**Information brochure for master's level students**

**English Section, Department of Language and Literature, NTNU**

**Autumn 2019/Spring 2020**

**Information for master's level students**

This brochure is addressed to students who are planning to write a master's thesis in the English subject area, that is, students taking:

* the Master's program in English (*Master i engelsk*);
* the five-year teacher training program in languages (*Lektorprogrammet i språkfag*) with English as their main subject (*fag 1*).

Students on the MPhil program in English Linguistics and Language Acquisition will receive a separate information booklet from the program coordinator.

You will spend the second year of your program[[1]](#footnote-1) undertaking your master's thesis research project and writing the thesis, under the supervision of one or more staff members from the English section of the Department of Language and Literature.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Before you can begin writing your thesis, you must first decide on a subject area and a topic. It is *your* task, during the year before you write the thesis, to work out what you want to write your thesis on and then to draw up a project proposal which outlines the topic which you will work on and/or research questions which you will pursue. The proposal should be 3-5 pages long, and include a preliminary literature list / bibliography.

Part of the process of deciding on a topic involves finding out whether what you hope to work on is feasible. As well as being academically acceptable and realistic, and meeting requirements set out in the relevant course description (see below), the topic must fall within an area in which the section is able to provide supervision. Note that each member of the staff has his or her own specialized area of research and interest; the further outside these areas you go, the more independently you will have to work, and the less effective supervision will be. See the individual profiles at the end of this document for more ideas about possible topics and areas of supervision.

It is important to note that this is *your* thesis. It is important that the topic you choose is one which interests you and which works toward your educational goals. If, for instance, you plan to continue beyond the master’s level, you will want to be sure that your master’s thesis helps provide a foundation for doctoral studies. While the section cannot offer supervision in every topic, it will do what it can to provide both guidance and assistance in your selection. If, however, you are passionate about a particular subject, you should not hesitate to talk to more than one member of the staff in order to gain ideas. Remember, this is *your* thesis, and a document which will require a significant amount of your time and energy in the coming year.

The purpose of this brochure is to assist you in the initial part of this process by providing information about available supervision in the English section, specifically information about supervisors and their areas of specialization or topic areas in which they are willing and able to supervise master's theses.

Students enrolled in the 5-year MA programme in Teacher Education who wish to write a thesis with a didactic focus may apply for a second supervisor in didactics from ILU (*Institutt for lærerutdanning*); applications will be granted in those cases where it is academically desirable and when resources permit.

Halfway through the autumn semester before you begin the thesis, you are required to submit a supervision agreement (*Masteravtale del II - veiledningsavtale*), in which you outline your preferred thesis topic or topic area. This deadline is **November 15th**. Several weeks after that you will be notified who your supervisor(s) will be. At the end of the next semester (**June 15th**), you are required to submit the project proposal.[[3]](#footnote-3)

In other words, you will need to start thinking (and reading) about the area you want to work in and about possible topics already during your first semester.[[4]](#footnote-4) At the latest, you will need to settle the topic when have been assigned a supervisor (normally, this will be in December/January), which is the period when you will be setting up your project proposal. You should be aware that research and other designated leave may affect your supervision options and schedule. For instance, if your supervisor is out on leave during the Spring semester, there is a possibility that proper supervision will begin in the following term, thus your project proposal may be delivered in September rather than June.

Note that the following individuals are scheduled for research and other leave in the coming semesters:

Terje Lohndal (spring 2020)

Astrid Rasch (spring 2020)

You are encouraged to talk to a potential supervisor or supervisors before handing in the supervision agreement (*Masteravtale del II*), and you may suggest a preferred supervisor on that form. However, please be aware that **there is no guarantee that you will be assigned to your preferred supervisor**.

**Some useful links**

In Norwegian:

<http://www.ntnu.no/isl/masterstudenter>

In English:

<http://www.ntnu.edu/isl/for-masters-students>

Please also check out the course description (*emnebeskrivelse*) for the Master's thesis course code relevant to the program you are taking. You can find these via one of these links:

<http://www.ntnu.no/studier/emnesok>

<http://www.ntnu.no/studies/courses>

ENG3900 *Master's Thesis in English* 60 sp (ca. 80 pages, 30,000 words)

ENG3901 *Master's Thesis in English* 30 sp (*lektorprogram*) (ca. 40 pages, 15,000 words)

The learning outcomes (*læringsmål*) in these descriptions specify the basis on which the thesis will be assessed. The thesis topic must also comply with what is set out here.

