

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

HSS Student Bursary Project Advert 2023/24

Project title:

Histories of Disability Toolkit

Summary/explanation of the project:

This project is to create a 'Histories of Disability Toolkit' to enable all module convenors in the School of History to incorporate the thriving scholarship on disability into their teaching practices and curricula, regardless of their own scholarly expertise.

Project lead:

Liesbeth Corens

School of History

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Relationship between this project and your research or scholarship:

This project is part of a larger initiative to enable module convenors across the School of History to teach inclusively. The School of History does not employ an expert on the history of disability, yet that should not deprive our students from this key scholarship and understanding of the past.

Histories of disability are crucially important in their own right, but also offer insightful lenses on the past. 'Disability' and 'ability' are constructed categories, the histories of which need to be understood to understand societies past and present. 'Marginalised' experiences and people are particularly illuminating of dominant cultures, categories, and practices. In a truly inclusive curriculum, students encounter a wide range of past experiences and reflect on the structures that shaped this diversity. Despite this, 'disability history' is often seen as a distinct and separate subfield, and few non-specialist historians engage with this scholarship in the classroom. This application will support the creation of a 'toolkit' to provide colleagues from every field in the QMUL School of History with the reading suggestions, primary sources, plans, and confidence to incorporate the histories of disability into their teaching practices. This toolkit will enable colleagues to show that disabilities have histories of every time and place, and have the potential to feature in every historical narrative.

As EDI Lead for the School of History I am responding to a call from students to include more histories of disability in the curriculum, based on a staff-student Forum around disability, inclusive curriculum discussions with the Education Committee, and our EDI Hub. Together with an expert in medical history and based on my own expertise as historian of marginalised histories, I won a Royal Historical Society Teaching Fellowship worth £500 to support a workshop around this toolkit, where we will invite specialists in the field of disability history to discuss pedagogy, case studies, and good practice. The student bursary will support the

compilation and ensure the resulting toolkit is addressing the needs and expectations of students, in line with the university's programme of co-creating education.

Project work and outcomes:

The student will work collaboratively with me on three work packages that will contribute to the Histories of Disability Toolkit.

1. The student will use databases and existing review articles to create a select bibliography and links to websites that publish resources and bibliographies on the history of disability.
2. The student and I will together select four modules from the school of history, and will write some short biographies and object studies that module convenors can include into their lectures.
3. Taking the same four modules as examples, the students will compile a selection of primary sources (images, short publications, letters, laws, etc.) from online archives and resources. These can be used for classroom discussion and give students a sense of the range of materials through which we study past lives, not just the materials of pain or exclusion.
4. The student will have the chance to participate in a workshop with staff and experts which I am co-organising. We can co-present on the progress with the toolkit and reflect on the process co-creating this toolkit.

The students' work will feed into the development of the Histories of Disability Toolkit that will shape teaching in the School of History. The student's research will be complemented by the discussion with experts at the workshop, as well as reflection in the EDI Committee. The tangible outcome of this project will be:

1. A report about co-creating this toolkit, presented at the RHS-funded workshop and disseminated via the RHS Teaching Portal.
2. A toolkit available to all teachers at the School of History via our EDI Hub on QMPlus.
3. [At a later stage, once the toolkit is available] written feedback from colleagues to explain how they have used the toolkit, how it has changed their modules, and how it can be improved.

Student skills and knowledge required:

- Interest in the histories of disability/marginalisation/medicine/emotions (desired)
- Experience of using online archive collections and materials (desired)
- Experience in selection and decision making in historical research

Start date and work pattern:

- The start date for the UG project is flexible, but will be as soon as possible after 22 January. The end date is fixed at 19 April.
- The student anticipated to work flexibly but one suggested arrangement is:
 1. Five hours a week of research for 12 weeks during term time
 2. Seven hours for participating in a workshop with staff and experts
 3. Six hours of contact with project leader
 4. Three hours of supporting drafting a report on the workshop
- Scheduled monitoring and support by the project leader will amount to six hours:
 1. One initial orientation and discussion of schedule (1 hour)
 2. Two fortnightly updates (2 x 30 mins)
 3. One meeting mid-term to solidify the selection of materials and transition to case studies for the four modules (1 hour)
 4. Two fortnightly updates (2 x 30)
 5. Meeting to prepare for workshop participation (2 hours)

Students must submit applications to Alicia Barnes, Research Officer (a.barnes@qmul.ac.uk) by **12 noon on 1 December 2023**. Each School will make its own arrangements for selecting student applicants; these may include interviews if considered appropriate.

We anticipate that funding will be disbursed in two instalments, both subject to confirmation by the academic project lead that the student has been working appropriately.

The first instalment (40% of the award) will be paid no earlier than the end of February 2024; the second (60% of the award) will be paid upon overall completion.