

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE HUMANITIES**

SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE



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Summer Seminars for College and University Teachers  
Institution: University of California, Los Angeles



NATIONAL  
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DIVISION OF EDUCATION  
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## National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Education Programs

### Narrative Section of a Successful Application

This sample of the narrative portion from a grant is provided as an example of a funded proposal. It will give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. It is not intended to serve as a model. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with staff members in the NEH Division of Education Programs well before a grant deadline. This sample proposal does not include a budget, letters of commitment, résumés, or evaluations.

**Project Title:** *The Decadent 1890s: English Literary Culture and the Fin de Siècle*

**Institution:** University of California, Los Angeles

**Project Director:** Joseph Bristow

**Grant Program:** Summer Seminars for College and University Teachers

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Mr. Bruce Whiteman, Head Librarian, UCLA William Andrews Clark Memorial Library

Professor Margaret D. Stetz, University of Delaware

Mr. Mark Samuels Lasner

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## Narrative Description

### *Intellectual Rationale*

The five-week summer seminar titled “The Decadent 1890s: English Literary Culture and the Fin de Siècle” will bring together fifteen college-level instructors with the aim of deepening their knowledge of a comparatively brief but creatively dynamic period of literary history that bridges the Victorian and Modernist eras. The chief intellectual objective of the seminar is to show that the 1890s comprise a remarkable moment when English writing, at the time when imperialist fervor rose to unforeseen heights, deepened the serious questioning of many cherished Victorian orthodoxies. By rejecting liberal models progress, upholding the principle of *l’art pour l’art*, adopting some of the unconventional mannerisms of the French *Symbolistes*, and promoting insubordinate opinions on the need to liberate sexual love, the writers who were quickly identified as “fin-de-siècle” and “decadent” embarked on a series of bold, controversial literary experiments that were little short of avant-garde. As both of these terms imply, this group of authors readily embraced the attenuation, decline, if not complete *fin* of the preceding generation, which, as their works show, involved breaking taboos, challenging inhibitions, and devising radically new forms—ones that look forward to the turn of the century.

Nowadays Oscar Wilde is perhaps the most celebrated and respected of those 1890s writers who welcomed the newfangled (and quickly stigmatized) epithet “fin-de-siècle.” Finding himself in 1894 obliged to defend the malaise that critics attributed to it, he made this defiant remark: “All that is known by that term I particularly admire and love.” “It is,” he added, “the fine flower of our civilisation: the only thing that keeps the world from the commonplace, the coarse, the barbarous.” Within a year of making these unapologetic comments, Wilde presented the worst face of literary decadence because he was sent to jail for two years (in solitary confinement with hard labor) for committing acts of “gross indecency.” The scandal about Wilde’s private life only served to strengthen what had for time been a growing suspicion among conservative commentators at the

time that everything connected with “decadence”—especially bohemian lifestyles whose excesses were often linked with sex and drugs—was leading the nation toward moral dereliction.

It is certainly true that some of the most prominent members of Wilde’s circle became infamous, both in their writing and in their everyday lives, for their love of alcohol, their frequenting of prostitutes, and their attraction to narcotics. When one reflects on the rapid rise and fall of poets Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, and Arthur Symons (the first two were alcoholic, the third suffered a severe mental breakdown in middle age), it is fairly easy to conclude that the authors whose works appear to typify the decadent 1890s certainly belong to the “The Tragic Generation” that W.B. Yeats looked back upon, with not a little condescension, in *The Trembling of the Veil* (1922). It is worth noting, however, that Yeats first found his feet as a poet in the Rhymers’ Club, of which Dowson, Johnson, and Symons were members. Moreover, Yeats published some of his finest early poems—such as “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”—in the Rhymers’ anthologies. The all-male Rhymers’ Club embraced many other writers—including Victor Plarr, Ernest Radford, and John Todhunter—who worked together in order to open up a fresh debate about the need to find suitable poetic forms to embody their “religion of art”: a secular faith whose only deity was the aesthetic.

