

Film, theatre & television

Collecting policy

User profile

This collection statement covers provision for the Department of Film, Theatre & Television in the School of Arts, and Communication Design.

Other subject areas in the University with an interdisciplinary interest in aspects of film, theatre and / or television studies include:

- Art
- Classics
- English literature
- French, German, and Italian
- History
- Philosophy
- Theatre arts, education and deaf studies in the Institute of Education

Related areas in which other Departments / Schools also make purchases include:

- Influence of the classical world on stage and screen
- Aesthetics
- Literary theory and criticism
- Communication theory
- Popular culture
- History of art
- Artists' films and video
- Live art and performance art
- Graphic design and communication
- Film and documentary as historical evidence
- Cultural theory
- Modern History
- Applied arts

Research interests

The research interests of academic staff are wide ranging. The department aims to research across historical periods and genres. Its research strategy is coalesced closely around those research centres which it accommodates or with which it has close links:

- The Centre for Film Aesthetics and Cultures (CFAC), which fosters links with Reading Film Theatre.
- Beckett at Reading, working in collaboration with the Beckett International Foundation, which supports research into Samuel Beckett and the development of the internationally important archive based in the University.
- The Television Drama Research Group, which promotes the study of the past development and current trends in television fiction of all kinds, both in Britain and abroad.

Current research projects include:

- Giving Voice to the Nation. The Arts Council of Great Britain and the Development of Theatre and Performance in Britain 1945-1995;
- Spaces of Television: Production, Site and Style;
- Staging Beckett: The impact of Productions of Samuel Beckett's Drama on Theatre Practice and Cultures in the UK and Ireland.

The department's research interests also have close links with the University's major research themes, especially the 'Heritage and Culture' theme.

General research interests across film, theatre and television:

- Critical, theoretical, historical and performance studies
- New media
- Space and place in performance

Theatre:

- Theatre productions and performance from the late 19th century to the present day
- British Theatre
- World theatre
- Contemporary mainstream and avant-garde theatre in Europe and the United States
- Irish theatre
- Cultural transfer in eastern European theatre
- The Holocaust in Polish theatre
- Diasporic identity and theatre
- Elizabethan and Jacobean drama and its influence on contemporary theatre
- Women's theatre
- Playwriting
- Multimedia in performance
- Samuel Beckett

Film:

- World cinema
- Classical and contemporary Hollywood film
- Documentary film
- Avant-garde film
- Gender in film and media
- Pedagogy in film
- Digital media, film style and technology
- Film aesthetics
- Cinematic time and space, and narration in film
- Early sound film
- The spectacular in film
- Mise-en-scène
- Action cinema
- Authorship in cinema
- Representation of conflict in film
- Cinema and the politics of erasure in the war on terror

Television:

- American and European Television history and institutions
- British and American television drama
- Documentary television
- Transatlantic relationships in television
- Relationship between film and television
- Television aesthetics
- Semiotics and postmodernism
- Television in translation (adaptation, dubbing and subtitling)

Dimensions of teaching and learning

The Department runs full-time degree programmes. Film, Theatre and Television can also be studied as part of a joint honours undergraduate course in combination with Art or English Literature. Postgraduate taught courses offered focus on Creative Enterprise (Film) and Samuel Beckett.

A list of programmes offered by the department can be found at: www.reading.ac.uk/ft/

Current holdings

Most materials fall into the 790 and 812, and 822 sections of the Dewey classification scheme. Key sections are: 791 (Public entertainment); 791.4 (Film, radio and television); 792 (Theatre); 812 (American play texts and associated criticism); 822 (English play texts and associated criticism); sections within the Call number range 832-899 cover play texts and criticism from the rest of world, including texts in translation.

For more detail see the Film, theatre and television *Finding your way* guide.

Books

There is a sizable collection of printed monographs in this subject area. The Department has also recently acquired a large number of individual ebooks purchased via aggregators such as EBL, Ebsco and MyiLibrary, as well as the *Cambridge Companions* online, *Drama Online*, and Taylor and Francis packages which support undergraduate studies, in particular. The department's policy is to purchase both printed and online versions of required reading where both are available.

Multimedia

The Department maintains its own film collection to support teaching and research and so films are not normally purchased for the Library. The Library has a small number of films on DVD and CDs of film sound tracks originally purchased to support teaching and research in other academic departments. The MediaHub and Screenonline databases contain stills and film clips of relevance to the department, including newsreel footage and interviews.

Periodicals

There is a sizeable printed / online periodical collection with complete runs of several core titles, reflecting the longevity of the Department. Several current titles are shared purchases with English Literature, Modern Languages and European Studies, and the Institute of Education. Both teaching and research are supported by a wide range of titles available through ejournal collections such as JSTOR, the Project Muse Humanities Collection and the journal packages provided by Taylor & Francis, Oxford Journals and Cambridge Journals Online. A number of additional full-text titles have also been made available online through a subscription to the Film Indexes Online database.

Reference

There is a sizable printed reference collection with relevant titles also held in the online packages Credo and Oxford Reference Online.