A final word of advice: It pays to inform yourself properly at the outset, to start thinking about topics early, to seek advice when deciding on your topic, and to start reading up on it well in advance of the deadline for the thesis proposal.

**Who we are**

The staff members of the English section who offer supervision for master's theses in English are listed below. You can find us all somewhere along the corridors of the 5th floor of building 5 (Dragvoll main building). You can discover more about our supervision areas on the following pages.

* Giosuè Baggio (Professor, English language and linguistics)  
  room 5543A
* Yuri Cowan (Professor, English literature)  
  room 5564
* Anne Dahl (Associate Professor, English language and linguistics),  
  room 5543B
* Paul Goring (Professor, English literature)  
  room 5544
* Annjo Klungervik Greenall (Professor, English language and linguistics)   
  room 5534
* Dave Whitney Kush (Associate Professor, English language and linguistics)  
  room 5515
* Terje Lohndal (Professor, English language and linguistics)   
  room 5531
* Gary Love (Associate Professor, English cultural history)   
  room 5570
* Eli Løfaldli (Associate Professor, English literature)   
  room 5542
* Domhnall Mitchell (Professor, English literature)   
  room 5507
* Hanna Musiol (Associate Professor, English literature)   
  room 5512
* Astrid Rasch (Associate Professor, English cultural history)  
  room 5572
* Rhonna Robbins-Sponaas (Associate Professor, English literature)   
  room 5530B
* Mila Vulchanova (Professor, English language and linguistics)   
  room 5555
* Andrew Weir (Associate Professor, English language and linguistics) room 5508
* Christopher Wilder (Professor, English language and linguistics)   
  room 5505

**Giosuè Baggio**

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My main research interests are semantics and pragmatics from an integrated theoretical and experimental perspective. A recent synthesis of my work in this area is the book ‘Meaning in the Brain’ (The MIT Press, 2018; <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/meaning-brain>). Some of my research takes place within the framework of the project ‘Origins of Semantic Composition in Early Cognitive Development’, funded by the Research Council of Norway for the period 2016-2020; see: <https://www.forskningsradet.no/prosjektbanken/#/project/NFR/251219>).

Possible areas of supervision for master theses include:

* Experiments using electroencephalography (EEG) and event-related potentials (ERPs) on topics related to meaning composition and compositionality, also in connection to other basic operations in language (e.g., prediction, inference, referential processing).
* Experiments using EEG and ERPs on topics related to the semantics or pragmatics of (i) intensionality (e.g., modal verbs and modal constructions) and (ii) inquisitiveness (e.g., conditionals and questions).
* Behavioral or survey studies in experimental semantics and pragmatics (a small subset of the areas described in the book ‘Oxford Handbook of Experimental Semantics and Pragmatics’ (eds., C. Cummins & N. Katsos; OUP, 2019; <https://bit.ly/2PKvLve>).

**Yuri Cowan**

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**Possible Areas of Supervision:**

Romantic and Victorian lyric and narrative poetry

Romantic and Victorian fiction and non-fiction prose

- Victorian journalism

- The Victorian novel

- Nineteenth-century sport and rural life

- The Victorian reception of medieval history, art, and literature

Medieval and Early Modern literature in verse and prose

History of the Book:

- Periodical culture (magazines and journals)

- The book arts

- Constructions of authorship

- Reading communities and reception

- Paratext and epitext, including the relationship between text and illustration

Literature and Historiography (including the historical novel and the Neo-Victorian)

Speculative Fiction (esp. utopia/dystopia, cyberpunk, steampunk, the fantastic)

- Victorian fantastic literature (so-called “Forgotten Fantasy”)

Fairytale, Myth, Legend, Saga, Ballad, Romance, and the Gothic

Comics and the graphic novel

Literature of the First World War

Canadian Literature (especially regionalism in Canada from rural, urban, western, or Atlantic

perspectives, and the First Nations or immigrant experience)

Games and play in literature and culture

Animals in literature

- Representing animal consciousness in fiction

- Human/animal interactions

Eco-criticism

Life writing: memoir and autobiography (including travel writing)

Material culture in literature

Digital culture and the future of the book

**About this list:**

Notice that all these topics include writers in both verse and prose. You should consider working on poetry; we’ve had a couple of good theses on poetry lately, and it’s critically rewarding and interesting. I’m also happy to recommend books to read in any of the areas covered above, based on your own articulation of your interests. I think it’s important that you choose a topic that fits your taste in reading, and conversely that you try to get out of your comfort zone; I prefer to see students go out of their way to tackle works beyond the ones that they’ve already encountered in their courses.

