

Dr Andrew Watts BA, PhD

Lecturer in French Studies

[Department of Modern Languages: French Studies \(/schools/lcahm/departments/french/index.aspx\)](/schools/lcahm/departments/french/index.aspx)

Contact details

Telephone [+44 \(0\)121 414 5984](tel:+441214145984) (tel: [+44 121 414 5984](tel:+441214145984))

Email a.j.watts.2@bham.ac.uk (mailto: a.j.watts.2@bham.ac.uk)

University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT
UK



About

I was appointed to the University of Birmingham in 2007, having previously taught at the universities of Bristol and Newcastle. I am a specialist in nineteenth-century French prose fiction, especially the work of Honoré de Balzac. My current research focusses on adaptations of classic novels from this period in a variety of different media including silent film, graphic novels, and stage musicals.

Feedback and office hours

My consultation hour in 2013-14 is Thursday 11am-12pm. Students are welcome to see me in my office (415, Ashley Building) at this time without prior appointment.

Qualifications

BA PhD (Bristol)

Biography

I obtained my first degree (Modern Languages, French and Spanish) from the University of Bristol in 1999. After completing my doctoral thesis at Bristol in 2004 under the supervision of Professor Timothy Unwin, I spent a year as a lecturer at Newcastle University before taking up my post in Birmingham.

Teaching

I have taught across the undergraduate programme at Birmingham, including:

- Modern France (Years 1 and 2)
- Politics, Culture and Society (Year 2)
- Renaissance to Realism (Year 2)
- French Language (all years)
- Landmarks in European Literature (Year 1)
- European Cinema (Year 2)
- My final-year option, (Re)Imagining the Nineteenth Century, explores contemporary reworkings of classic novels by Balzac, Flaubert, and Zola in literature and film. I am also module convenor for the final-year language option Dissertation.

I am a member of the teaching team for the Birmingham International Foundation Programme, and contribute both lectures and seminars to the module 'The Country and the City'.

Postgraduate supervision

I welcome enquiries from prospective postgraduate students wishing to work on any aspect of nineteenth-century French prose fiction.

I am currently supervising an MA by Research on cinematic adaptations of Balzac's work, due for completion in September 2014.

Research

The principal focus of my research to date has been the representation of provinciality in nineteenth-century fiction, with special reference to the work of Honoré de Balzac. This was the subject of my first book, which examined Balzac's attempts to record the 'exotic' diversity of provincial France at a time when the advent of the railway was threatening to level the country's cultural landscape.

I am also interested in contemporary 're-imaginings' of nineteenth-century literature, and have recently completed a book (co-authored with Dr Kate Griffiths, Cardiff University) entitled *Adapting Nineteenth-Century France: Literature in Film, Theatre, Television, Radio and Print*.

I served as Conference Officer for the Society of Dix-Neuviémistes from 2009-11, and am co-editor of the proceedings of two annual conferences ('Memory', 2008, and 'Aller(s)-Retour(s)', 2009), with Professor Susan Harrow (University of Bristol) and Dr Loïc Guyon (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick) respectively.

Other activities

I have spoken widely on Balzac and the nineteenth century at conferences including French Studies, and the annual conference of the Society of Dix-Neuviémistes. In 2008-09 I was also the organiser of a research seminar series at Birmingham, on the theme of re-imagining the nineteenth century. This series was funded by the Dean's Initiative Fund, and welcomed guest speakers of international renown, including the author and illustrator Posy Simmonds (*Gemma Boverly*, 1999).

Publications

Monographs

- (with Kate Griffiths), *Adapting Nineteenth-Century France: Literature in Film, Theatre, Television, Radio and Print* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013)
- *Preserving the Provinces: Small Town and Countryside in the Work of Honoré de Balzac* (Oxford: Peter Lang, French Studies of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century, 2007)
- (Re-)Writing 'La Comédie humaine': *Balzac and the Practice of Literary Adaptation* (in preparation)

Edited books

- (with Susan Harrow), *Mapping Memory in Nineteenth-Century France* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012)
- (with Loïc Guyon), *Aller(s)-Retour(s): Nineteenth-Century France in Motion* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013)
- (with Owen Heathcote), *The Cambridge Companion to Balzac* (under contract with Cambridge University Press and due for completion in 2015)

Critical editions

- (with Michelle Cheyne), *Honoré de Balzac: 'Le Nègre'* (forthcoming Liverpool Online Series, 2014)

Special issues

- (with Kate Griffiths and Bradley Stephens), *Adaptation* (under consideration with *Dix-Neuf*)

