

PhD Studentships Collections Based-Research Programme

www.reading.ac.uk/gs-phd-collections.aspx

Project title: The Limits of Desire: the Mills & Boon Romance Market, 1946-1973

Department/School: English Literature

Supervisors: Professor Alison Donnell & Dr Andrew Nash

Project Overview:

The project will involve original research in the Mills & Boon archive held in the Special Collections at the University of Reading. This archive, with particularly rich holdings of editorial correspondence in the postwar period, offers potential for a PhD which makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of publishing and reading patterns, the history of popular culture, and social and ideological representations of women in the period 1945-1973. In addition to the paper archive, the University also holds file copies of Mills & Boon publications, enabling a student to combine bibliographical and book historical analysis with study of the textual and paratextual aspects of the books themselves.

The project will examine the nature of the market for women's romance fiction after 1945 up to the period when Mills & Boon switched to predominantly paperback publishing. The student will be expected to pursue individual interests but it is anticipated that the project will follow an author-based approach, selecting strategically-chosen samples from the archive to build up a representative picture of the nexus between author, publisher and the market. The student will begin by surveying the archive, identifying the different types of material available for investigation and determining suitable case-studies. At the same time he/she will familiarise him/herself with current literature on fiction publishing in the postwar period, exploiting the University Library's outstanding primary and secondary sources on the subject, and develop existing knowledge of theoretical debates in the areas of feminism, gender and sexuality studies, and popular culture. The case-studies are likely to reflect key topics such as the relevance of libraries and different institutions of reading, the importance of the magazine market, the role of male authors, and instances of censorship and self-censorship.

Applicants should indicate their proposed scope, methodology and lines of enquiry in relation to the collection and any relevant skills, knowledge and experience. We would expect the successful applicant to have significant input into the final shape of the PhD project.

Book and publishing history is a long-standing and distinctive research focus of the Department of English Literature. In recent years staff have been awarded substantial external funding for research projects on such topics as fiction publishing 1880-1940, contemporary poetry publishing, and diasporic literary archives. The department is able to provide expert supervision drawing on staff with research and teaching interests in

twentieth-century literature and publishing history, women's writing and gender studies, and the practice of archival research.

Eligibility:

- Applicants should hold or expect to gain a minimum of a 2:1 Bachelor's degree in a relevant subject.
- Due to restrictions on the funding this fees only studentship is only open to candidates from the UK/EU.

Funding Details:

- Start date: October 2013
- Duration: 3 years; part-time applicants are also invited
- Value of award: a fees only studentship is available, in addition to a backing grant of £1000 per annum for equipment/placement/outreach support (or part-time equivalent)

How to apply:

To apply for this studentship please submit an application for a **PhD in English Literature** to the University. Go to www.reading.ac.uk/Study/apply/pg-applicationform.aspx to apply online.

Please quote the reference **CBR-1** in the '*Scholarships applied for*' box which appears within the *Funding Section* of your online application.

Application Deadline: 31st March 2013

Interview Dates: one of 22, 25, 29 April 2013

Contact information

- **For further details about this project:**
please contact Dr Andrew Nash – a.p.nash@reading.ac.uk
- **For further details about the PhD Collections-Based Research Programme**
please contact Professor Alison Donnell – a.j.donnell@reading.ac.uk
- **University of Reading Special collections :** www.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/collections/archives/sc-publishers.aspx
- **Department of English Literature:** www.reading.ac.uk/english-literature/ell-home.aspx