

The Professor Sir Richard Trainor PhD Scholarships 2017-18

Project Title: The Road to Trump: The Lewinsky Scandal and The Civil Religion of Bill Clinton

Partner Organisation: The Eccles Centre for American Studies

King's is now inviting applications for one of the Professor Sir Richard Trainor PhD Scholarships in the Department of History at King's College London in collaboration with the Eccles Centre for American Studies at the British Library. The scholarship will commence from October 2017 onwards and is open to new incoming PhD students only.

Project Description:

In 1998 the character flaws of the American President, his lack of self-control and a tendency to play loose with the truth polarised a nation. The result was a collision of power and sexual politics and an unprecedented constitutional, political and cultural struggle. It was a period when new relationships between political power and social reality emerged, exposing tensions between private morality and secular authority – tensions evident today in Trump's election. The project will explore these themes via qualitative analysis of mass market texts – press, television and books - relating to the Lewinsky scandal of 1998. Significantly, it will examine how Bill Clinton successfully navigated the crisis by linking himself with traditional expressions of the nation's collective identity – or 'civil religion' – despite a political culture characterised by the maturing of the Sixties sexual liberalisation, shifting concepts of masculinity and the empowerment of new media. How the President and public responded to the cultural manifestations of power has had repercussions for presidential politics ever since. As Trump's presidency commences, this project with the Eccles Centre, with its capacity to link the US Embassy and the British American Studies community, will play a crucial intellectual role in contributing to the debate about American political culture at an important moment in UK-US relations.

The Department of History was ranked 5th of all UK History departments in the 2014 REF with 86% of our research activity assessed as 'world leading or internationally excellent'. It is a research-led department with a strong reputation for contribution to scholarship, teaching and practice. The Department is located on the Strand Campus of King's College London where the studentship will be based.

Supervisors:

Lead Supervisor: Dr Uta Balbier

Second Supervisors: Dr Clare Birchall

Partner Organisation Supervisor: Dr Cara Rodway

Application documentation: applicants must complete and submit:

- a CV
- personal statement explaining why they would be suitable
- a writing sample of around 4,000 words from the field of American cultural history

to graduateschool@kcl.ac.uk by 11:59pm (UK BST) on 7 May 2017. The subject line of the email should read 'RT Scholarship 1718 – [*include the relevant project title*']

All documents should be submitted as a single pdf.

Two academic references **must** be received by the deadline for the application to be eligible. Candidates are responsible for instructing referees to submit their references to graduateschool@kcl.ac.uk using the subject line 'RT Scholarship 1718 – [*name of applicant*]'.

Funding Details: The scholarship will provide an annual payment of £15,000 which can be used to cover tuition fees and/or living costs.

Length of Award: 3 years (PhD)
