

## Dr Stephen Forcer

Senior Lecturer in French Studies

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### About

**Academia.edu Profile** (<http://birmingham.academia.edu/StephenForcer>) • **Twitter** (<https://twitter.com/DrStephenForcer>)

I completed my first degree and MA at the University of Warwick, before moving to Wadham College, Oxford to write my doctoral thesis under the supervision of Professor Malcolm Bowie. I joined the University of Birmingham in September 2005, having previously held temporary posts at Keble College, Oxford and the Universities of Leeds and Exeter.

### Qualifications

- DPhil, University of Oxford
- MA Modern French Cultural Studies, University of Warwick
- BA (Hons) French with Film Studies, University of Warwick

### Teaching

I currently teach a broad range of topics within 20th-century French film and literature. For final-year Undergraduates I run an option on Avant-Garde Currents in French Cinema: based partly on my own research, this module deals with Dada, Surrealism and other canonical aspects of the classical avant-garde, as well as alternative trends in post-WWII French cinema, from Jean-Luc Godard and Chris Marker through to Claire Denis.

I contribute numerous individual lectures to the **Undergraduate programme in Years 1 and 2** (<http://www.french.bham.ac.uk/undergrad/index.shtml>). I am Convenor for the Year 1 Introduction to French Literature and Film Studies, and the Year 2 module on French Cinema, Media and Visual Culture.

At Birmingham I have retained an active commitment to language tuition through grammar lectures and class teaching, particularly Year 4 Prose. My previous teaching and lecturing includes BA and MA courses on 19th- and 20th-century French literature, French cinema, French Language, and Specialised Translation.

I am currently Head of **Postgraduate Studies** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/icahm/postgraduate/index.aspx>) (Taught) for the School, and Programme Lead for **BA Modern Languages** ([http://www.undergraduate.bham.ac.uk/coursefinder/arts/modern\\_languages.shtml](http://www.undergraduate.bham.ac.uk/coursefinder/arts/modern_languages.shtml)) degrees. Previous admin roles include Director of Postgraduate Studies in French, Admissions Tutor, French Year Abroad Tutor, and Deputy Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

### Postgraduate supervision

Past and current postgraduate projects include:

- **Elizabeth Benjamin** (<http://birmingham.academia.edu/FrancesElizabethUrquhart>) (AHRIC), 'The Authenticity of Ambiguity: Dada and Existentialism' (PhD).
- Sabina Stent, '**Women Surrealists: Sexuality, Fetish, Femininity and Female Surrealism**' (<http://theses.bham.ac.uk/3718/>) (PhD). Co-supervised with **Martyn Cornick** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/french/cornick-martyn.aspx>).
- Sarah Cassidy, 'Poetics in French and Spanish Surrealist Film' (MPhil).
- Beth Urquhart (AHRIC), '**"Tout est tatou": Dada as Artistic Suicide or Alternative Identity**' (<http://theses.bham.ac.uk/3094/1/Urquhart11MPhil.pdf>) (MPhil).
- Alex Waters, '**Discerning a Surrealist Cinema**' (<http://theses.bham.ac.uk/3092/1/Waters11MPhil.pdf>) (MPhil).
- Maeve Broderick, 'Does Spanish Avant-Garde Culture Exist Today Through the Cinema of Pedro Almodóvar? How Significant is the Influence of Luis Buñuel on Almodóvar's Work?' (MA). Co-supervised with **Frank Lough** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/hispanic/lough-francis.aspx>).
- Sabina Stent, 'Feminism and Gender in the Work of Lee Miller, Meret Oppenheim and Elsa Schiaparelli' (MA).

External Examining:

- Barnaby Dicker (Royal Holloway, University of London), '**Visibly Frame-based Cinematography: Practice, History, Theory**' ([http://catalogue.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do?dsnt=0&vl%28174399379UI0%29=any&frbg=8&scpscps=scope%3A%28BLCCONTENT%29&tab=local\\_tab&dstmp=1353358589468&srt=rank&ct=search&mode=Basic&dum=true&tb=&indx=1&vl%28freeText0%29=barnaby+dicker+ativism&vid=BLVU1&fn=search](http://catalogue.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?dsnt=0&vl%28174399379UI0%29=any&frbg=8&scpscps=scope%3A%28BLCCONTENT%29&tab=local_tab&dstmp=1353358589468&srt=rank&ct=search&mode=Basic&dum=true&tb=&indx=1&vl%28freeText0%29=barnaby+dicker+ativism&vid=BLVU1&fn=search)) (PhD).
- Clarissa Hotchkis (Royal Holloway, University of London), 'To What Extent was the Rebellion Portrayed Within Avant-garde Women's Art a Rebellion Against Gender Norms?' (MPhil).