There is also now a new project in the department on Norwegian “skillingsviser,” a genre which has its counterpart in English broadside ballads, a diverse and interesting eighteenth- and nineteenth-century form of near-ephemeral publishing. If you’d like to work on a topic in this field, it could be a really interesting chance to explore the popular culture of the past. The same goes for studying literature that was published in Victorian periodicals, or for studying novels and poems in conjunction with reviews, news, travel accounts, author biographies, and other supplementary material in periodicals. These topics offer you the chance to read some unusual and rarely-studied material, and to base your research on digital archives.

**Anne Dahl**

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**English language and linguistics**

My research interests include language acquisition and multilingualism, in particular the acquisition of new languages after early childhood. Examples of topics that interest me are the acquisition of English as a second language, third language acquisition, the role of age in language acquisition, cross-linguistic influence in multilingual speakers, and the use of English in international contexts. I am interested in both very theoretical questions (for example the acquisition of a specific syntactic phenomenon) and more applied or practical issues (for example questions of how languages are learned in schools).

Most theses that I supervise involve some form of data collection from language learners or multilingual speakers.

**Examples of thesis topics that I have supervised are:**

- Word order in the second language English of Norwegian learners

- Adverbial placement in the second language English of Chinese learners

- The influence of English as a second language on the first language of speakers of Chinese

- The acquisition of indirect questions in English by Norwegian speakers

- The second language acquisition of English clause structure in speakers of Chichewa in Malawi

- Acquisition of pragmatic principles in English left dislocations by French speakers

- Teachers' language choice (English vs. Norwegian) in English classrooms in Norway

- A comparison of the vocabulary of English textbooks in France and Norway

- The role of explicit grammar instruction in English textbooks in Norway

- The role of pragmatic competence in English classrooms in Norway

- Norwegian university students' reading comprehension of English academic and non-academic texts

- Norwegian upper secondary students' sensitivity to formal vs. informal English

- English vocabulary acquisition from the classroom and from extramural exposure in Ghana

- The use of English in Norwegian Internet forums

**Paul Goring**

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Areas of supervision

Main areas:

1. Contemporary British fiction
2. Eighteenth-century British literature and culture
3. Early news media

Many of the MA theses I have supervised in recent years have been on twentieth-century and contemporary British fiction. Novelists addressed include Virginia Woolf, Ian McEwan, Julian Barnes, Jeannette Winterson, and others. Further writers in whom I take a particular interest include Graham Swift, Howard Jacobson and Sebastian Faulks; I will be happy to discuss ideas for projects on these and other contemporary authors.

Most of my own research addresses eighteenth-century British literature and culture, and I have published and supervised widely in this area. Particular interests include the life and works of Laurence Sterne and theatre history, but I will be pleased to advise students interested in any aspect of this period.

I am in addition the leader of the collaborative research project *Enlightenment News: Periodical Publication, Newspapers and the Digital Archive*. This is a project which explores early news media, the access to which has recently been revolutionized through the mass digitization of source material. MA students wishing to work on the early development of news media – or with an interest in digital archives more broadly – can be supervised by me and will be welcome members of the project group.

**Annjo K. Greenall**

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My field of expertise is **Translation Studies**. The following are some broad topics that I would be happy to supervise theses within. Remember that each topic can spawn a number of different research questions (projects/theses).

* Audiovisual translation (dubbing, subtitling)
* Literary translation (including song translation)
* Other forms of translation (technical translation, legal translation, amateur translation, translating into one’s 2nd language, localization, etc.)
* The effects of translation on Norwegian language, culture and society
* Translation/subtitling as a tool in language teaching and learning
* Translating from English as a global language: Societal and linguistic effects on smaller languages like Norwegian
* Translation of cultural, non-standard and creative language use (e.g. culturally-specific items, swearing, humour)

Other ideas are of course also welcome.

**The following is a list of some theses that I have supervised:**

Culture-specific items in legal translation: The case of EU legal texts in Norway

The subtitling of face-threatening acts in Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*

A universe more childish? A comparison of the potential connotations created by original and translated Norwegian names in *Harry Potter*

The cultural influence on translations between Britain and Norway: A study of domestication and foreignization in British vs. Norwegian translations

Translating humorous wordplay in the American sitcom *Friends*

Friend or foe? The use of translation as a didactic tool in English teaching in Norwegian schools

”They don’t think it be like this, but it do”. The rendering of African-American Vernacular English dialogue in Norwegian subtitles.

