Academic Staff

Fellows


**Professor Marion Turner** teaches literature from 650 to 1550. She has recently completed a biography, *Chaucer: A European Life*, published by Princeton University Press in 2019. Her other publications include *Chaucerian Conflict* (OUP, 2007), and, as editor, *A Handbook of Middle English Studies* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). She has also published numerous articles in journals such as *New Medieval Literatures*, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* and the *Chaucer Review*, and in many edited collections. She recently (2016) edited a special issue of the Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies on the topic of Medical Discourse in Premodern Europe. Marion has been awarded major funding from The Leverhulme Trust, The Wellcome Trust, and the British Academy. She has appeared on several television and radio programmes. In 2019 she is speaking at numerous literary festivals, including Hay on Wye, and on Radio 4’s Start the Week, and Radio Five Live, about her new biography of Chaucer. Marion is also very active in outreach work, and speaks to many school groups every year. She is a Trustee of the New Chaucer Society, and a Book Reviews Editor for *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*. From 2017-19, she is Director of Undergraduate Studies for the English Faculty.

Jitka Štollová is a Junior Research Fellow specialising in Early Modern Literature. Her research interests include the intersection between literature and history, drama from Elizabeth I to the Civil War, and the history of the book. Her first book will investigate the reputation and representation of Richard III in the seventeenth century. She has published several articles on paratexts and on poetry.

Lecturers

Dr Amanda Holton, Stipendiary Lecturer in English Language.

A Career Development Fellow in Victorian and Modern Literature will be joining the College in October 2019.

About the Course

English at Jesus College

Jesus College currently has 27 undergraduates reading English, including 10 in the joint schools with Classics, History, and Modern Languages. There are also 11 graduates studying for Masters and doctoral degrees (please see below for further information on Postgraduate Studies and Careers).

The College has an excellent record of academic achievement in English and the Joint Schools - in 2012, for example, all six of our English finalists gained Firsts; in 2014 five of our first years won distinctions in Prelims; in 2017, six of our seven English finalists gained Firsts. We have a tradition of fostering a love of literature and independent thought. Theatre trips, poetry readings, and English society events (detailed below) all contribute to a densely textured intellectual life at Jesus. Jesus College is located a two-minute walk from the Bodleian Library, an eight-minute walk from the English Faculty Library and itself offers excellent library and computer facilities.

The Undergraduate Course

All degree courses should help students to learn how to think, and the English course at Oxford is particularly well equipped to do so. Each student will study different texts, pursue personal interests, and shape his or her degree in exciting and challenging ways. The study of English starts from a love of literature and language, and branches out to encounter or encompass other subjects and fields of enquiry. English is a subject which lends itself to diverse approaches and theories of interpretation, from Aristotle’s Poetics to Derridean deconstruction. Here at Jesus we encourage students to work in interdisciplinary ways, and to explore a range of approaches to literature, while never forgetting the centrality of the text. Studying English involves the development of analytical skills and the accumulation of a great deal of knowledge: you need to be able to read widely but also in close detail; to understand the sweep of historical change while also being able to meditate on the nuances of a single word.

The English course is extremely demanding, and you must be ready to work hard. Our students think in original and imaginative ways, and are willing to pursue ideas, themes, and approaches to texts independently. Much of our teaching is conducted in tutorials (one or two students with the Tutor) and small groups, and you must be prepared to discuss your ideas and reading with tutors and other students, and to respond spontaneously to criticism or new ideas introduced by them. You must be excited by the challenges of literary study, and dedicated to developing the skills of reading, writing, interpretation, and research.

Your tutors will be experts in their particular field of research and committed to providing you with an excellent educational experience. You will read widely across authors, periods, and genres. For example, in the first year you will study Early Medieval and Victorian, modern and contemporary writers. You will also learn basic critical approaches to literature and language which will prepare you for good close reading of the texts. In your second and third years, you will study towards four period papers covering the years 1350 to 1832, and will also take a special option, and a paper on Shakespeare, as well as writing a dissertation on a subject of your choice. We want our students to cover all periods of English literature and then to be able to choose their own particular areas of interest.

The tutors are always available to help students develop their individual research plans and discuss any problems they might encounter during their course. We all share a concern and enthusiasm for our students’ work, their aspirations, and their general welfare. We hope that the study of literature will continue to be an important part of their life. Our graduates go on to a great variety of careers, including
academia, writing, acting, broadcasting, publishing, journalism, teaching, advertising, administration, librarianship, management and law.

**Cultural and Intellectual Life**

Students at Jesus find themselves welcomed into a serious, lively, and good-humoured academic community with every opportunity to discuss their thoughts in tutorials, seminars, and College English events.

The **Herbert English Society** provides a forum for exchange of ideas and discussion of literature, criticism, and the arts. The Society invites poets, playwrights, novelists, academics, journalists, and cultural historians. For instance, in 2018, we hosted the Booker-Prize winning poet and novelist, Ben Okri, who ran a writing workshop for Jesus students. Other recent speakers have included Marina Warner, Philip Pullman, Bernard O’Donoghue, Craig Raine, Hermione Lee, Sally Shuttleworth, William St Clair, Blair Worden, and Geoffrey Hill.