The large body of poetry issued by Rhymers’ Club is part of a ground-breaking corpus of literary works to which modern scholars have increasingly paid attention. Much of this fresh research shows why the literary *fin de siècle* paved the way for such Modernist figures as T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound (who had a detailed knowledge of his 1890s predecessors). As literary historians have widened their understanding of the literary canon, it has become clearer to see that this fast-paced decade brought to public attention a rich variety of innovative writings not only by popular male novelists such as Grant Allen, Kenneth Grahame, and Arthur Machen but also women authors such as George Egerton [Mary Chavelita Dunne], Michael Field (coauthors Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper), and Alice Meynell. “The Decadent 1890s: English Literary Culture and the *Fin de Siècle*” will give the participants the opportunity to study aspects of works by all of these writers (and more). The syllabus provides a richly textured understanding of why the diverse

decadents of this era were decidedly modern not only in their skeptical reaction against the positivism that dominated the Victorian age but also in the literary ground they laid for a later generation of Modernists.

The seminar will take place at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library of the University of California, Los Angeles, which contains not only the world's largest archive of materials related to Oscar Wilde and his fin-de-siècle circle. These holdings comprise a significant part of the Clark Library's principal collections, which include English and European books issued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the history of California, and innovations in typography and fine printing (notably, the Eric Gill collection). Full information about the scope of the Clark Library's collections can be found at <http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/clarklib/>; this website contains an efficient finding tool that readers can use in order to navigate through the unrivaled resources of the archive containing many different kinds of documents linked with both Wilde and his literary associates of the 1890s.

At UCLA, the Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies oversees the administration of all of the numerous academic programs arranged at the Clark Library. Moreover, the Center is responsible for making a variety of short-term and longer term fellowships to scholars whose research focuses on aspects of the Clark Library's collections. Ever since the Clark became part of the UCLA library system in 1934, the university has continued to strengthen its fin-de-siècle holdings. Especially notable among the Clark's stock of rare fin-de-siècle books are titles issued by avant-garde publishers, Elkin Mathews and John Lane. In 1892 and 1894, Mathews and Lane, who for a number of years joined forces under their imprint The Bodley Head, who not only issued the two anthologies assembled by the Rhymers' Club but also brought to public attention an extraordinarily diverse body of cutting-edge fiction, poetry, and non-fiction throughout the 1890s. These publishers similarly took considerable risk when they issued the decidedly decadent and immediately legendary periodical, *The Yellow Book*, in April 1894. The Clark Library's collections contain not only the larger proportion of titles that Mathews and Lane (both jointly and separately)

issued in the 1890s but also many books published by other publishers that emerged during this decade, such as William Heinemann, Grant Richards, and Leonard Smithers.

Since the early 1990s, the Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies has supported some eight one- and two-day conferences dedicated to exploring facets of aspects of fin-de-siècle literary culture. These conferences have resulted in the publication of three substantial collections of essays, *Oscar Wilde: Contextual Conditions* (University of Toronto Press, 2003) *The Fin-de-Siècle Poem: English Literary Culture and the 1890s* (Ohio University Press, 2005), and *Oscar Wilde and Modern Culture: A Legend in the Making* (Ohio University Press, 2008). The Project Director, Professor Joseph Bristow, has edited all three of these volumes. Moreover, in 2001 and 2005 the Center further demonstrated its commitment to making the Wilde archive accessible to budding scholars by arranging, with the help of the Ahmanson Foundation, two upper-division seminars whose main purpose was to introduce undergraduates to techniques in using manuscript materials in their research.

It was on the basis of these successful Ahmanson-sponsored undergraduate seminars that Professor Bristow developed his syllabus for the 2007 NEH-funded seminar, “The Oscar Wilde Archive: His Life, His Work, His Legend.” At present, Professor Bristow is working closely with the Center to ensure that the NEH-funded seminar on Wilde’s work results in two related projects: first, a conference that will enable some of the seminar participants to present research on their findings in the Clark’s Wilde archive, and secondly, a collection of essays based on their research papers. In many ways, “The Decadent 1890s” broadens the scope of the 2007 NEH-sponsored seminar to a much larger range of fin-de-siècle writings that will, among other things, reveal Wilde’s position along a spectrum of highly original and on occasion polemical literary authors who came to prominence during this period.