What the fuck just happened? A comparison of translating strategies in subtitling the swearword ’fuck’ in the movies *Born on the Fourth of July* and *Crash*

Translating humour in subtitling: The case of Vicky Pollard in Little Britain

”Fighting mad to write her story”: A study of the Norwegian translations of Jean Rhys’ post-colonial novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*

To translate or not to translate: Ethical issues in adapting ”2083 – The European Declaration of Independence” for the Danish stage

Hybrid texts in translation: A comparative study of the Norwegian and Spanish translations of Julia Alvarez’ *In the Time of the Butterflies*

The Norwegian translations of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*: A comparative study of the book and films

The purpose and function of code-switching in Nabokov’s *Pnin* and three of its Russian translations.

Representations of linguistic variation in audiovisual translation: A study of American animated films and their Norwegian dubbed translations.

**Dave Whitney Kush**

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<http://davewkush.github.io>

I am a relatively new associate professor at the Department of Languages and Literature. Before coming to Trondheim I received my PhD in Linguistics, with a certificate in Cognitive Science, from the University of Maryland, College Park. After receiving my PhD, I worked as a post-doctoral researcher at Haskins Laboratories.

Broadly construed, I am interested in syntax, the syntax-semantics interface, and psycholinguistics.

One strand of my research involves understanding how language users build linguistic representations during real-time sentence processing, with an eye towards connecting formal grammatical theories with parsing models. Some of the questions that I like to ask in this domain are:

* *How do language users store and retrieve items from memory while reading?*
* *How quickly can people use grammatical knowledge during sentence processing?*
* *How do people predict upcoming information during language understanding?*

A second strand of research is concerned with understanding cross-linguistic variation in syntactic and semantic constraints. This work always involves formal syntactic analysis, but often brings new experimental data (collected from large-scale acceptability judgment studies and other behavioral paradigms) to bear on classic puzzles. Recently, I’ve been interested in investigating cross-linguistic difference in *ellipsis* constructions (such as gapping and sluicing) and *island constraints*.

I would welcome students who are interested in psycholinguistics, comparative research in syntax/semantics, or some mixture thereof. Theses under my supervision would most likely, though not necessarily, involve an experimental component. Experiments could be run using a number of behavioral methodologies ranging from acceptability judgment studies to eye-tracking.

I am open to co-supervising a thesis with another member of the department if students are interested in a project that spans our areas of expertise. I encourage interested students to send me an email or to stop by my office to talk about potential projects.

**Terje Lohndal**  
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<http://lohndal.com>

**Research interests/supervision interests:**

I would be delighted to supervise theses on any of the below topics and if you have interests in any of these areas, feel free to contact me to discuss your ideas.

* Theories of grammar and its structure, mostly focusing on syntax, semantics, and morphology
* Interfaces in language, focusing especially on the syntax-semantics and syntax-morphology interfaces
* Argument structure
* Multilingualism and bilingual speakers, most notably heritage speakers and especially speakers of American Norwegian in the US
* English as a second language
* The history of modern linguistics and theory of science

**Some supervised MA theses (often together with colleagues):**

* ‘Et generativt undervisningsopplegg: Nye rammer for grammatikkundervisning i skolen’ (2016)
* ‘Syntaktisk transfer av V2 frå engelsk til norsk? Ein generative andrespråksstudie av lokativ inversjon-fenomenet’ (2016)
* ‘Testing for transfer in 16-year-olds with Norwegian as their L1 and English as their L2’ (2015)
* ‘A Study of Grammatical Constraints on Code-switching in Norwegian-English Bilinguals’ (2014)
* ‘Searching for patterns in English as a second language: A Norwegian study of 10 and 15 year old learners’ (2014)
* ‘Norwegian L1 Speakers’ Knowledge and Evaluation of English Nominal Phrases’ (2013)
* ‘Aktionsart og Aspekt. En semantisk analyse av vekslinga mellom –*e* og –*en* i nordnorske fortidspartisipper’ (2013).

