

MANCHESTER  
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The University  
of Manchester

# Centre for New Writing

# Welcome

## *The University of Manchester's Centre for New Writing is a brand new venture.*

Our ambition is to make the Centre a place where the best, most interesting contemporary literature is both written and written about - one of our founding principles being that good reading and good writing naturally go together.

We aim to attract the most interesting writers and teachers and the most interested and talented students to The University of Manchester. We also aim to reach out beyond the University to engage with a broader audience, and become an important part of the cultural scene in the north-west and beyond.

We feel we have already made a pretty good beginning.

In February 2007 we announced, with great pride and to much fanfare, the arrival of world-renowned novelist Martin Amis as Manchester's first Professor of Creative Writing. We followed this up in the July with the appointments of award-winning Irish poet Vona Groarke and novelist M.J. Hyland, whose second novel *Carry Me Down* won the Encore and Hawthornden Prizes and was short-listed for the Booker.

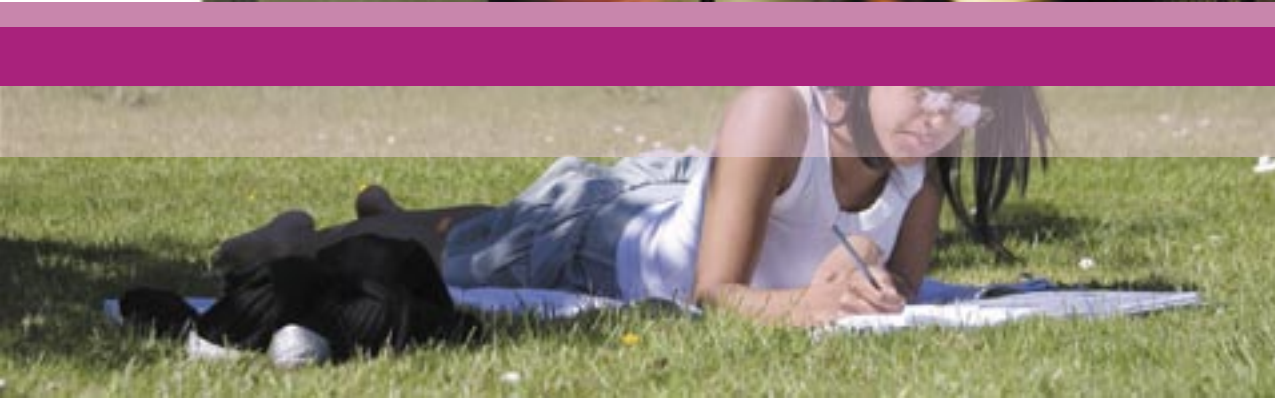
We've also been fortunate enough to attract two excellent writers in residence: Neil Rollinson, a splendidly entertaining and accessible poet, and Joe Stretch, a Manchester graduate whose first novel *Friction* we predict will make a big splash.

On top of that we've expanded and refined 'Literature Live', our year-long reading series open to the public and featuring a range of excellent poets and novelists, and organised a series of high-profile public debates featuring Martin Amis and a host of other well-known writers and commentators. And, if that wasn't enough, 2008 sees the launch of a new on-line literary magazine, *The Manchester Review*.

So we've been busy, and the next year or so promises to be even busier and more exciting. More details about the Centre's many activities and plans are laid out in this brochure; please take a look, and if you have any comments or suggestions do get in touch.



**John McAuliffe and Ian McGuire**  
Co-directors, Centre for New Writing



# Postgraduate COURSES

*Creative writing courses have been offered at The University of Manchester for over a decade, and the number of students and staff working in this area has expanded greatly over this period. We currently offer courses in poetry and fiction writing at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.*

## MA in Creative Writing

The MA in Creative Writing has recently expanded to become one of the UK's leading creative writing programmes. Available as a one-year, full-time programme or part-time over two years, it is taught by six permanent tutors and open to just 36 students – giving it one of the highest staff-student ratios in the UK.

The MA is taught by a dedicated staff of publishing writers, including Martin Amis, M.J. Hyland, Vona Groarke, Geoff Ryman, Ian McGuire and John McAuliffe. It consists of strands in fiction (novel-writing and the short story) and poetry, both of which are focused on practice.

Each strand is centred on weekly workshops, where the work-in-progress of two or three students is discussed. Students also take critical courses which focus on reading, understanding and analysing the work of other writers, and meet tutors for one-to-one conferences at least four times during the year.

Martin Amis offers two master classes, one on The Novella and one on Vladimir Nabokov and Saul Bellow, which are available to all postgraduate students based in the Centre.