As Appendix A on p.20 shows, Professor Bristow has devised a demanding and rigorous but lively and diverse syllabus that integrates readings of indisputably canonical figures from the 1890s (such as Aubrey Beardsley, Ernest Dowson, Oscar Wilde, and W.B. Yeats) with lesser-known works

by writers who represent different facets of the decadent avant-garde—notably Grant Allen, Ella D’Arcy, Michael Field (i.e. coauthors Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper), Arthur Machen, and Arthur Symons. Moreover, the syllabus calls attention to apparently anti-decadent writers such as Alice Meynell who published her highly respected, deeply religious work with the same company that issued *The Yellow Book*. Participants will also have the opportunity to explore some of the most influential decadent periodicals of the period—not just *The Yellow Book* but also *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, *The Studio* and *The Savoy*. Further, since the 1890s marked the heyday of the decorated book Professor Bristow will draw the seminar members’ attention to developments in the binding, printing, and illustration of 1890s volumes that frequently appeared in limited or collectors’ editions, since the publishers marketed these books as artworks in their own right.

#### *Project Content and Implementation*

For most of the five weeks of “The Decadent 1890s,” participants will convene at the Clark Library for three hours (9.30am to 12.30pm) each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning from June 22, 2009 to Friday, July 24, 2009. There will, however, be several exceptions to this pattern, as I explain in more detail below.

On Monday, June 22, the participants will gather for a day-long session (9.30am to 4.30pm), which will involve three activities. First, Professor Bristow will hold a 45-minute introductory session at which all of the seminar members can share a few words about themselves, especially their critical and scholarly interests. The Project Director will also make sure that everyone has received copies of the various Course Readers that will have been prepared for the seminar.

This session will be followed by a 45-minute introduction to the Clark Library by librarians Bruce Whiteman and Carol Sommer, who will arrange for all of the visitors to be registered as library users. Since there are a number of protocols that all users of the Clark must follow, it is important for Mr. Whiteman to explain a number of rules and procedures for ordering up books, delivery times, copying facilities, use of scanners, and so on. After a short break, the project director and librarian will meet for a further thirty minutes to explain how the participants can make best use of the variety



of hard-copy and electronic catalogs attached to UCLA's very large library system. Once the visitors have become acquainted with the catalogs (as well as useful databases), then the computing assistant, Alastair Thorne, will explain how the operation of the wi-fi system in the library, sending and receiving e-mail, the use of printers, the MOODLE site (through which participants can share files) set up specially for the seminar, and the software connected with "Bruin Online" (the server which will enable all of the participants to have access to databases to which UCLA subscribes). Mr. Thorne will also explain the arrangements for registering as a "Bruin Online" user, which will take place on the main campus on Tuesday, June 23, 2009.

At the end of the morning session, the participants will meet the two Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) whose main responsibility will be to deliver books and articles that are not held at the Clark. Although the Clark's collection of fin-de-siècle volumes is impressive, it does not maintain the broad range of journals to be found at the Young Research Library (YRL), UCLA. Moreover, the YRL holds a very large number of secondary sources that are not housed at the Clark. Further, the GSRs will ensure that materials the participants would like to share with all members of the seminar are scanned and uploaded on to the MOODLE site. The GSAs will provide an invaluable service for twenty hours each per week. Each participant will be assigned to one of the GSRs.

The Center will host at the Clark a lunchtime reception from 12.30pm to 2.00pm. In the afternoon, the Project Director will meet in his private office with half of the participants for 15-20-minute meetings (he will meet with the remaining half on Wednesday, June 24). During these individual meetings, Professor Bristow will be able to make sure that the visitors have settled in comfortably to their new surroundings. He will also take note of each participant's research interests.

On the morning of Tuesday, June 23, the participants will be invited to attend three sessions on UCLA's main campus, which is located at Westwood, some twelve miles from the Clark. The first session will be an introduction to the Young Research Library, especially the Department of Special Collections which houses a variety of papers of direct relevance to the seminar. At this session, all of

the participants will be issued with UCLA library cards with borrowing rights. The second session will involve escorting the participants to the Bruin Online office so that they can obtain the software to gain access to the databases to which UCLA subscribes. During the third session Alastair Thorne at the Center's main campus office will check each participant's laptop, just to make sure that the necessary software has been downloaded.