I am regularly involved in the internal marking of M-level and PhD work.

### Research

My general research areas are Dada and Surrealism in French literature and film.

I am currently writing a book on Dada - **Dada as Text, Thought and Theory** (<http://www.legendabooks.com/titles/isbn/9781907975837.html>) (Oxford: Legenda RMFS) - that uses close textual analysis to approach topics either ignored or resisted by most traditional criticism, such as women Dadaists, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and the history of ideas, including Buddhism and quantum physics.

Over 2014 I am working with **Saskia Warren** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/gees/people/profile.aspx?ReferencId=47194>) on a **feasibility study** (<http://www.culturalintermediation.org.uk/>) into a heritage space related to the Birmingham Surrealist group led by Conroy Maddox. The project is funded by the **Communities and Culture Network+** (<http://www.communitiesandculture.org/>).

I am also interested in Dada and Surrealism as part of a tradition of experimental or (would be) 'radical' French culture. With my colleague **Emma Wagstaff** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/french/wagstaff-emma.aspx>) I co-edited a special issue **Nottingham French Studies** (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/french/ntfs/specialissues.aspx>) (2011) on the French avant-garde, in the aim of expanding the periodisation and scope of the avant-garde canon, as well as the methods used to understand individual authors and bodies of work. My other published research in this area considers French avant-garde work from the 1920s and 1930s within a variety of contexts, including European cultural responses to WWI, developments elsewhere in 20th-century intellectual history, modern geo-politics and the (so-called) 'so-called' 'war on terror', and the politics and commodification of avant-garde art. I have also drawn on Dada and Surrealism in looking at collaborative experimental work produced on film and video by Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville in the 1970s and 1980s.

My monograph on Tristan Tzara (1896-1963) - **Modernist Song: The Poetry of Tristan Tzara** (<http://www.mhra.org.uk/cgi-bin/legenda/legenda.pl?catalogue=b1904713149>) (Oxford: Legenda, 2006) - represents the first book-length study of poetry written by the man remembered popularly as 'the Father of Dada', whose life in literature continued for nearly four decades after the totemic *Sept manifestes Dada* of 1924. I have continued to research various aspects of Tzara's life and writing, and am working on a long-term project to bring together Tzara's post-WII poetry - which was illustrated by Sonia Delaunay, Matisse, Miró and Picasso, among others - in a critical edition.

I have corresponded with galleries, cultural organisations and researchers about the various research topics described here, and it is always a pleasure to hear from colleagues or students working in related areas. I am very happy to discuss possible supervision or collaboration, or to respond to questions about any aspect of my work.

### Other activities

Editorial Board Member of **Dada/Surrealism** (<http://ir.uiowa.edu/dadasur/>).

Editorial Board Member of **Studies in European Cinema** ([http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-journal\\_id=127/](http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-journal_id=127/)).

Reviews and reader reports (selected): *French Studies*, *The Irish Journal of French Studies*, *Modern and Contemporary France*, *The Modern Language Review*, *Nottingham French Studies*, Intellect Books, Manchester University Press, Routledge.

Staff member of **Réseau-F** (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/french/research/reseau-f/>) (an inter-institutional forum for Postgraduates in French Studies based at the Universities of Birmingham, Queen Mary University of London, Reading, Sheffield, Southampton and Warwick).

Elected member of the University of Birmingham **Senate** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/governance/senate/index.aspx>).

### Previous positions

Honorary Secretary of the UK **Society for French Studies** (<http://www.sfs.ac.uk/>) 2008-2011 (co-opted 2007).

Reviews Editor for **Studies in European Cinema** (*Studies%20in%20European%20Cinema*) (2002-2010).

### Publications

#### Self-authored Books

- **Dada as Text, Thought and Theory** (<http://www.legendabooks.com/titles/isbn/9781907975837.html>). Monograph in preparation for the **Legenda Research Monographs in French Studies** (<http://www.legendabooks.com/series/rmfs/>) (Oxford, 2014/2015). ISBN 978-1-907975-83-7.