During the second semester the Centre hosts visits from literary agents and editors, who can advise students on how to market and sell their work, and throughout the year we hold additional workshops and Q & A sessions for students with the writers appearing at our Literature Live events.

For information about entry requirements and how to apply please visit [www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/newwriting/postgraduatestudy/taught/course/](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/newwriting/postgraduatestudy/taught/course/)

## MA in Contemporary Literature

The MA in Contemporary Literature admits students for the first time in September 2008. This programme focuses on literature written in English over the last twenty five years, and is taught by seminar and dissertation.

The course units will change from year to year, but they will be taught by staff based in the Centre as well as colleagues in English and American Studies.

Students on the Contemporary Literature MA are able to attend the Martin Amis master classes and all Literature Live events.

As the MA is located in the Centre for New Writing, students will have a unique opportunity to learn from and interact with the very writers they are studying. Our aim is to create synergies rather than barriers between creative and critical writing.

## PhD in Creative Writing

Our recently-launched PhD in Creative Writing is the next logical step for students who have been successful at MA level, and who wish to work on a full-scale project under the careful supervision of experienced writers. The final dissertation consists of an extended, original piece of creative work (a novel, short story collection or volume of poetry) and a shorter piece of literary or cultural criticism.

Teaching staff include Martin Amis, Patricia Duncker, M.J. Hyland, Vona Groarke, Geoff Ryman, Ian McGuire and John McAuliffe.

To read frequently asked questions about our PhD, please visit [www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/newwriting/postgraduatestudy/research/faq/](http://www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/newwriting/postgraduatestudy/research/faq/). For further details of the academic content contact Ian McGuire on [ian.r.mcguire@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ian.r.mcguire@manchester.ac.uk).

For information about entry requirements and how to apply please visit [www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/newwriting/postgraduatestudy/research/course/](http://www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/newwriting/postgraduatestudy/research/course/)

## Alumni

Our alumni include the published authors Sophie Hannah, Joe Pemberton, Anna Davis, Jonathan Trigell, Ian Pople, Susan Barker, Tod Wodicka and Clare Wigfall.

## Funding

The Centre for New Writing typically offers three student bursaries each academic year; two to applicants for the MA in Creative Writing (one to the most promising fiction writer and the other to the most promising poet) and one to the most promising applicant (in either poetry or fiction) for the PhD in Creative Writing. Each bursary is currently worth £3,100.

For information on other sources of funding please visit [www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/postgraduatestudy/funding](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/postgraduatestudy/funding)

# Creative Writing Summer School

## *Summer 2008 sees the launch of the Centre's four-week Creative Writing Summer School.*

The summer school will bring up to 45 international undergraduates to Manchester each year. They will enjoy an intensive programme of seminars and workshops, interspersed with field trips to nearby literary sites in Stratford, Dublin, the Lake District and the Yorkshire Moors.

A unique gala event featuring our Professor of Creative Writing, renowned author and critic Martin Amis, and a host of other distinguished writers is also included; allowing students to learn from and interact with leading professionals in person.

There will also be regular social activities and a chance to explore the nightlife and music scene of Manchester, as well as a programme of readings and discussion sessions with well-known novelists and poets.

The summer school offers two credit-bearing courses:

### *Literature and Place*

This course looks at the work of Wordsworth, Emily Brontë, W.B. Yeats, James Joyce and Anthony Burgess, and examines the centrality of marginal and marginalised places and language to their work.

For each of these writers it was impossible to know who they were without understanding where they were. We will consider how their poems, short stories and novels devise new ways of constructing and thinking about the relationship between human identity and its physical environment.

### *Creative Writing: Fiction and Poetry*

The course will look at both reading and writing creatively, studying the work of established writers - some of whom will visit the course - as well as reading one another's work. We will look at how to start and develop our writing and also revision, and students will be expected to submit revised work towards the end of the course.

The course begins with workshop exercise/discussion seminars, covering a wide range of writing skills including description, character, monologue, dialogue, narrative shape, about form, metaphor and rhythm. Students will produce a typed piece of fiction (c.2,000 words) or poem and a critical/reflective commentary on a rota basis, which will be marked up by the other students and discussed in detail in class.

The summer school is open to undergraduates entering their Junior or Senior year, who have a GPA of 3.0 and above and an interest in literature and/or creative writing.

A flat fee of around £1850 (TBC) covers tuition for both courses, accommodation, meals and field trips (including entrance to museums and the RSC theatre in Stratford). The cost of travel to and from Manchester is not included in the summer school price.