On Wednesday, June 24, the participants will explore some of the most notable critical assessments of the 1890s. Our discussion will begin with an evaluation of Holbrook Jackson's *The Eighteen-Nineties* (1913), a remarkably comprehensive study that remains a standard work of reference in the field. We will compare Jackson's perspective on the period with the editorial commentary and wide-ranging contents of Talia Schaffer's impressive anthology, *Literature and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (2007). Our readings of these materials will be complemented by an overview of another recent anthology, *The Fin de Siècle, c. 1880-1900: A Reader in Cultural History* (2000), edited by Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst. The two new anthologies will serve as important resources for the participants throughout the whole course of the seminar, since these new volumes reveal the ways in which our scholarly knowledge of the period has been diversifying since the time Jackson published his finely researched account. All of these materials will help the seminar members understand how and why the terms "decadent" and "fin-de-siècle" not only enjoyed wide circulation during the 1890s but also quickly possessed a range of counter-cultural, sexually rebellious, and morally questionable connotations, particularly in relation to growing fears about cultural degeneration in an imperial age. In the afternoon, the Project Director will complete his individual meetings with the participants.

The third discussion will focus on a specific case study: the Rhymers' Club, an influential all-male group that Ernest Rhys and W.B. Yeats founded in 1890. The club, whose impact on the English literary world of the 1890s is hard to overestimate, met regularly at the Cheshire Cheese public house on Fleet Street. The most important meetings of this literary set, which lasted until 1904, resulted in two noteworthy anthologies, the first of which we will examine during this session. The *Book of the Rhymers' Club*, which Elkin Mathews issued in 1892, is significant because it shows this

poetic circle's deep commitment to such phenomena as fixed forms (such as the villanelle), the “religion of art” (poems about aesthetics that exploit Christian iconography), and the poetics of the city. Many of the leading figures in the Rhymers' Club, such as Ernest Dowson and Arthur Symons, will return in our explorations of later developments in 1890s literature (especially in relation to Leonard Smithers' periodical, *The Savoy*, which created a stir when it appeared in 1896). Dowson and Symons count among a number of 1890s authors whose decadence relates to their noticeable responsiveness to French *Symbolisme*—notably the poetry of Paul Verlaine.

At the start of second week of the seminar, the seminar members will look at the more substantial *Second Book of the Rhymers' Club* (1894) in relation to the wider range of poetry published jointly by Mathews and Lane. Participants will therefore see that the poetry lists that Mathews and Lane developed before, during, and after their five-year partnership arguably became the most preeminent literary publishers of the period.

Owing to the fact that Friday, July 3, is a university holiday, there will be two sessions (one in the morning, another in the afternoon) on Wednesday, July 1. The morning will be devoted to looking at the writings of three women poets whose works have attracted growing critical attention in recent years. The first is Dollie Radford, spouse of Ernest Radford who was a figurehead in the Rhymers' Club. Dollie Radford's first collection, *A Light Load*, was issued by Mathews in 1891; her third volume, *Songs and Other Verses*, appeared from Lane five years later. Thereafter, our attention will turn to two of the fine volumes of poetry that coauthors Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper published under the name of “Michael Field.” The first of these books, *Sight and Song* (published by Mathews and Lane in 1892), comprises a series of ambitious poems on major European artworks; Michael Field's ventures into ekphrasis emerged from a critical dialogue with American art historian Bernard Berenson. The second of Michael Field's impressive collections that we will study is *Underneath the Bough* (1893), a sequence of four “song-books” that took their inspiration from Elizabethan lyrics, which the coauthors decided against placing with Mathews and Lane (they secured publication with George Bell). In the afternoon, the participants will have the opportunity to examine

the finely crafted lyrics of Alice Meynell, who stood as a strong candidate for the post of poet laureate after Alfred Tennyson's death in 1892. Meynell, a Catholic writer who was ostensibly very anti-decadent in outlook, may first appear to be out of place in the lists of Mathews and Lane. Yet she maintains a central place in theirs lists because her work represented the era's devotion to metrical experimentation (often in tightly controlled poetic forms). Not surprisingly, Meynell was one of the most advanced theorists of poetic rhythm during the 1890s, and Mathews and Lane published her most important essays on prosody. Together, Dollie Radford, Michael Field, and Alice Meynell form an important part of a canon of 1890s poetry by women that modern scholarship—as the list of recommended reading in Appendixes B and C show—has begun to study in depth.

