



Mitacs Globalink 2021 Project Submission

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Project Information

Project ID	22207
Project Title	Literature and Language Studies in the Commonwealth - a History
Project Status	Submitted
Number of openings	1
Preferred Student's Academic Background	Cultural Studies, Comparative Literature, English Literature, History
Preferred internship start date	2021-04-30
Start Date is Flexible	Yes
Languages	English

If the project requires that the intern speaks a language in addition to English or French in order to conduct the research, please specify the language(s):

Please provide a brief description of your specialized research area:

Dr. Anna Guttman is a full professor in the department of English at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario. She is the chair of the Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies, the oldest and largest international organization dedicated to the study of postcolonial literature. She is the author of two monographs: "Writing Indians and Jews: Metaphorics of Jewishness in South Asian Literature" (2013) and "The Nation of India in Contemporary Indian Literature" (2007). She co-editor of "The Global Literary Field" (2006) publishes in a variety of areas, including gender and sexuality studies, globalization studies, and popular culture.

Please provide a brief description of the research project:

The Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies (ACLALS) is the world's largest, and oldest, association for postcolonial literary studies, and the only civil society of the Commonwealth organization dedicated to the study of print and oral literature. Since its inaugural conference at the University of Leeds in 1964, ACLALS – together with its regional branches in Canada, East Africa, Europe, India, Malaysia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the South Pacific, the United States of America, West Africa and the West Indies – ACLALS has held numerous conferences and other events, produced a

range of publications, including scholarly books, and nurtured generations of emerging scholars of global literature from around the world. In its half-century of existence, the organization has accumulated a significant trove of documents, as well as access to oral histories of the association's founders. This archive has yet to be organized or made accessible. As the executive office moves to a different region of the Commonwealth, maintain such a physical archive becomes increasingly untenable, and limits the prospects for utilizing the archive for research. Sorting, categorizing, summarizing, analyzing and digitizing these various items will generate a history of the organization that will not only contribute substantively to an understanding of the emergence and ongoing transformation of postcolonial and global literature as a disciplinary field, but also to a better understanding of how efforts to Indigenize and decolonize the academy have proceeded within and across institutions, nations, and regions. Personal accounts from scholars will illuminate how challenging the literary canon through both teaching and research impacted the careers and lives of the first generation of scholars of commonwealth literatures. Production of a digital archive will generate a resource for further research by scholars around the world and preserve the institutional memory of a uniquely diverse and global scholarly organization.

Please describe the required skills/background of the student:

The right student will have excellent written and spoken English, as well as the capacity to comprehend, analyze, summarize and synthesize diverse textual materials. He or she will have excellent organizational skills, and be able to work both independently and with direction. He or she will be computer literate and able to work with and generate both digital and print documents that are coherent, well-written and free of grammatical and syntactical errors. Experience with, or interest in, working with archival material and conducting interviews (either via email or phone) would be beneficial, as would an interest in anti- or post-colonialism.

Please describe the required role of the student:

At present, the archives of the Association of Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies are housed in a series of cardboard boxes, and include a vast array of documents, including financial statements, conference programs, photographs, newsletters and other items. There is no consistent filing system. Under the supervision of Dr. Anna Guttman, the student will sort, categorize, and assess the relevant documents and photographs. Documents and photographs may be scanned for inclusion in a digital archive, preserved in physical form (or both). If appropriate, items may also be discarded after careful examination. Working with Dr. Guttman, the research student will consider the relevance of each text, scan documents as needed, and generate captions and summaries of archive material. The student will arrange materials such as conference programs into chronological order, and generate a timeline of the organization's major events and accomplishments. He or she will be trained in research ethics and integrity, then tasked with contacting founding members of ACLALS in order to supplement the archival record with oral accounts, that he or she will record and / or transcribe (with the permission of the interviewees). Synthesizing both the material in the archive, and additional information gathered via interviews and further research, the student will compose a narrative history of the organization and its activities, suitable for publication to the Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies public website. The student should be prepared to draft this account, receive feedback, revise and edit as required. He or she will be publicly credited on the website as the author of this history. The student will also have the option to draw on the archival material to generate further individual research should they so wish, and to seek additional venues of publication, with Dr. Guttman's support, should they choose to do so.

Activities

Please indicate how frequently the Globalink Research Intern will be engaged in the following activities during their research internship:

Analyzing data or information:
Always

Conducting surveys or administering questionnaires:
Almost never

Conducting interviews:
Often

Creating drawings, models, or designs:
Never

Gathering information from archives, published works, documents, or recordings:
Always

Making observations outside of a laboratory or controlled environment:
Never

Performing controlled experiments:
Never

Programming, scripting, or coding:
Never

Reading research literature:
Often

Solving mathematical problems:
Never

Using hand or machine tools, laboratory equipment, or scientific instruments:
Never

Writing reports:

Very often

Meeting or discussing with the supervisor:

Often

Working on tasks that require teamwork:

Infrequently

Locations

Will the entirety of the research project take place at the university campus location indicated in your Profile?

Yes

Additional Comments

If you have any additional comments, please provide them here: