

Students as Researchers 2024-25 Vacancy

This is a fantastic opportunity for current YSJ students to work on a research project with a member of academic staff within an area of impactful research as part of the 'Students as Researchers' initiative. Up to 45 hours work is available. The rate of pay is £11.35 per hour + £1.37 holiday pay per hour.

Students will be set up on a casual support staff contract and claim hours on a timesheet submitted to the supervisor at the end of the project. Approved timesheets to be sent across to Research Office for payment.

How to apply:

Students must complete the Students as Researchers application form and send to the Research Office (ResearchOffice@yorksj.ac.uk) by the deadline stated on the application form. Please note that candidates will be shortlisted and may interviewed by a member of the project team.

Any questions or further information, please contact Emma Sunley, Research Officer (Events and Projects): Email: e.sunley@yorksj.ac.uk

Project code	RES177
Project name	Getting Smart: Mapping the Life and Legacies of Christopher Smart (1722-1771)
Timeline	January 2025 – July 2025
Supervisor leading project	Adam J Smith
Co-supervisors	Alex Wylie
Email Address(es)	a.smith3@yorksj.ac.uk a.wylie@yorksj.ac.uk
Subject area	English Literature Liberal Arts Creative Writing York Research Unit for the Study of Satire (YRUSOS)
School	Humanities
Summary of research project	
<p>The career of Christopher Smart (1722-1771) was a diverse as it was prolific. He was a poet, pedagogue, religious writer, children's writer, essayist and magazine editor, who also cultivated a second persona—as the woman “Mary Midnight”—and for a time was committed to a eighteenth-century mental asylum. As a result, although his life and work have attracted critical attention, he tends to be treated with reference to one of the above elements, but has yet to be the subject of a sustained exploration which considers all of these elements together.</p>	

Smart's work aligns with several existing interests in the York Research Unit for the Study of Satire, notably: Smith's interest in satirical periodicals and Wylie's interest in satirical poetry and religious writing.

We intend this project to provide a launchpad for a wide-range of research and engagement activities exploring the life, legacies and striking contemporary significance of Christopher Smart.

Student Tasks

Our student researcher will be required to:

- Use the British Library ESTC (English Short Title Catalogue) to write a comprehensive list of Smart's extant works
- Identify where these works are held
- Produced a detailed literature review of existing scholarship on Smart
- Where possible, visit, catalogue and transcribe locally held works of Smart (for example, York Minster Archive, Brotherton Library)
- Identify scholars and organizations who may be interested in attending a Christopher Smart symposium and who could contribute to future essay collections

What student skill level is the project suited to?

Undergraduate

Is the project open to students on all programmes?

Yes, but it might be most appropriate for students studying English Literature or History.

Proposed Outcomes

Smith and Wylie have already spoken to publishers about the possibility of producing the first, modern, collected works of Christopher Smart and, in their discussions with Boydell & Brewer, have come to understand that there is also interest in published a collected edition of critical essays on the various aspects of the Smart canon (focussing, for instance, on queer readings and his representation of mental health, as well as his interests in satire, pedagogy and religion). There is similar interest from the *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* in coordinating a special issue on Smart, and from the *Literature Compass* journal in commissioning a state-of-the-field essay on recent Smart scholarship.

Wylie and Smith aspire to:

- Run a symposium on Smart with a view to developing a special issue for the *Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies* (approx. 6 essays) and a book proposal for Boydell and Brewer
- Write a state-of-the-field essay on Smart scholarship for the *Literature Compass* journal
- Smith to develop an article on Smart's Mary Midnight persona for a forthcoming special issue of *The Shandean* journal, edited by Mary Newbould (Kazimierz Wielki University, Poland) about periodical essay as a space for formal experimentation in the late eighteenth century
- Wylie to develop new poetry in response to the work of Christopher Smart

- Smart will also be the subject of a future iteration of the York St John Critical Editions WREL project, which sees placement students from the English Literature degree and the publishing MA.
- Run an event at the York Festival of Ideas about Smart, capitalising on the existing audience for YRUSOS events (all public events held by the group in 2023-2024 were fully booked).
- Develop a proposal to Broadview to produce a modern, complete edition of Smart's works