**Gary Love**

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**British History and Culture**

I am an Associate Professor of British Social and Cultural Studies. My main research focuses on the history of right-wing politics in Britain and Europe between 1918 and the 1980s. I have published academic articles on British Conservatism, the periodical press, radical-right women, political Catholicism and Christian Democracy, and fascism. I am currently the leader of a major research project entitled ‘Conservatism at the Crossroads’, which is funded by the Research Council of Norway. My research group is exploring the transnational links between British and Scandinavian Conservative parties and it compares the development of Conservative ideas in Northern Europe to those of Christian Democrats in Central Europe between 1945 and the 1980s. I have also recently applied for a new research grant in the UK for a project entitled ‘Genres of Political Writing in Britain since 1900’, which would explore many different forms of political writing and publishing from a broader perspective.

However, I teach all forms of twentieth century British history and I am particularly interested in the political, social, and cultural aspects of my new MA course, ENG3450 ‘Britain in the 1980s’. I am happy to discuss proposals for topics in most areas of twentieth century British history, but students should know that some projects would demand a greater level of independence on their part if they lie outside my immediate areas of expertise. This is particularly true when it comes to tracking down suitable primary sources for use in the thesis. Some of my students choose to visit archives in the UK or elsewhere, whereas others make more use of online archives and/ or published primary documents. Under my supervision students are expected to develop their research skills and approaches to analyzing primary and secondary sources (or scholarly texts), which they have worked with at the 1000, 2000, and 3000 levels in the area of Cultural History and/ or Literature.

I would advise students who are interested in Cultural History to approach me when they have thought about some general historical themes and/ or periods that interest them. We can then discuss ideas for potential topics, which we can later refine if you are assigned me as your supervisor. The question of whether it is actually possible to research a given topic in the time available is the most important one to answer at this stage.

I have supervised many Master’s theses both at 30sp and 60sp on a range of interesting history topics at NTNU. Students have worked on themes relating to British political and economic history, media history, cultural history, and gender history. Others have combined their interest in British history with an interest in Scandinavian or European history to write a comparative study of something specific in multiple countries. Although I am a historian of British politics in terms of my research career I would be just as enthusiastic to supervise social and cultural topics, which is also why I try to combine all of these forms of history in my MA course.

**Eli Løfaldli**

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My main research interest is literary adaptation and appropriation – the various ways in which texts are used, re-used, reworked and rewritten in other texts and for new contexts. My work has centred on both theoretical and practical aspects of different forms of appropriation, such as translation, imitation, edition and adaptation for film and television. Much of my research has dealt with eighteenth-century literature and culture. I have a particular interest in investigating how this period is understood and represented today, especially in biographical and autobiographical films and texts. Representations of masculinity and manhood, both in the eighteenth century and today, is another recurring theme in my research, and I am currently investigating how notions of manhood are appropriated, adapted and translated as the genre of Nordic Noir is being exported to new contexts.

Relevant topics for theses within my areas of expertise could for instance be:

film and tv adaptations/‘literature on screen’; theories of adaptation and appropriation; all kinds of literary appropriation and reworking (e.g. imitation, reception and translation); topics within eighteenth-century literature; masculinities in literature and culture; Nordic Noir and similar art forms; biographical films and texts; the cultural memory of various historical periods.

Some examples of theses I have supervised:

*From text to sound: Retelling time and place in* Barry Lyndon *through film music*

*A new framework in adaptation studies: Cultural economy theory, meme theory and* The Blind Side

*Adapting Jane Eyre’s inner world: A comparative study of Zeffirelli’s 1996 cinema adaptation and Young’s 1997 television adaptation*

*‘The fair Ophelia’: A comparative study of screen interpretations of Ophelia from William Shakespeare’s* Hamlet

*English students’ reception of Baz Luhrmann’s* William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet *as a modern adaptation of William Shakespeare’s* Romeo and Juliet

*A study of graphic adaptations of* Beowulf*: Beowulfian graphic adaptations in the light of current adaptation theory*

*Cultural context and masculinity in* The Office *UK and* The Office *US*

*Originality, intertextuality and subjective reading: Cormac McCarthy’s* The Road *as an appropriation of J.M. Coetzee’s* Life & Times of Michael K

*Virtue Rewarded – Or, Feign’d Innocence Detected? A comparative analysis of Samuel Richardson’s* Pamela *and two appropriations: Eliza Haywood’s* Anti-Pamela *and Upton Sinclair’s* Another Pamela

*Intertextuality in* The Perks of Being a Wallflower*: Coming-of-age novels in the twentieth century*

*‘Of Pilferers Accurst, the Literary Thief’s the Worst’: Plagiarism in eighteenth-century Britain*

