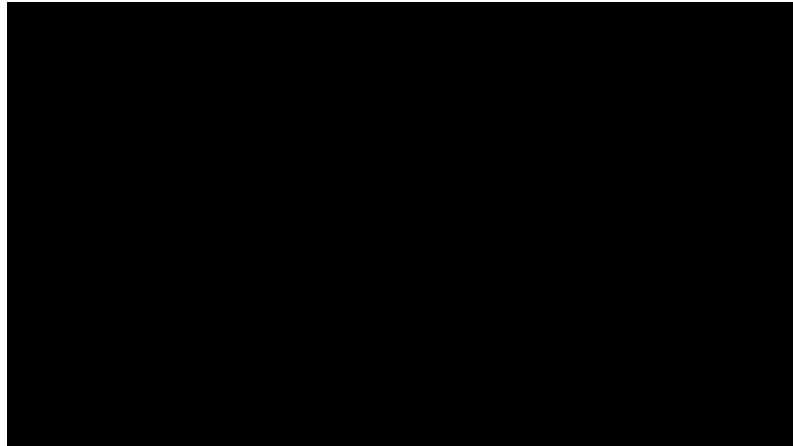
The programmes will also draw upon the expertise of key members of the Shakespeare Institute team: co-convenors **Professor Ewan Fernie**

(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/staff/profile.aspx>) and **Dr Abigail Rokison**

(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/staff/profile.aspx>); and Director of the Shakespeare Institute, **Professor Michael Dobson**

(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/staff/profile.aspx?ReferencId=20968>).

Interviews with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the Library of Birmingham and the Royal Shakespeare Company



You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS)**

(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx>) which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the **English for International Students Unit (EISU)**

(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/inseasonal/index.aspx>).

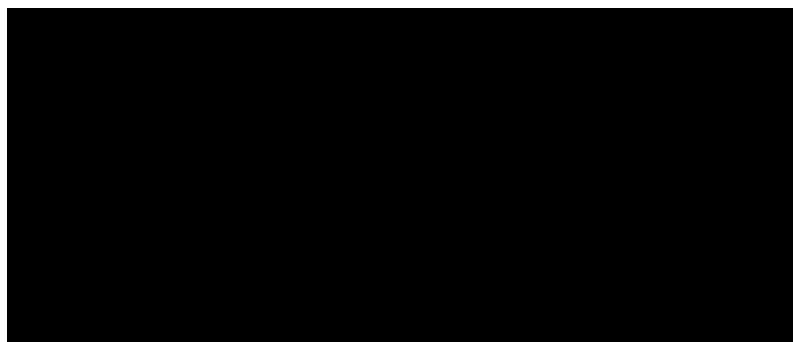
Related staff

Professor Ewan Fernie (</staff/profiles/shakespeare/fernie-ewan.aspx>)

Employability

The University of Birmingham has been ranked 8th in the UK and 60th in the world for post-qualification employability in the latest global survey of universities commissioned by the International Herald Tribune.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for employment and this will be further enhanced by the employability skills training offered through the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.



Postgraduates at the Shakespeare Institute are able to develop a broad range of creative, research and theatre skills, as well as in-depth subject knowledge.

In 2013, 99% of our postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation.

In recent years, our postgraduates have successfully entered a variety of sectors from teaching in secondary and higher education to performing arts, publishing, museums and library and archive work. Employers that graduates have gone on to work for include: Imperial College London; National Trust; Royal Shakespeare Company; Shakespeare Birthplace Trust; The Grove Theatre; and University of Bristol.

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