Articles and book chapters

- 'An Overwritten Mystery: Balzac, Television, and *Une ténébreuse affaire*' (forthcoming in *Detective Fiction and the Palimpsest*, ed. by Amy Wigglesworth and Angela Kimyonghur, 2014)
- 'Serial Breaks and Adaptive Returns: Balzac, the BBC, and *Père Goriot*' (under consideration)
- 'Les Spectres muets: l'adaptation de Balzac dans *Narayana* et *The Conquering Power*', *L'Année balzacienne* (2012), 213-229
- 'Cracks in a Cartoon Landscape: Fragmenting Memory in Posy Simmonds' *Gemma Boverly*', *Essays in French Literature and Culture* (November 2011), 45-65
- 'Footsteps in the Snow: Piecing Together Time in *Madame Bovary* and *Contre-enquête sur la mort d'Emma Bovary*', *South Carolina Modern Language Review*, 10.1 (Autumn 2011), 13-24
- 'Mao's China in the Mirror: Reversing the Exotic in Dai Sijie's *Balzac et la Petite Tailleuse chinoise*', *Romance Studies*, 29.1 (January 2011), 27-39
- '**Searching for gold: Honoré de Balzac and the redemption of provincial France** (<http://linguoromana.byu.edu/>)', *Lingua romana*, 7 (Autumn 2008)
- 'An Exercise in International Relations, or the Travelling Salesman in Touraine: Balzac's *L'illustre Gaudissart*', in *Currencies: Fiscal Fortunes and Cultural Capital in Nineteenth-Century France*, ed. by Sarah Capitanio et al. (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), 161-73

Short articles

- 'Silent Spectaculars: Adapting Balzac in *Le Mort vivant* and *L'Auberge rouge*', *Romance Notes*, 52.1 (2012), 61-69
- 'A Matter of (Bad) Taste? Honoré de Balzac's *Contes drolatiques* in England and America', *French Studies Bulletin*, 118 (Spring 2011) 11-14
- 'Two Tales of One City: Balzac and the Decline of Tours', *French Studies Bulletin*, 99 (Summer 2006), 37-40

Encyclopedia entries

- I have completed several entries for [The Literary Encyclopedia](http://www.litencyc.com) (<http://www.litencyc.com>) including 'Honoré de Balzac' (2006), *Eugénie Grandet*, *La Rabouilleuse*, *Le Colonel Chabert*, *La Cousine Bette* (all 2008), and *Le Père Goriot* (2009).

Reviews

- I have reviewed numerous publications for journals including *French Studies*, *Modern Language Review*, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, and *The English Historical Review*.

Recent conference papers and invited lectures

- 'Balzac's other side: mediumship and literary adaptation in Charles d'Orino's *Contes de l'au-delà*', annual conference of the Society of Dix-Neuviémistes ('Heaven and Hell'), University of Exeter, 8-10 April 2013
- 'Pastiche in pieces: rewriting Flaubert in *Contre-enquête sur la mort d'Emma Bovary*', colloquium on 'Crime Fiction and the Palimpsest', University of Durham, 14 September 2012
- 'Wrecked reels and silent spectaculars: *L'Auberge rouge* and *Le Mort vivant*', annual conference of the Society of Dix-Neuviémistes ('Dirt and Debris'), University of Birmingham, 7-9 April 2011
- 'Balzac et l'exotique à rebours', special lecture given at the Maison de Balzac (Passy), 20 June 2009
- 'Reversing the provincial exotic: Balzac, *Ursule Mirouët*, and a little Chinese seamstress', annual conference of Nineteenth-Century French Studies, Vanderbilt University (Nashville), 15-17 October 2008
- 'Balzac and the politics of provincial difference: From *Les Chouans* to *Un caractère de femme*', annual conference of the Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France ('Mapping France'), University of Reading, 6-8 September 2007
- 'A matter of (bad) taste? Honoré de Balzac's *Contes drolatiques* in England and America', annual conference of the Society of French Studies, University of Birmingham, 2-4 July 2007
- 'Power to the young? Balzac's jeunocratie, from *Une fille d'Ève* to *Z. Marcas*', annual conference of the Society of Dix-Neuviémistes ('Institutions and Power'), 27-29 March 2007

Expertise

I have previously acted as an academic expert on the work of Honoré de Balzac for BBC Radio. I welcome media enquiries relating to any aspect of nineteenth-century French prose fiction, especially with regard to adaptations of canonical novels from this period.