*Changing relationships: An analysis of the relationship between the two characters Robinson Crusoe and Friday in three different works*

**Domhnall Mitchell**

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Main areas of supervision

1. Nineteenth century American literature

2. American song writers and their reception in Norway.

3. The American Short story

My research is almost exclusively on the poetry of Emily Dickinson (1830-86), and especially on discussions about the status of her manuscript lyrics, largely unpublished in her lifetime. I am also currently supervising a thesis on the broad popular reception of her work through documentary and creative media, novelisations and theatrical productions, and there is certainly more work to be done in this field. I also write on canonical American authors of the nineteenth century such as Chopin, Hawthorne, James, Melville, Poe and Stowe. I would be interested in supervising research on writers of this era, or on adaptions of their works for the stage, television and film. Related to my background in American literature of the nineteenth century is a keen interest in the wider historical contexts of prose fiction about Native Americans, especially in the writings of Lydia Maria Child, James Fenimore Cooper, Catharine Maria Sedgwick and others.

I have recently written on how the work of Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen is translated and represented (by the press, in critical articles, and in book-length studies) in Norway. Cohen and Dylan, like Joni Mitchell, are highly valued because of the density and allusiveness of their lyrics, and therefore make ideal subjects for treatment in an M.A. thesis.

My third area of interest is the American short story, with particular emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Finally, though Irish literature is by no means my field of expertise, I would be enthusiastic about supervising research on Seamus Heaney as well as other authors from the North of Ireland.

**Hanna Musiol**

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I come to Trondheim from Boston, where I taught in the writing, English, and American Studies programs at Northeastern University, the University of Massachusetts Boston, and Simmons College, working across the fields of transnational American literature, cultural studies, digital humanities, gender studies, theory, and critical pedagogy. I look forward to working with NTNU students across these research areas to help them make important intellectual connections of their own and develop their work into research projects and M.A. theses. I believe that literary scholarship should be engaging and interdisciplinary and, as Richard E. Miller puts it, like the “practice of the humanities” itself, it should be “about the movement between worlds . . ., about making the connections that count.”

**Research Profile:** My diverse research interests include modern and contemporary American literature, transnational Anglophone literature, law and literature, film and visual culture, theory, critical pedagogy. archive and curation, and digital humanities, with emphasis on migration, human rights, political ecology, gender/sexuality, and decolonization.

**Recent Publications:** My work on literary and visual aesthetics and human rights has appeared in *Journal of American Studies*, *College Literature*, *Journal of Labor and Society*, *Oil Culture* (University of Minnesota Press), *Human Rights and Literature* (Routledge), *Discursive Framings of Human Rights* (Routledge). I also associate-edited *Cultural Studies: An Anthology*, and I am the creator of the (*Im)Migrant Experience Initiative (IEI)*, an open-access digital archive devoted to the preservation of narratives of migration and displacement at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Select undergraduate and graduate courses taught:

English 3314: Of Borders and Travelers (2016) / Migrant Fictions (2015) *NTNU*

English 1302: Drama and Lyric Survey

English 1303: Prose Fiction Survey

English 2501: Narrating the American City (2014) / Just Fiction: Literature and Human Rights (2015)

English 523: Narrating the Global City *Simmons College*

English 178: Multicultural Themes in American Literature, 1900–2013

English 139: American Modern(ist) Poetry

English 528: American Ghosts and the Colonial Gothic

English 4672: American Novel and Visual Culture, 1900–1950 *Northeastern University*

English/Cinema Studies 488: Film and Text: From Silents to PowerPoint

English 1111: Cultural Translation; The Conditions of Being Human; Cultural Autobiographies; Vision and Urban Space

AMST 405: The Immigrant Experience *University of Massachusetts Boston*

AMST 110: American Culture after 1945

AMST 101: American Popular Culture

If you would like to discuss your research and MA thesis plans with me in more detail, contact me at hanna.musiol@ntnu.no.

**Astrid Rasch**

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I am an associate professor of cultural and social studies of the English-speaking world. My work centres on the relationship between individual and collective narratives with particular attention to memory culture. In particular, I am interested in the former British Empire (places like Australia, the Caribbean and Zimbabwe) in the period before and after decolonisation. In my research, I have studied autobiographies from these areas to answer questions like: When countries decolonise, how do people make sense of change through telling their own life stories? And how do they try to affect the way in which their society tells its past? I am also interested in the rise of populism and recent developments in the UK and the US.

