

Undergraduate Scholars Programme (USP) Projects, 2024

Course Convener: Professor Mairéad Pratschke, SALC Chair in Digital Education

1. *Translating literary texts for publication* with Dr Monica Boria
2. *Tracking 19th century radical activism* with Dr J Michelle Coghlan
3. *Language Trail at Manchester Museum* with Drs Simone De Cia & Ryan Walter Smith
4. *Experiential learning in the Global South* with Dr Jessica Hawkins
5. *Premium love – how much are dating and hook-up apps worth?* with Dr Łukasz Szulc
6. *The value of culture* with Dr. Leandro Valiati
7. *Corpus-based research on spoken language* with Dr. Richard Zimmerman

Please read the abstracts below carefully and indicate which project you are applying for in your application form. Applications are due by Friday 24th November 2023. Good luck!

Project 1: *Translating Literary Texts for Publication*

What is a translator's pitch? What is a translation slam? What does copyright mean for translators? What does reviewing a translation for publication involve? And what about questions of 'domesticating' or 'foreignising'? How do translators (and editors) approach controversial/sensitive language? What can AI do for literary translation? In this project, students will be invited to reflect on the practice of literary translation both from a theoretical and a practical perspective.

From a theoretical perspective, literary translation has increasingly been confronted with pressing power asymmetries in the publishing world. Some of these are of a linguistic nature (national vs regional; global v local), others depend on cultural, historical or economic factors (dominant vs marginal; Eastern/Western). Insights furnished by scholars in the fields of gender studies, and post and de-colonial studies, for example, will be touched upon to understand the nature of hegemonic discourses (and practices) on the translation and publication of literature in a selection of countries.

You will be asked to comment on these issues when choosing a translation case study in their culture and language combination (for ex. contemporary Spanish poetry into English; English-language children's classics into German, etc.), and to produce a scholarly/professional piece (pitch; translation & commentary; retranslation; etc.) for publication. Each case study will be a collaborative effort involving at least two students.

The aim of the project is to provide students with an opportunity to develop professional competences in the field of translation and publishing. Students will be asked to collaborate in various capacities. In addition to translation, other roles which are increasingly part of a translator's skill set is that of peer-reviewer, copyeditor, literary scout. For the purposes of this project, some students may prefer to take part as co-editors rather than translators, or copyeditors or cover designers. The end product of the project is the publication of a Special Issue of the journal of literary translation practice [*Il Pietrisco*](#), where the case studies will be published and all these roles are essential.

After participating in this collaborative project, you will:

- expand your digital research skills through the use of specialised databases, translation and editing tools;
- enhance your team-working and communication skills in an academic/professional context;
- have a published issue to include in your CV as evidence of your hard work.

In addition to working with Dr Boria and the co-editor of the journal, Prof Ángeles Carreres, the team will involve other staff from Modern Languages and Cultures, including postgraduates from the Centre for Translation and Intercultural Studies.

Project 2: *Tracking 19th-Century Women's Radical Activism through Digital Archives*

In the final decades of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth century, American women radicals such as Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre, and Ninfa Baronia made a series of previously unthinkable demands, calling for access to birth control and bodily autonomy as well as the full-scale abolition of marriage, prisons and—most radically of all—the state. Committed internationalists, they refused to celebrate American national holidays, instead gathering to mark the dates of past revolutions and global worker struggles, and working to build cross-national radical networks through their reading, their letter writing, and their lecture tours. Their work was often compared to Louise Michel, the fiery French anarchist orator and activist in exile in London whose speeches, arrests, and lecture tours got surprisingly extensive coverage in a variety of US newspapers. But if these women terrified mainstream nineteenth-century American readers, and have often been overlooked in histories of US anarchist organizing, their speeches and their ideas nevertheless garnered an astonishing amount of coverage in contemporary US newspapers. And recent large-scale newspaper digitization projects of nineteenth-century US newspapers—such as the Library of Congress's *Chronicling America* digital archive—have made first-hand primary sources on their activism newly accessible (and searchable) for scholars.

By taking part in this project, you will:

- learn how to conduct research in digital archives and navigate digitized primary sources;
- work together to track, collate, and annotate newspaper coverage of radical speeches and lecture tours by American women anarchists covered in US newspapers between 1890 and 1905;
- consider how media bias informs the details that primary sources do or don't give us about nineteenth-century US women radical activists;
- begin to synthesize how archival sources shed light on archival silences, shaping the stories that we tell (or fail to tell) about radical activism past and present;
- collaborate on the production of a series of short (2-3 minute) Instagram or Tiktok videos on 19th-century women activists and media coverage of their speeches;
- discuss the real-world application of these research skills with a panel of professionals working in the arts, law, and museum/curatorial practice.