## Co-edited Journal

- With Emma Wagstaff: *The French Avant-garde* (=special issue of *Nottingham French Studies*, 50: 3 (<http://www.eupublishing.com/toc/nfs/50/3>) (Autumn 2011)), Commissioned contributors: Martyn Cornick, Lisa Downing, Robert Gillett, Ruth Hemus, Leslie Hill, Eric Robertson, Sabina Stent, Chris Townsend, Natalie Wourm. ISBN 978-0-8535-8281-6. Reviewed in *Modern and Contemporary France* (<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09639489.2012.743383>), 21: 1 (February 2013), 117-18, the *Journal of European Studies* (<http://jles.sagepub.com/content/43/2/180.full.pdf+html>), 43 (June 2013), 180-81, and *French Studies* (<http://jfs.oxfordjournals.org/content/67/3/432.full.pdf+html?sid=5b1f7ca6-8499-4344-82af-268c0cf59a38>), 67: 1 (July 2013), 432-433.

## Articles in Refereed Journals

- With Emma Wagstaff: **Introduction** (<http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/nfs.2011-3.001>), in Forcer and Wagstaff (eds), *The French Avant-garde* (= special issue of *Nottingham French Studies*, 50: 3 (Autumn 2011)), pp. 1-11.
- Co-authored with Emma Wagstaff: **'Dedication and Friendship in Two Livres d'artistes: Parler seul (Tzara-Miró, 1948-1950) and Vivantes cendres, innommées (Leiris-Giacometti, 1961)'** (<http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/nfs.2011-3.008>), in Forcer and Wagstaff (eds), *The French Avant-garde* (= special issue of *Nottingham French Studies*, 50: 3 (Autumn 2011)), pp. 103-16.
- 'For every word do almost tell my name': a response to Charles Chadwick on anagrams in poetry'** (<http://jfs.oxfordjournals.org/content/27/100/78.full.pdf+html>), *French Studies Bulletin*, 100 (Autumn 2006), pp. 78-81. ISSN 0262-2750. For a response to this article, see Charles Chadwick, **'The Game of the Anagram'** (<http://jfs.oxfordjournals.org/content/27/101/107.full.pdf+html>), *French Studies Bulletin*, 101 (Winter 2006), p. 107.
- 'Word games and space invaders: form, play and philosophy in Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville's Numéro deux (1975)'** ([http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Article\\_id=5572](http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Article_id=5572)), *Studies in French Cinema* (Intellect) 5: 2 (2005), pp. 87-97. ISSN 14715880. **Online abstract** (<http://www.atypon-link.com/INT/doi/abs/10.1386/sfci.5.2.87/1>).
- 'Trust me, I'm a director: sex, sado-masochism and institutionalization in Luis Buñuel's Belle de jour (1967)'** ([http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Article\\_id=5656](http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Article_id=5656)), *Studies in European Cinema* (Intellect) 1: 1 (2004), pp. 19-29. ISSN 17411548.

## Chapters in Books

- 'Beyond Mental: Avant-garde Culture and War', in Nicholas Martin, Tim Houghton and Pierre Purseigle (eds), *Legacies and Memories of War in Europe, 1918-1945-1989* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014). Forthcoming.
- 'The Importance of Talking Nonsense: Tzara, Ideology, and Dada in the 21st century', in Eliza Adamowicz and Eric Robertson (eds), *Dada and Beyond, vol. 2: Dada and its Legacies* (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 263-74.
- 'On the Starfish Road: Surrealism and the Paris-Barcelona Connection', in Helena Buffery and Carlota Caulfield (eds), *Barcelona: Visual Culture, Space and Power* (<http://www.gwales.com/bibliographic/?isbn=9780708324806&tsid=2>) (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), pp. 31-46.
- 'Before They Were Famous: Tristan Tzara, Nationhood and Poetry', in Anne Quinney (ed.), *Paris-Bucharest, Bucharest-Paris. Francophone Writers from Romania* (<http://www.rodopi.nl/ntalpa.asp?BookId=FAUX+367&type=coming&letter=>), (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 71-94.
- 'Neither parallel nor slippers': Dada, war, and the meaning(lessness) of meaning(lessness)' in Elisabetta Tarantino (ed.) with Carlo Caruso, *Nonsense and other Senses: Regulated Absurdity in Literature* (<http://www.c-s-p.org/flyers/978-1-4438-1006-7-sample.pdf>), (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009), pp. 191-206.
- 'Ceci n'est pas une transmission': Dada and Surrealism in work by Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville', in Isabelle McNeill and Bradley Stephens (eds), *Transmissions: Essays in French Literature, Thought, and Cinema* (<http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?event=cmp.cst.ebooks.datasheet&id=13368>), *Modern French Identities*: 51 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 179-97.
- In preparation: chapter to be contributed to Roland-François Lack (ed.), *Reading with Jean-Luc Godard* (Coboose, 2014/2015).