On July 6 at the start of week three, the participants will have such breadth of insight into the activities of Mathews and Lane that they will be prepared to approach the first two volumes of *The Yellow Book*, which began publication in 1894 (and lasted, through some thirteen numbers, until 1897). American novelist Henry Harland, who has recently settled at London, edited the at times controversial literary contents of this exquisitely printed quarterly. While some of Harland's selections for the first number horrified some readers (Symons' "Stella Maris," a poem celebrating a sexual encounter with a prostitute is one of the most memorable examples), it was the activities of the *enfant terrible* art editor, Aubrey Beardsley, which gained *The Yellow Book* its lasting notoriety. Not only did the luridly-colored covers of the journal deliberately connote the steamy sensuality of French "yellow-back" fictions, Beardsley's depiction of a devilish-looking young man leering at a buxom woman's cleavage at a *bal masqué* tested the limits of propriety. As the seminar members will see, not all of Harland's *Yellow Book* went out of its way to stimulate a prurient audience. One of the most distinguished literary contributions to the first number is Henry James's "The Death of the Lion."

On the Wednesday morning of the seminar's third week, the participants will be able to examine the second volume of *The Yellow Book*, which contains notable works of fiction by Ella D'Arcy, Charlotte Mew, Kenneth Grahame, and Netta Syrett—most of whom (apart from D'Arcy)

would firmly established their reputations after the turn of the century. One of the finest poems of the 1890s, John Davidson's "Thirty Bob a Week," appears in this volume. Since Beardsley had by this point of the 1890s become the most talked-about young artist in London, it will make sense for the seminar members to look at the illustrations that he published in the English edition of Wilde's biblical tragedy, *Salome*, which Mathews and Lane issued in 1894. Wilde's controversial drama, which the British state banned from performance in 1892, often figures as one of the most decidedly decadent works of the 1890s.

The fact that Beardsley ensured Wilde's exclusion from *The Yellow Book*, together with the fact that some of Beardsley's illustrations of Wilde's poke cruel fun at him, points to the ways in which Wilde—who reached his forties in the 1890s—could at times provoke negative reactions among a younger generation of writers and artists during the *fin de siècle*. On Friday, July 10, participants will be invited to compare Beardsley's dislike of what he considered Wilde's condescension with the poet John Gray's decision to dissociate himself from Wilde. In the early 1890s Wilde provided the monies to finance Gray's first volume of poetry, *Silverpoints* (1892), which Mathews and Lane issued in what is arguably the most beautifully produced volume (designed by Charles Ricketts) that they ever published. Before the volume appeared, Gray's intimate friendship with poet Marc-André Raffalovich, who despised Wilde, prevented any continuance of close relations with the Irish author. At this point of the seminar, it will be important for the seminar members to devote time to Wilde's controversial career for another reason as well. On April 5, 1895, when the police arrested Wilde on the charge of committing acts of "gross indecency," he was discovered to have a yellow-backed publication under his arm. One newspaper journalist assumed that Wilde was carrying *The Yellow Book*. In light of the negative publicity that this episode created for Lane (who was now the sole publisher of the periodical), he put pressure on Harland to change the editorial direction of the journal, which also resulted in the firing of Beardsley. As a consequence, the literary contents of the *The Yellow Book* became somewhat more conservative, and, as a consequence, by 1897 its sales had dropped off so much that it remained impossible to sustain publication.

Even though the early volumes of *The Yellow Book* maintains a central position in the emergence of a recognizably decadent literature of the 1890s, it is not entirely representative of the broader range of works that Lane issued, some of which enjoyed considerable commercial success. In the fourth week of the seminar, the participants will look at several titles that Mathews and Lane, and then Lane alone, began publishing in the “Keynotes” series in 1893. On Monday, July 13, the seminar members will study the volume by George Egerton that gave the series its title. *Keynotes* (1893), a collection of remarkable, explicitly feminist short stories that Egerton dedicated to Norwegian author Knut Hamsun, anticipates many of the decisive changes in literary style and structure which scholars usually associate with modernism. Participants will be encouraged to compare Egerton’s literary innovations, which attracted thousands of readers, with those of Olive Schreiner’s visionary *Dreams* (1890) and Ella D’Arcy’s sexually unapologetic *Monochromes* (1895). On Wednesday, July 15, our discussion will focus on the Arthur Machen’s supernatural tale, *The Three Impostors; or, The Transmutations* (1895), which holds a vital place in the development of late-Victorian Gothic. Since supernatural short stories have considerable prominence during the fin de siècle, the participants will have the opportunity to look as well at Machen’s *The Great God Pan; and the Inmost Light* (1894) and Vernon Lee’s *Hauntings* (1890). On Friday, July 17, the seminar members will explore the volume that became one of Lane’s best sellers—Grant Allen’s tale of time-travel, *The British Barbarians* (1895). This clever novel, which features the transplantation of a scholar from the twelfth century to the 1890s, focuses on how “barbarian” modern English society has become because of its irrational taboos (particularly in sexual matters).