The outcomes of this project will be two-fold: The newspaper articles you uncover will feed into the case studies Dr Coghlan writes about in their book-in-progress, *Louise Michel in America*, which is under contract with Rutgers University Press. This research assistance will be acknowledged in the book, and you'll be very cordially invited to my book's launch when it comes out. Your project findings regarding media coverage, media bias and gendered histories, as well as some examples of your finds, will additionally be presented as a standalone series of collaboratively produced Instagram or Tiktok videos aimed at making your research findings on C19 women's activism accessible to a broad public audience. These videos will be hosted on EACW and SALC social media channels.

Project 3: *The Language Trail at Manchester Museum*

In this project, you will work with members of the Department of Linguistics and English Language associated with the Linguistic Diversity Collective (LDC) and with the Manchester Museum to update and expand the existing LDC Language Trail for children and their parents. LDC members ran the Language Trail twice at the Manchester Museum last academic year: during the celebrations for the reopening of the museum and as part of the UoM Community Festival. With more than 400 children taking part in the activity, the Language Trail was so successful that Manchester Museum asked the LDC to update and expand the existing trail. The aim is to make the Language Trail a permanent LDC activity in the museum, which visitors can access by simply scanning a QR code. By undertaking this project, you will have the opportunity to be creative, enhance your skills as individual and group investigators, learn how to disseminate academic research, and reflect on the importance of language in human history and in the natural world.

The project involves several stages, each of which builds on the previous one:

1. First, you will have to identify a set of potential objects (including paintings, artefacts, tools, stones, etc.) in the museum permanent display, which could make a visitor reflect upon language as a natural and/or socio-cultural phenomenon.
2. Second, you will have to explain why and how these objects are linked to human language (or animal communication in contrast to human language), clearly discussing the relevant linguistic scholarship. Each student individually will be assigned a small set of objects to work on.
3. Third, as a group, you will have to create a logical and coherent trail that links all these objects. At this point, based on the same objects, you will be asked to create two versions of the trail: a playful version for children, and a more educational/didactic version for their parents or for young adults.
4. Finally, you will be asked to produce and digitise the trail sheet so that individual visitors of the museum can access and complete the Language Trail without the need for an LDC member to facilitate the activity.

As part of the output, your contribution will be acknowledged as co-creator of the LDC Language Trail at Manchester Museum.

Project 4: *Guidance for student experiential learning in the Global South*

Taking students on field trips to places in the Global South presents educators with a difficult dilemma. On one hand, students need to understand the implications of theory on practice and this learning can shape their actions in their future careers. On the other hand, there is a fine line between development tourism and ethically responsibly field trips. The underlying aim should be to *do no harm*, yet if run incorrectly, these visits can become extractive exercises resonating with neo-colonialism. However, the field trip remains an integral part of some humanities degree programmes. The immersive experience of experiential learning provides students with the in-depth knowledge on a particular case study and is oftentimes the pivotal moment in their degree programme forming new friendships and establishing the direction for their futures.

In this project, you will interrogate the ethics of student experiential learning to the Global South at the higher education level with a focus on field trips. Within a broad field of humanitarianism, development, international relations, history, and human geography, students are tasked with uncovering the types of research visits that exist, their purpose, pedagogy and any corresponding research through an interdisciplinary approach.

In collaboration with the project lead, you will develop research questions to scope your project, which could include but are not limited to:

- What are the ethical implications of taking students on fieldtrips?
- How do students benefit from fieldtrips to the Global South?
- What are the best practices for engaging with local actors?
- What recommendations exist for doing no harm on student field trips?

Your research will start with a review of the literature on field trips to the Global South, broadly defined. You will then compile a database of relevant fieldtrips currently offered by degree programmes at universities in the UK. The project output will be to develop a practical guide for higher education students on best practice for “do no harm” when partaking in international experiential learning.

By taking part in the research project, you will become versed in the key theories which underpin ethical travel to the Global South and will become familiar with research skills of scoping and completing a review of the literature. You will develop analytical skills to evaluate the research and formulate recommendations of best practice based on this research. Finally, you will develop knowledge translation skills to revise these practices into a student guide. You will gain an understanding of different interpretations of ethics. In sum, you will develop employability skills including research design; digital research skills; assessing risk and ethics; creative knowledge translation skills; teamwork and self-directed work; knowledge of the Global South.

The project is ideally suited to those who have undertaken voluntary or paid work in the Global South or intend to work in these areas in the future.

Project 5: *Premium Love – how much are dating and hook-up apps worth?*

Finding romantic or sexual partners has long been mediated by diverse technologies, from love letters to personal ads to dating and hook-up apps. The technologies influence the practices of self-presentation, intimacy and community, online and offline, and they delimit what is required, possible and expected when engaging in dating. Many dating and hook-up apps adopt the so-called freemium business model: they offer basic services for free but charge a premium for access to advanced features that promise a more effective and convenient dating experience. In this project, you will analyse what the app designers imagine people are willing to pay for.