*“This summer school offers a rare opportunity to learn from some of Britain and Ireland's most acclaimed writers, and visit the countries' top literary locations. It promises to be a lively, exciting and rewarding experience for anyone interested in literature and creative writing.”*

*- Professor Nancy West, Associate Chair, Department of English, University of Missouri-Columbia*

For more information please visit [www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/newwriting/events/summerschool](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/newwriting/events/summerschool)

# Our staff

**The Centre for New Writing's staff of distinguished writers includes leading British author Martin Amis, novelists M.J. Hyland, Geoff Ryman and Ian McGuire, literary and cultural critic Kaye Mitchell and Irish poets Vona Groarke and John McAuliffe.**

## Martin Amis



Leading novelist Martin Amis is the Centre's Professor of Creative Writing, and will run postgraduate seminars and participate in high-profile public events and our annual summer school. Regarded by many as one of the most influential and innovative voices in contemporary fiction, he is often grouped with the generation of British-based novelists emerging during the 1980s including Salman Rushdie, Ian McEwan and Julian Barnes.

He has written 11 novels and is best known for the loose trilogy *Money* (1984), *London Fields* (1989) and *The Information* (1995). His most recent short novel was *The House of Meetings* in 2006, while *The Pregnant Widow* is published in 2008. He is also the author of three collections of essays and two of short stories, and is a regular contributor to publications including the *New York Times*, the *Sunday Times*, *The Observer* and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

## M.J. Hyland



Prize-winning novelist M.J. Hyland joined the Centre as a Lecturer in Creative Writing in June 2007, having recently been awarded the Hawthornden Prize and the Encore prize for best second novel for *Carry Me Down* (2006).

The book was also short-listed for the Man Booker Prize and the Commonwealth Writers Prize. Hyland's work has been acclaimed by Ali Smith, Hilary Mantel and J.M. Coetzee, who said, "This is fiction writing of the highest order."

She is considered one of the leading members of the new generation of British and Irish novelists, and her experience as a writer coupled with her enthusiasm as a teacher is a valuable combination for the Centre's students.

## Vona Groarke



Poet Vona Groarke has worked in the UK, the United States and Norway, as well as her native Ireland, and she and her husband, poet Conor O'Callaghan, have co-held the Heimbald Chair in Irish Studies at Villanova University.

Her poetry collections include *Sha le* (1994), *Other People's Houses* (1999) and *Flight* (2002), which was short-listed for the UK's Forward Prize in 2002 and won the Michael Hartnett Award in 2003. Her other poetry prizes include the Hennessy Award, the Brendan Behan Memorial Prize, Strokestown International Poetry Award and the Stand Magazine Poetry Prize, and she was runner-up in the Times Literary Supplement Poetry Competition in 2003.

Her newest volume, *Juniper Street*, was published in 2006.

## Geoff Ryman

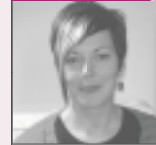


Geoff Ryman's science fiction includes *Air* (2005), which won a John W. Campbell Memorial Award, the Arthur C. Clarke Award, the James W. Tiptree Memorial Award, the Sunburst Award and the British Science Fiction Association Award, and his interactive web novel *253*, which won the Philip K. Dick Memorial Award for best novel not published in hardback. The published Print Remix of the same novel (1998) is his most popular book.

Much of his work is based on travels to Cambodia. *The Unconquered Country* (1986) won the World Fantasy Award and British Science Fiction Association Award, while *The King's Last Song* (2006) was set both in the Angkor Wat era and the time after Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. His novelette *Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter (Fantasy)* (2006) has been nominated for the Hugo Award and the World Fantasy Award.

Geoff's mainstream novel *Was* (1992) views the American West through the history of *The Wizard of Oz*, and he is currently at work on a new historical novel set in the US before the Civil War.

## Kaye Mitchell

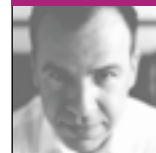


Kaye Mitchell's research is mainly in contemporary literature and culture, with a particular focus on gender and sexuality, critical theory and narratology. Her PhD at Birkbeck examined diverse theories of intention, literary meaning and authorship, and a book based on her thesis is published by Continuum in 2008.

She taught for several years at the University of Westminster before joining The University of Manchester in 2007, and her most recent research includes a book on the fiction of A.L. Kennedy (Palgrave 2007) and chapters and articles on contemporary writers including B.S. Johnson and Alan Hollinghurst.