At the start of the fifth week the participants will have the opportunity to meet and talk with two of the most distinguished scholars to have dedicated their careers to the decadent writing of the 1890s. The first, Margaret D. Stetz (University of Delaware), whose 1982 Harvard dissertation provides the first sustained analysis of George Egerton’s career, has published very extensively on women writers of the fin de siècle, with special reference to Mathews and Lane. The second, Mark Samuels Lasner (University of Delaware), is one of the most prominent collectors of fin-de-siècle

literature. Together with Professor Stetz, Mr. Lasner has shared not only his findings from his unrivaled collection but also his immense bibliographical knowledge of the period in a number of important publications, including, most recently, the catalogue accompanying a Grolier Club exhibition of literary portraits from the 1890s. Professor Stetz and Mr. Samuels Lasner will make two one-hour presentations during the morning on Monday, July 20. During the afternoon, they will make themselves available to discuss their work with the participants on an individual basis. They will also be available for consultation on the morning of Tuesday, July 21.

The concluding two sessions of the “The Decadent 1890s” will turn to the brief but notable appearance of Leonard Smithers—who started out in the late 1880s as a publisher of clandestine erotica—in the world of decadent writing. Smithers’ boldest venture was the publication of *The Savoy*, which ran for eight issues in 1896. This extraordinary periodical, which Symons and Beardsley jointly edited, seized on the opportunity to revive the spirit of *The Yellow Book*’s earliest days, featuring articles and illustrations whose support of seemingly immoral writing was bound to raise more a few eyebrows. The participants will examine the first issue, which contains notable contributions by George Bernard Shaw (“On Going to Church”) and Havelock Ellis (on Zola’s fiction), as well as the first installment of Beardsley’s unfinished adaptation of the Tannhäuser legend (“Under the Hill”) and one of Dowson’s sacrilegious poems (“Impenitentia Ultima”). Given that Beardsley’s provocative drawings dominated the artworks that were reproduced in *The Savoy*, it is not surprising to discover that his contemporaries at times quipped that the periodical should have been called *The Beardsley*.

Our final session, on Friday, July 24, will focus on three important publications that Smithers issued before he went bankrupt in 1900. The first is the expanded edition of Symons’ *Silhouettes* (1896), a volume of poems about the nighttime city, which Lane originally brought out four years earlier. Symons’ work, whose nocturnal obsessions bear the influence of James Whistler’s famous paintings of London and Charles Baudelaire’s “Spleen de Paris,” in many respects embodies the qualities that literary histories tend to attribute to 1890s decadence. The same is true of Ernest Dowson’s *Verses* (1896), for which Beardsley provided a provocative frontispiece. This volume will

also be of interest to the seminar members, who at this stage will be able to see how the careers of these two members of the Rhymers' Club developed in the 1890s. Neither Symons' nor Dowson's volumes brought Smithers commercial success. The only volume that made Smithers a reasonable sum was Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Smithers was the only publisher to accept Wilde's work after the Irish writer was released from jail in the spring of 1897. Some six editions of the Ballad appeared before Wilde died from meningitis in late November 1900. In some respects, this important poem—in which Wilde's speaker declares that “All men kill the thing they love”—can stand as an epitaph for the decadent writings of the 1890s.

All of the participants will be encouraged to pursue one or two directed research projects related to the syllabus throughout the course of the seminar. At the end of the first week, when the Project Director has established the specific interests of the seminar members, he will incorporate into the schedule of discussions spots of ten to fifteen minutes when participants can share their research findings with the seminar members. It may be that a collection of papers will result from the research projects.