Fields of interest include:

* Memory studies
* Trauma and nostalgia
* Postcolonial studies
* The British Empire and decolonisation
* National identity
* Narrative
* Life writing, memoirs and autobiographies
* Australia
* The Caribbean
* Southern Africa
* The UK
* Brexit, Donald Trump and the rise of populism
* Migration and belonging
* Racism and race relations
* I also have some experience with modernist and feminist writing, in particular that of Virginia Woolf

**Rhonna Robbins-Sponaas**

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I hold a Master’s in writing with a focus on creative nonfiction, and a Ph.D. in American literature. The relative contrast between these two areas means that I tend to approach literature from a slightly different perspective, and am as much fascinated by the execution of the craft as by the product itself. The background in writing also means that I have a special passion for creative nonfiction such as nature writing, travel writing, memoir, personal essay, literary journalism, and so on. Each of these subgenres have their own traditions, expectations, and characteristics as well as a growing body of literature and resources to draw upon. This is far from a new form of writing; it is, in fact, ancient. While often used in lower education, however, it is an area which typically has no foundation or training in Norwegian academics and is largely not handled at NTNU. Creative nonfiction is, however, a significant genre within literature. As of this writing, Norway lags behind other educational systems in academic recognition of creative production, but that does not mean that we cannot examine these texts in the same way that we might examine fiction, poetry, or drama.

While my doctorate is American literature, my primary area of focus is on literature of the American South. I continue to work with a little-known Virginia writer, Mary Johnston (1870-1936), but am strongly interested in all aspects of Southern literature, particularly literature authored by female writers.

In addition to writing and literature of the American South, I also have a strong interest in textiles, including textile history, development, representation in literature, and as an aspect of cultural studies. This area overlaps heavily with the other two fields of interest and may also be expressed in terms of examination of the surrounding textiles and textile production, issues of personal and regional or national identity, family, gender roles, definition and presentation of home, and so forth. This is a rather broad topic and can be explored in a large variety of ways and from an equally large variety of perspectives or purposes.

Outside of these areas, I entertain a peripheral interest in a selection of other topics, but it must be noted that I do not research these topics or specialize in them and students would be expected to forge their own road. Nevertheless, I am moderately familiar with or have supervised topics dealing with graphic novels/comic books as literature/cultural studies within literature; computer games and hypertext as interactive story; children’s and young adult literature; and online and digital aspects of textuality and community.

**Mila Vulchanova**

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Research Lab website: [http://www.ntnu.edu/langdevlab](https://mail.ntnu.no/owa/redir.aspx?C=X8gEiQZEyUqBeMJyOxEOFaQ1bZmFoNEI_BkY-uMeQnrCSCpbiVsnwO1LfXWf6MkMON2x7SjM9-0.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.ntnu.edu%2flangdevlab)

Areas of research and supervisor expertise:

* first and second language acquisition;
* bilingualism
* language and cognition
* language processing
* acquisition of literacy (reading and writing)
* learning deficits (e.g., dyslexia)
* figurative language in development
* computer games and language learning
* role of digital formats in reading

Recent theses I have supervised can be accessed (in full text) here:

<http://www.ntnu.edu/langdevlab/masters-theses>

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<http://www.ntnu.edu/employees/andrew.weir>  
http://awweir.com

I specialize in theoretical linguistics, in particular syntax – the licit arrangement of words into sentences – and semantics – the ability to map words, phrases, and sentences onto meaning in a compositional way (such that the meaning of a larger expression follows from the meanings of the parts and some very general principles about how these parts are combined). I am also interested in how these two domains, syntax and semantics, interact with each other (as well as with other domains such as phonology and pragmatics).

A few topics that I particularly specialize in are:

**Variation (especially within English):** investigation of syntactic and semantic variation between (usually related) languages and dialects. I am especially interested in differences between standard English and dialectal English (e.g. Scottish English), or between dialects of English; I am also interested in comparison of the grammars of English and Norwegian. I focus on this from the formal grammatical point of view, e.g. what kinds of syntactic or semantic analyses can account for a wide but not unbounded range of variation between languages and dialects. However, there is clearly a sociolinguistic aspect to this too, especially when it comes to dialect variation, and co-supervision of a project that looked at both sociolinguistic and formal aspects of variation would be a possibility.

