Ph.D. Program Highlights

Six faculty members working in Romanticism and Victorian Studies: Tracy Davis, Mary Finn, Christopher Herbert, Christopher Lane, Jules Law, and Viv Soni.

Excellent field coverage in 19th-century literature and culture, with particular strengths in the novel and drama, cultural and intellectual history, gender and sexuality, colonialism and imperialism, psychoanalysis, religion, and Dickens.

Strong links to modernist and 18th-century faculty.

Interdisciplinary study with Northwestern 19th-century specialists in Anthropology (Matthew Johnson), Art History (S. Hollis Clayson, David Van Zanten), French and Italian (Michal Ginsburg), German (Peter Fenves, Samuel Weber), History (Deborah Cohen), Philosophy (Mark Alznauer), and Religious Studies (Christine Helmer), as well as faculty in cognate fields such as American Studies, Critical Theory, Gender Studies, Performance Studies, and Science in Human Culture.

Our students have secured fellowships, seminar enrollment, and funding for research travel to major archives in the U.S. and Britain, including the Huntington and British Libraries.

Colloquia and speaker series, including the Long Nineteenth-Century Colloquium, co-sponsored by Northwestern’s Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, with affiliations to Art History, English, History, and Theatre.

Strong job placement record in tenure-track positions.

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Faculty

Tracy C. Davis, Professor of Theatre and English and Director of Northwestern’s Excellence in Mentoring Initiative, specializes in 19th-century British theatre history, gender and theatre, and performance theory. She regularly teaches courses on 19th-century drama, theatre history, and museum studies, and her books and edited collections include Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture (1991); George Bernard Shaw and the Socialist Theatre (1994); Playwriting and Nineteenth-Century British Women (1999); The Economics of the British Stage, 1800-1914 (2000); Theatricality (2003); The Performing Century: Nineteenth-Century Theatres History (2007); and The Broadway Anthology of Nineteenth-Century British Performance (2012). She is currently researching mid 19th-century political activism, and co-editing Uncle Tom’s Cabins: the Transnational History of America’s Most Mutable Book, and is General Editor of the 6-volume The Cultural History of Theatre.

Mary Finn, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, teaches courses in Romantic and Victorian literature, especially poetry. She is the author of Writing the Incommensurable: Kierkegaard, Rossetti and Hopkins (1993), and articles on Percy Shelley and Robert Browning.


Vivasvan Soni, Associate Professor of English, studies romanticism and 18th-century British literature. His book, Mourning Happiness: Narrative and the Politics of Modernity, won the MLA prize for a first book in 2010. He has published essays on Wordsworth and Jane Austen, and is currently working on a project on judgment and aesthetics in the long eighteenth century. He teaches classes on aesthetic theory, the rise of the novel, theories of tragedy, utopian theory and the politics of romanticism.

British Studies

With six faculty specialists in Victorian and Romantic literature, Northwestern’s English department offers superb graduate training in the full range of genres, topics, methods, and approaches in 19th-century British literature and culture. In addition to a highly visible and productive faculty, the program features a wide range of interdisciplinary opportunities in a variety of related departments and programs at Northwestern, including a graduate cluster in British Studies, a strong record of job placement, a lively colloquium on the Long Nineteenth Century, and more.

Job Placement

Northwestern’s English Ph.D. program enjoys a strong record of tenure-track placement. Since 2010, Northwestern English Ph.D.s have moved on to a total of fourteen tenure-track and post-doctoral positions at a variety of colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada, including institutions such as Boston University, Columbia, Cornell, Ohio State, Trinity College, University of British Columbia, University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, the University of Texas at Austin, and Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Victorian specialists have recently secured positions at a range of institutions, including the University of British Columbia, University of Minnesota, and Wheaton College in Massachusetts, as well as earned tenure at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and turned down tenure-track appointments to work at the Modern Language Association and at Dartmouth College Library.

Publications

During their time in our program, Northwestern students have placed articles on Victorian and Romantic topics in such major journals as ELH, Novel, Mosaic, Victorian Literature and Culture, English Literature in Transition, ELN, Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film, and Intertexts.