Bibliographic

Film Indexes Online is the main bibliographic online database which cover a large number of both film and television titles. It incorporates three separate databases: the American Film Institute filmography, with references to reviews; the British Film Institute filmography with references to reviews; and the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAF) bibliographic database with some full text content. There is currently no subscription to a database which covers the performance aspects of theatre, although the MLA database covers (primarily) literary aspects of drama. The Arts and Humanities Citation Index (via ISI Web of Knowledge) is subscribed to and can be useful for inter-disciplinary research. The TV Times Project database is also of relevance to some aspects of television research.

Related special collections

Beckett Collection

Relevant special collections include the Wizard of Oz Collection and the papers of the film director Sir David Lean relating to the film *Dr Zhivago*. Special Collections also holds the papers of Gillian Freeman, Elinor Glyn; Roy Horniman; Sir Richard Marsh; Philip Ormond, Edward Thompson, and J.C. Trewin. Films held in the Museum of English Rural Life Collection have also been used in research by the department.

Strengths and exclusions

The Department was one of the very first to teach film studies in the UK. As such, the Library holds one of the most substantial collections of critical and theoretical works about film outside the British Film Institute and is especially rich in primary material, such as contemporary film and theatre reviews from the 1940s to the 1980s. In 2010, the department organised an exhibition in the Library and at Special Collections to showcase its long runs of film periodicals which are a particular strength of the collection. The quality of the collections is now a key attraction for potential research students.

The collection is also strong in works on aesthetics, and gender issues relating to both film and theatre.

Play texts from the 1940s onwards are well represented, especially those by the publishers Faber, Nick Hern, Methuen and Oberon. There are standing orders to major critical series produced by the British Film Institute. The collection is also especially strong in Renaissance drama, Pinter and Beckett because of interdisciplinary interest in these areas.

Play texts and critical works in languages other than English are not normally collected by the department, but these are represented in the acquisitions of the School of Languages and European Studies.

Exclusions include motion picture films, trade literature, financial and statistical information about the film industry, drama pre-1870 (except works on the contemporary performance of Renaissance theatre), and works relating to dance. The Library does not collect theatre ephemera such as poster bills and programmes, though these may be of interest to the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication's Ephemera Centre.

Even though class sets are held and used for much of the teaching, the Department now has a policy that students should purchase their own copies of play texts rather than rely on the Library for provision. Single copies continue to be purchased to support individual research projects.

Areas for collection development include: world theatre, including eastern European and East Asian theatre; world cinema; contemporary American cinema; contemporary theatre performance; alternative forms in film and theatre.

Collecting level

The department continues to develop the Library's extensive collection of periodicals and monographs relating to theory, aesthetics and criticism to support research undertaken by postgraduate students, and staff. The Library also collects inter-disciplinary material relating to Art which supports research projects. Together with other departments, Film, theatre & television acquires material to support research-level activity in the field of Samuel Beckett and related modernist theatre.

Staff and research students benefit from the close proximity of a range of other important archives and libraries (see section on alternative access) for accessing more specialist resources outside the collection's main strengths. The extensive Beckett Collection supports research activity within the department and attracts theatre studies postgraduates to Reading.

The collection supports all aspects of taught courses, and the department makes extensive use of the Course Collection, ebooks and the Library's CLA scanning service to enhance access to materials for taught courses.

The collection will provide most, but not necessarily all, materials students need at final year undergraduate level for independent projects. Masters students will find a significant proportion of material to support taught elements of their course, but may need to travel further afield or use inter-library loan services to undertake research components.

Alternative access

Other information resources in the University

The Department holds a substantial video, DVD and Blu-Ray collection containing more than 6,000 titles (available only to members of the Department). English literature and Modern Languages and European Studies also have video/DVD collections for use by members of those departments.

Use of other libraries

Other specialist collections used for research being undertaken within the department include:

- Archives of the National Theatre
- BBC Archives
- British Film Institute Library (the University Library is a member of the BFI Library)
- British Universities Film and Video Council
- Victoria and Albert Museum's Theatre and Performance Archive (V&A). This collection can be accessed on request and includes the useful records of the Arts Council.

Statistical evidence suggests that the department manages to source most material to support its research either from within the University or the specialist collections mentioned above. Only a small number of requests processed by the Library's Inter-Library Loan service come from Film, theatre & television.

Selection, acquisition and stock editing

See the General Collection Development Statement for general principles.

Selection and acquisition

Films are not normally purchased by the Library for film, theatre, and television courses, but if requested by staff, they are purchased in DVD format.

Second-hand material may be purchased to replace damaged items or to fill gaps in stock retrospectively when new courses are introduced.

The Liaison Librarian will suggest additions to stock to the Library representatives, order required reading not in stock, and ensure items in demand are transferred to the Course Collection.

Relegation and withdrawal

The General Collection Development statement gives the criteria for decision making on relegation and withdrawal. During the period covered by this policy, it is anticipated that further de-duplication of material will take place as part of the Library's Collections Project. Some low use material of relevance to research will also be relegated to storage.

The Department has identified material which informs understanding of reception and the historicising of performances as a key area of interest. This includes criticism / analysis of film, theatre and television performances contemporaneous with the first performance and such material should not be withdrawn, though such material might be relegated. Because of the interest in contemporary film, theatre and television, items less than 10 years old should not be relegated if space permits.

Policy written by Kerry Webb, Film, Theatre and Television Liaison Librarian, August 2015