**Ellipsis:**constructions such as ‘verb phrase ellipsis’ (*John ate brunost but Mary didn’t \_\_*), ‘noun phrase ellipsis’ (*John ate two strawberries and Mary ate three \_\_*), ‘sluicing’ (*John ate something but I don’t know what \_\_*) etc. In all of these cases, some linguistic material seems to have ‘gone missing’ in the sentence, but we can still understand what is meant. When do languages allow such ‘silent meaning’? What constraints are there on the ‘interpretation of silence’? What cross-linguistic variation do we find and why (e.g. why does English allow verb phrase ellipsis, while French (for the most part) doesn’t)? This interest also extends to other similar phenomena, in particular expressions like *do so* in English and *gjøre det* in Norwegian.

**‘Special registers’:** English, and other languages, have certain so-called ‘registers’ which show different grammatical properties from ‘standard’ language. For example, in some forms of written English, such as recipes or diaries, a number of elements can be omitted: subjects can be omitted in diaries, articles can be omitted in newspaper headlines, objects can be omitted in recipes. Notably, there are grammatical restrictions on this phenomenon: for example, prepositions can generally *not* be omitted even in these registers, even if the meaning of the preposition is very ‘light’ or could easily be recovered from context. I am interested both in how these differences from the standard can be understood on their own terms (what governs their distribution, interpretation, etc.) as well as what governs the range of possible variations between registers.

These represent my particular areas of interest, but I would be interested in supervising MA theses in the areas of syntax or semantics even if they do not fall into the above categories. Students should feel free to contact me to discuss possible topics. I can also potentially offer supervision in other theoretical subfields of linguistics such as phonology, morphology or pragmatics, but I specialize less in these areas, and students would therefore have to expect to be more independent in their own research.

**Chris Wilder**

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**Research interests** Syntax. Sentence grammar interactions with phonological, morphological, semantic and discourse factors.

My expertise is in grammar. That includes the structures of English (my native language) but also linguistic theory (generative approach), and I am fascinated by the structures of languages generally. Much of my research involves a comparative angle, contrasting two or more different languages.

English is the best-studied language. To think that there is 'nothing new to be discovered' about English would however be light-years from the truth. Linguistic study of an aspect of English can form an MA project in itself, or form part of a project directed to another goal.

Accounts of English figure prominently in influential models/theories, which means that studying structural patterns in *another* language inevitably involves comparing that language with English. Comparison between English and another language is a very fertile ground for MA thesis topics. *Your* native language (be it Norwegian or any other language) harbours a myriad of potential MA theses exploring similarities and differences to English.

Differences between English and another language are often relevant to projects whose main goal lies elsewhere, e.g. psycholinguistics, language acquisition, language teaching or translation. I am more than willing to (co-)supervise such projects.

Examples of MA theses which I have (co-)supervised at NTNU:

Kvaal, I. T. *Ellipsis in the AN&A construction in Old English*. 2017.

Dorgbetor, N. *A Comparative Investigation into the Syntax of Double Object Constructions in English and Ewe: A Minimalist Approach.* 2016.

Grønning, M. *An Investigation of Norwegians' L2 Knowledge of English Verb Phrase Anaphora Patterns*. 2016 (with Mila Vulchanova).

Xue, W. *The Effect of L2 English on L1 Mandarin Chinese from the Perspective of Complement Event Coercion.* 2016 (with Anne Dahl).

Sereikaite, M. *Lithuanian Passives and Passive-like Constructions, with comparison to English*. 2013.

Shafiei, S. *Causative Constructions in English and Farsi*. 2013.

Voroshnina, M. *Ordering of Adjectival Modifiers in English and Russian: An Exploration*. 2012.

Marasini, S. *Unaccusative Diagnostics in Nepali*. 2011.

Liu, L. *A Contrastive Study of Sentential Negation between English and Chinese*. 2010.

Rambøl, K. *Argument Structure Alternations and Semantic Verb Classes. A comparative study of the dative, the locative, the benefactive and the conative alternation in English and Norwegian*. 2010.

Nam, H.-Y. A *study on the English get-passive construction. The unmoved PRO analysis*. 2009.

1. For students in the lektorprogram, this is the fifth year of the program. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In certain cases, it may be possible for a thesis to be jointly supervised by a member of the English section and someone from outside the section. The main supervisor must be from the English section. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. These dates presuppose that you started the program in August (autumn semester). If you started on the program in January (spring semester), the dates are February 15th (supervision agreement / *masteravtale del II*) and December 15th (project proposal). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Semester 8 for students in the *lektorprogram*. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)