There is an active tradition in **student drama** at Jesus. Many of our undergraduates produce, direct, and act in plays and musicals as well as participating in the Turl Street Arts Festival each Hilary Term.

We make sure that our students have opportunities to make the most of the books and artefacts available in Oxford. For instance, we have arranged for our students to visit the Ashmolean Museum to look at Anglo-Saxon artefacts as part of their work on material culture and Old English literature, and held classes on early modern book history and print culture in the Jesus College Fellows’ Library where they viewed, *inter alia*, the folios of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson and a range of historical chronicles and travel accounts.

**Joint Schools**

- English and Modern Languages
- Classics and English
- History and English

**Admissions**

In a total College entry of about 100 undergraduates, 6-8 are offered places in a typical year to read English and joint schools with English. We are looking for students who combine academic excellence and ambition with intellectual curiosity and the determination to read as widely as possible. Our successful applicants usually read extensively beyond the school syllabus while maintaining strong analytical skills in close reading. Enthusiasm and a love of the subject are vital.

**Academic requirements:** Offers made to candidates will be conditional upon A-level results (AAA, with an A in each subject the candidate is applying to study to degree level) or equivalent qualifications. It is essential to study A2 Level English Literature (or English Language and Literature), or equivalent in other qualification systems.

**Written test:** all candidates (including applicants for Joint Schools with Classics or Modern Languages) must take the **English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT)** in school on **30 October 2019**. The ELAT is administered by Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing, and the registration deadline is **15 October 2019**. For further details, see: [http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/tests/elat](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/tests/elat)

**Written work:** Candidates are required to submit one recent example of writing. This should be a marked essay produced in the normal course of your school or college work. It should not be rewritten and it should not be a short timed essay, piece of creative writing, or critical commentary. The essay should be on an English literature topic. The deadline to submit written work is **10 November 2019**.
Interviews: There will be two interviews of approximately 20 minutes. In one interview, candidates will be asked to discuss a poem which will be supplied about half an hour earlier. In the other interview, candidates may be asked about their reading interests, the written work they have submitted, and the authors and texts they have studied at A-level.

Prospective students are warmly invited to attend one of the College’s Open Days at which the English tutors will be very glad to answer any questions. More information can be found on the Jesus College website at: https://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/access-and-outreach-visiting-us

Deferred Entry: Applications for deferred entry to Jesus College are accepted. You must apply for deferred entry at the time of application to Oxford: you cannot change your mind after an offer has been made. Please refer to departmental web sites for subject-specific advice. You should be aware that applicants who are offered places for deferred entry will generally be among the strongest of the cohort for their subject. We would not usually offer more than one deferred place per subject in order not to disadvantage the following year’s candidates. In some cases, an applicant for deferred entry may be offered a place for non-deferred entry instead. If you require any further advice, please contact the Admissions Officer via admissions.officer@jesus.ox.ac.uk

Postgraduate Studies

Jesus has a thriving community of graduate students in English, and we are actively expanding our postgraduate intake. For the last few years, we have been co-funding a number of full scholarships for MSt and DPhil students and we are committed to continuing to do all we can to support our students financially as well as intellectually. We welcome applicants for the following postgraduate courses in English:

- DPhil in English Language and Literature
- M.St. English Language and Literature (650 -1550)
- M.St. English Language and Literature (1550-1700)
- M.St. English Language and Literature (1700-1830)
- M.St. English Language and Literature (1830-1914)
- M.St. English Language and Literature (1900- Present)
- M.St. English and American Studies
- M.Phil. English Studies (Medieval Period)
- M.St. World Literatures in English

Prospective graduate students are welcome to contact the English fellows for an informal discussion about the College.

Why choose Jesus College for graduate study?

The College is unique in its financial provision for postgraduates: it provides generous allowances for research trips and book purchase, and its housing and food are heavily subsidised and among the best-value in Oxford. There are also other funding opportunities available – for example, an English postgraduate was recently awarded a generous Old Members’ bursary. English postgraduates are allocated one of the English tutors as a College advisor, who will serve as a pastoral and intellectual point of contact within Jesus College.

Our graduate students take an active part in the intellectual life of the College and participate in the English Society meetings and poetry readings. These involve dinner for students, tutors and guests, a talk or reading, questions, and then informal drinks. Thus they offer an opportunity to socialise with.
tutors and students, while also engaging with speakers of the highest calibre (including novelists, cultural historians, poets, and literary critics). There are also numerous other social and intellectual events based in College such as joint speaker evenings with members of the Senior Common Room or annual Graduate dinners to which students invite their supervisors. In 2018, one group of Jesus DPhil students is convening a Graduate Seminar on Early Modern England held at Jesus; another DPhil student hosts a Middle English reading group at Jesus; and yet another organised a speaker event with Pulitzer-prize winning contemporary playwright, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, at Jesus.

**Preliminary Reading and Further Information**

Further information about English at Oxford can be found on the Faculty website: [www.english.ox.ac.uk](http://www.english.ox.ac.uk)

Information about Admissions is available at: [http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing/english-language-and-literature](http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing/english-language-and-literature)

**Contact details**

If you have any questions about our entrance requirements, or about applying to study at Jesus College, please contact the Admissions Officer:

Tel: 01865 279721  
Email: admissions.officer@jesus.ox.ac.uk  
Web: [www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/study-here](http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/study-here)

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