By participating in this project, you will engage with the literature on commodification of love and sex. The starting point will be Eva Illouz's (*Cold Intimacies*, 2007) thesis about the rise of emotional capitalism. Illouz shows how both popular psychologising (discourses of self-work, therapy and emotions) and the language of the market economy have become naturalised in even the most intimate parts of our lives. She argues that internet dating services have established dating as a rationally manageable process; a matter of personal choice and marketing oneself in the context of an abundance of competing, interchangeable dating candidates. You will build on the idea of emotional capitalism to investigate diverse market positioning, target groups and functionalities of several dating and hook-up apps. You will employ a walkthrough method (Light et al., 2016), which offers a critical analysis of apps and their political economy. It provides a step-by-step guide to investigating the role of apps in sociocultural and economic transformations across many domains, including relationships, intimacy and dating.

You will move from the theoretical to the practical by first working in small groups to analyse a particular app, then compare your findings with others. Your project output will be to produce a digital asset that presents your project results. The only restriction is that it be in an attractive format that is appropriate for the topic. This is your prompt to be creative!

Apart from enhancing your theoretical knowledge about capitalism and everyday life and your methodological skills in the realm of political economy, this project will help you improve several transferable skills, including communication skills, digital skills, critical thinking, time management, organisation, initiative and teamwork.

Project 6: *The Value of Culture*

How do we measure the value of culture? Poets and philosophers can tell us in words but are there other ways to measure the value of the arts? What happens if we try to express that value as a measurement of social/individual economic progress beyond the traditional quantitative approach made by economists (i.e., impact on GDP, employment, etc.)? Are there different measures we can use to express the value of the arts for society and the economy?

In this project, you will be invited to reflect on innovative ways to identify and describe the multidimensional contribution of arts and cultural practices to economic development. For our purposes, we will treat the study of the economy as a social science and focus on

elements such as gender, race and social backgrounds equality, distribution, and pro-society policies that contribute to the improvement of quality of life. Similarly, development in this context refers to the sustainable improvement of individual and social wellbeing as a result of contributions in and by the arts sector and by cultural practices.

Your research activity on this project will begin with a focused, non-exhaustive literature review on multidimensional human and economic development, well-being, substantive value for economics, political economy of culture and social progress. Next, using the toolkit of multidimensional indicators produced by Dr Leandro Valiati in partnership with 30 Arts Organisations in Brazil and the UK (www.culturalvalue.org), you will create a small set of indicators that express the dimensions found in your literature review. The indicators - stemming from secondary data, structured interviews, or surveys – will function as examples of the impact of the arts and culture in socio-economic development from a multidimensional perspective. Finally, you will test these indicators, using a cultural activity performed by one of the Arts Spaces at The University of Manchester as a case study.

By taking part in this project, you will become acquainted with the basic notions of heterodox economic development and wellbeing theory; become familiar with research instruments and their applications; and develop basic data analysis skills.

Note: this project is for SALC students and *no advanced knowledge of mathematics* is required to take part.

Project 7: Conducting Corpus-based Research on Spoken Language

Studying the language of written texts is relatively straight-forward: Collect lots of texts, look for the linguistic expressions you are interested in, and investigate your results. The study of spoken language, however, is a whole different animal. First, speech does not come in objective categories, but must be transcribed. This is not a trivial task but requires some theory and great effort. Secondly, there are many aspects of language that are exclusive to the spoken mode, such as errors or fillers (think of all the uhms and you knows). Such difficulties must be treated carefully within an explicit framework. Thirdly, the processes in uttering spoken words are multi-faceted and complex, involving factors such as attention to speech (you speak differently when you read or talk to others), speech participants, dialect, and much more. In this Undergraduate Scholars Research Programme, students learn how to deal with all of these difficulties and how to analyse spoken language professionally and competently.

By taking part in this project, you will become familiar with:

- the relevance of theoretical transcription guidelines, involving issues such as time stamps, tokenization, disfluencies and spelling conventions;
- the state-of-the-art “tier transcription system”, with different levels for speakers, extra-linguistic noises, comments, etc., associated software, as well as text and audio formats;
- ways to find speech samples from public sources;
- the importance of proper documentation of a speaker, including dialect, age, social, individual and situational variables;

- basic analysis techniques in the study of linguistic features that are predominantly found in speech (e.g., quotative be like, I was like, “Yeah, definitely.”, the is is construction, But the reality is is nobody knows the answer, or the use of emphatic literally, I literally couldn’t open my mouth.).

The outcome of this project is a professional, publicly accessible corpus of high-quality transcripts. Each student contributes two transcriptions of 5 minutes and 25 minutes of speech to this corpus and then used to analyse one feature of spoken language of their choice. [Visit the website of spoken corpus.](#)