Her next major project will investigate the posited relationship between sexuality and signification in a range of contemporary writings, both fictional and theoretical, looking particularly at accounts and representations of the perverse, the masochistic and the queer.

## Ian McGuire



Ian McGuire has been at The University of Manchester since 1996, and now co-directs the Centre for New Writing. He received his PhD from the University of Virginia where he specialised in nineteenth century American Literature, and has written and published on Whitman, Melville, Howells and the American realist tradition.

His contemporary campus novel *Incredible Bodies* (2006) was described as "hugely entertaining" and "a 21st century Lucky Jim" by *The Times*, while *The New Statesman* saw it as evidence that the genre had "plenty of misanthropic life in it".

Dr McGuire has also published short stories in *The Paris Review*, *The Chicago Review* and elsewhere, and is currently working on a new novel which is "definitely not set in a university."

## John McAuliffe



Centre Co-director John McAuliffe's first collection of poems, *A Better Life* (2002), was short-listed for the Forward First Collection Award, and he has published poems in the *TLS* and a range of poetry reviews. His second collection *Next Door* was published in 2007, and he also writes essays and reviews of contemporary poetry for journals and newspapers in Ireland and the UK.

He has published critical essays on post-colonial literatures, Victorian travel writing and twentieth century Irish poetry and fiction, and taught at a number of Irish universities, the UK's Open University and a host of creative writing workshops and courses.

## Research Fellows

### Joe Stretch



Joe Stretch is a Manchester-based, first-time novelist, whose book *Friction* is published in March 2008 by Vintage. He is currently editing his second novel, *Love Song*, and working on his third, *New World/A Season in Wow Bang*.

Joe is also lead vocalist with 'electro death pop band' Performance.

### Neil Rollinson



Neil Rollinson is a poet whose collections *A Spillage of Mercury* (1996) and *Spanish Fly* (2001) were published by Jonathan Cape, and *Gridlines* by Two Rivers Press. *A Spillage of Mercury* was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation, and in 1997 he won first prize in the National Poetry Competition.

His new book, *Demolition*, is published by Cape.

# Events

The Centre for New Writing's unique Literature Live events feature workshops, readings and interviews with leading writers, and are open to students, staff and members of the public. They have already attracted such names as John Banville, Will Self, Hilary Mantel and Sarah Waters, who are joined in 2007/8 by Rose Tremain, Galway Kinnell, Paul Muldoon and our own Professor of Creative Writing Martin Amis among others.

Literature Live was launched by Louis de Bernieres, author of *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and *Birds Without Wings*, in October 2005. At each event a well-known author is invited to speak about and give selected readings from their work, before taking questions from the audience.

The events are linked to our postgraduate Creative Writing programmes, and offer a unique opportunity to learn from established writers first-hand. Blackwell University Bookshop runs a bookstall at each event, and audience members are invited to a free drinks reception after the readings.

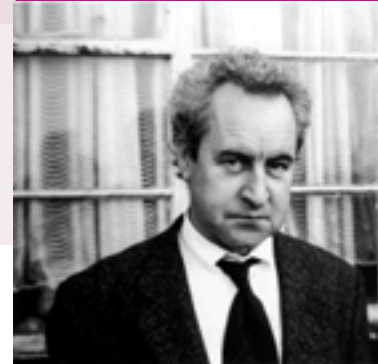
“The MA in Creative Writing and introduction of a PhD in Creative Writing mean that we have a larger cohort of creative writers on campus than ever before, so we decided to create a series of events that would both showcase the new courses and provide a chance for our students to regularly meet and question established writers.

“We hope that it will continue to encourage bright, promising writers to enter our courses in poetry and fiction, as well as bringing attention to the ways writers address subjects relevant to the way we live today.”

- John McAullife, Co-director of the Centre for New Writing

The appointment of novelist Martin Amis as a Professor of Creative Writing also marks the launch of a series of high-profile public events in Manchester, including debates with other leading writers on the state of literature in the 21st century and its role in relation to religion and terrorism.

For more information on all our events please visit [www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/newwriting/events/](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/newwriting/events/).



John Banville



Geoff Dyer



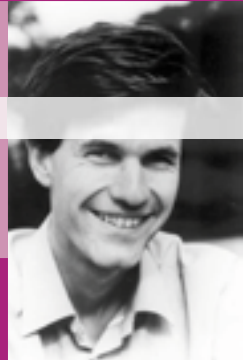
Will Self



Michèle Roberts



Paul Muldoon



Robert Crawford



Bill Manhire



Galway Kinnell



Rose Tremain

Peter Samson



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