## French-English Translations

Six items (approx. 40,000 words) in Christina Howells (ed.), *French Women Philosophers: A Contemporary Reader* (<http://www.routledge.com/books/French-Women-Philosophers-isbn9780415261401>), (London: Routledge, 2003):

- Catherine Challer, 'Peace as Gift and Obligation', pp. 56-68;
- Françoise d'Eaubonne, 'The Feminine and Philosophy', pp. 274-82;
- Anne Fagot-Largeault, 'Science and Ethics', pp. 323-36;
- Dominique Schnapper, 'Racism and the Radical Condemnation of Modernity', pp. 369-84;
- Mireille Delmas Marty, 'Democracy and Humanity', pp. 425-35;
- Blandine Kriegel, 'The Eighteenth-Century Declarations of Rights and their Destinies', pp. 437-49.

Volume reviewed in *French Studies* (<http://jfs.oxfordjournals.org/content/LX/1/158.full.pdf+html?sid=21498ea-ab40-4f25-acc4-fb79a5d9710c>), 60: 1 (January 2006), 158-59.

## Encyclopedia Entries

- 'The French Avant-garde'** (<http://www.litencyc.com/php/stopsis.php?rec=true&UID=14901>), *The Literary Encyclopedia* (February 2011).
- 'Tristan Tzara'** (<http://www.litencyc.com/php/people.php?rec=true&UID=11954>), *The Literary Encyclopedia* (August 2008).

## Review Article

- 'Chronicle d'un été'** (<http://bufvc.ac.uk/reviews/chronicle-of-a-summer-1960>) *é* (<http://bufvc.ac.uk/reviews/chronicle-of-a-summer-1960>) (Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 1960) in *Viewfinder* (British Universities Film and Video Council), 4 October 2013.

## Dissemination of Research and Participation in Academic Events

- 'The Surreal Seeminglyness of War': the French Avant-garde and Military Testimony'** (<http://shef.ac.uk/french/newsevents/researchculture1314-1316699>), University of Sheffield French Research Seminars, 5-6pm 13 May 2014.
- 'Decoding Dada: Women Dada Poets, Buddhist Dada, and Other Apparent Anomalies'** (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/french/events/current-events/seminars/decoding-dada-women-dada-poets.aspx>), University of Nottingham French and Francophone Research Seminars, 18 October 2013.
- 'Surrealist House and Garden Competition'** (<http://www.balsallheathbiennale.com/decorate-your-house-competition>), 2013 Balsall Heath Biennale, August-September.
- 'Surrealism, Conroy Maddox, and Balsall Heath'** (<http://www.balsallheathbiennale.com/talks>) Public lecture at the **2013 Balsall Heath Biennale** ([http://www.balsallheathbiennale.com/Balsall\\_Heath\\_Biennale/About.html](http://www.balsallheathbiennale.com/Balsall_Heath_Biennale/About.html)), (Chris Poolman (<http://www.chrispoolman.com>) and Elizabeth Rowe (<http://elrowe.com>)), Tuesday 20 August.
- Contribution on **Conroy Maddox** (<http://vimeo.com/68899438>) (42:30-44:50) for **More Canals Than Venice** (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIH7m7fhI4>) (Rainbow Films, 2013).
- Staff Organiser: **Réseau-F Conference for Postgraduates in French Studies** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/cchm/departments/french/events/2013/reseau-conference.aspx>), University of Birmingham, 10 May 2013.
- With Roger Shannon: screening of **Surreal Enigmas** (<http://www.flatpackfestival.org.uk/event/surreal-enigmas>) (Silvano Levy, 1995), Birmingham Flatpack Festival, 2-3pm Saturday 23 March 2013, School of Art, Margaret Street, B3 3BX.
- With Barnaby Dicker and Chris Townsend: panel on 'Adaptation and Authorship in Avant-garde Film' at the 2012 **European Cinema Research Forum** (<http://www.ecrf.org.uk>), 16-18 July, Edge Hill University. Paper: 'Not Intended for Production: Surrealism, Film, and Philippe Soupault's poèmes cinématographiques'.
- 'Modern Life is Rubbish: An Introduction to Dada Art, Film and Literature'. Language Conference Workshop at Camp Hill School for Girls, 29 June 2012.
- 'The Odd, The Experimental and The Unfilmable: Current and Future Projects in Film'. Paper at a Symposium organised in advance of the launch of the Birmingham University Centre for International Film Studies. 15 May 2012.
- Session chair at **'Politics and the Aesthetic'** (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/french/research/reseau-fseminars/>), Réseau-F PhD colloquium, Queen Mary University of London, 14 May 2012.
- 'Dada.' Talk given 5 October 2011 at the Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, as part of a series of events run in conjunction with a production of Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*.
- Postgraduate Symposium (Organiser and Chair): 'Postgraduate Research on the European Avant-Garde', held at the University of Birmingham 21 June 2011.
- 'Sexuality, Race, Religion and Ideology: Encouraging Students to Speak Openly and Usefully About Sensitive Topics.' Presentation given at 'Sharing Best Practice in Teaching and Learning' (symposium) held 17 May 2011 at the University of Birmingham.
- 'Beyond Mental: Avant-garde Culture and War'. Invited paper at **'Legacies and Memories of War in Europe, 1918-1945-1989'** (<http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=32043>), European Research Institute, University of Birmingham, 23-24 September 2010.
- 'De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da: Dada, Music, Fetish'. Paper at bi-annual conference organised by the **European Network for Avant-garde and Modernism Studies** ([http://www.eam2010.amu.edu.pl/home\\_1](http://www.eam2010.amu.edu.pl/home_1)), Poznan, Poland, 9-11 September 2010.
- With Jennifer Birkett: In Your Dreams: Science and the Creative Imagination in France (1880-1930), presentation at **British Festival of Science** (<http://www.britishtscienceassociation.org/web/britishtsciencefestival/>), University of Birmingham, 17 September 2010.
- 'Le Surréalisme au cinéma', invited lecture at 'Le Paris des Avant-gardes', **University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education** (<http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/>), 24 April 2010.
- Introduction to *Trois couleurs: blue* (1993) at Cineworld, Birmingham, as part of **National Schools Film Week** (<http://www.filmeducation.org/>), 22 October 2009.
- 'Littérature et cinéma Dada', invited lecture at 'Paris 1900-1925: littérature et arts visuels', **University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education** (<http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/>), 25 April 2009.
- 'De beaux noms vagues': Science, Knowledge, Dada'. Invited paper at the **University of Warwick Research Seminars in French Studies** (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/french/research/seminars/>), 7 May 2008.
- 'Poetry for Life'. Paper at the **Queen Mary Malcolm Bowie Conference** ([http://www.qmul.ac.uk/events/public\\_show.php?id=811](http://www.qmul.ac.uk/events/public_show.php?id=811)): 'Across the Arts'. 1 December 2007.
- University of Birmingham Research Seminars in French Studies, Autumn 2007: 'The Avant-garde.'** (<http://www.celc.bham.ac.uk/research/seminars.htm>) Co-organiser with Emma Wagstaff. Speakers: Ruth Hemus (Royal Holloway), Eric Robertson (Royal Holloway), Michael Sheringham (All Souls College, Oxford), Natalie Wourm (Birkbeck).
- 'Mental Cases: Dada.' Paper at the **Annual Conference of the Society for French Studies** ([http://www.sfs.ac.uk/conference2007/programme\\_2007.htm](http://www.sfs.ac.uk/conference2007/programme_2007.htm)), University of Birmingham, 2-4 July 2007.
- Speaker at 'Delayed Encounters: Filmmic Legacies of Dada and Surrealism. Symposium at the University of Manchester, Friday 25 May 2007.
- 'Machine tourne vite: bodies, technology and time in Dada film.' Paper at 'Sensing Film: Body, Genre, Audience', the Annual Conference of the Association for Studies in French Cinema. Institut Français, London. Wednesday 18 April 2007.
- 'The importance of talking nonsense: Tzara, ideology, and Dada in the 21st century'. Paper at "Eggs laid by tigers: dada and beyond": international conference at the University of Wales Swansea, 5-8 July 2006.
- 'Neither parallel nor slippers': Dada, war, and the meaning(lessness) of meaning(lessness)'. Paper at "Between Peterborough and Pentecost": Nonsense Literature across Space and Time: international conference organised by the HRC at the University of Warwick, 12-13 May 2006.
- 'An Unholy Trinity: Dada, surrealism and the Bible'. Research paper given 22 March 2006, Department of French Studies, University of Birmingham.

## 2000-2005

Papers at the Universities of Bath, Cambridge (x3), Exeter, Florida State, Leeds (x2) and Oxford (x2). Co-organised (with Oliver Davis) international conference for graduates in French Studies (Oxford).

## Expertise

Avant-garde and modernist French film and literature, especially Dada and Surrealism in France; French cinema

Alternative contact number available for this expert: **contact the press office** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx>)