#### *Project Faculty and Staff*

The sole member of academic faculty for “The Decadent 1890s” is the Project Director, Professor Joseph Bristow, who has been closely involved with many Wilde-related activities at the Clark Library since he joined UCLA in January 1997. His scholarly research on the work of Wilde and his circle dates back to 1991 when he published an edition of *The Importance of Being Earnest* with Routledge. In 2005 his definitive variorum edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* appeared from Oxford University Press. There is no question about Professor Bristow's preeminence in the study of fin-de-siècle literature. As his full résumé indicates (see Appendix C, pp.33-37), he is a very accomplished scholar with some four monographs and over a dozen edited books to his name. At UCLA from 1997 to 2007, he edited (with Thomas Wortham) the leading journal *Nineteenth-Century Literature*. His scholarly articles—which include studies of 1890s writers such as Michael Field, Venron Lee, and Rosamund Marriott Watson—have appeared in a broad range of collections and peer-reviewed



periodicals, including *Critical Inquiry*, *ELH*, *Literature and History*, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, and *Victorian Poetry*. He is editor of the Palgrave Macmillan series titled “Palgrave Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture,” which by the end of 2008 will contain some twenty-two titles. His record as a teacher is exceptionally strong. His “instructor rating” frequently attains in excess of 8.00 out of a possible 9.00 points.

#### *Participant Selection*

Participants will be selected by on the basis of their stated need to acquire advanced research skills in using a major archive based in the humanities. Ideally, participants will have some knowledge—even if only acquired at undergraduate level—of fin-de-siècle writing. The Summer Seminar will particularly welcome participants who have not had the benefit of studying in a rare book library that houses extensive unpublished materials. Applicants will be selected on the basis of the following documents: a 500-word statement of purpose that explains (a) why the Summer Seminar would enhance his or her professional and scholarly skills, and (b) the special contribution that s/he could make to the seminar; a writing sample of 3,000-8,000 words (this may be published work); and a résumé. Publicity for the Summer Seminar will make it clear that the program is open to all college-level instructors.

#### *Institutional Context*

The mission of the Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies at UCLA is to make the unique resources of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library accessible to anyone who needs to consult them. For the most part, the readership at the Clark Library comprises scholars conducting archival research in the humanities, as well as undergraduate and graduate students developing projects that relate to the collections. Some of the library users, however, are not affiliated with scholarly institutions. Such individuals include novelists and playwrights, independent scholars, and researchers linked with film, television, and theatre.

The Clark Library will provide participants with access not just to the Clark Library's resources but also the catalogs of the whole UCLA library system. At the Clark Library, there are several online terminals, wireless connections to the internet, microfiche and microform readers, printers, and photocopying facilities. Copies of the assigned and recommended readings which are held on open shelves will be available for participants on a book cart positioned in the main reading room. Rare book items, as well as manuscripts and typescripts, will be held on reserve behind the main desk, and will be available on request from Scott Jacobs, the Reader Services officer.

Since the Clark Library welcomes many seminar members each academic year, it maintains a comprehensive list of suitable short-term housing in the nearby area (see Appendix D). Suzanne Tatian, the Coordinator of Programs and Fellowships at the Clark Library, has responsibility for updating this list, which will of course be available to participants. Moreover, Ms. Tatian will be able to advise participants on how to make the most efficient use of both the Clark housing list ([www.humnet.ucla.edu/c1718cs/neh-housing.htm](http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/c1718cs/neh-housing.htm)) and UCLA's Community Housing List ([www.cho.ucla.edu](http://www.cho.ucla.edu)). At present, the monthly rent of a furnished room in a home close to the Clark Library averages \$7500, while a one-bedroom furnished apartment is likely to be in the \$1,250-1,700 range. Should seminar members prefer to rent a room in UCLA's dormitories, they can do so easily by contacting Candis Snoddy (Manager of Programs and Fellowships) at the Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies. (Details of UCLA's residence halls and summer rates are listed in Appendix D.) In 2007 several of the participants found [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com) an extremely useful resource because short-term accommodation (frequently used by people with contracts in the film and television industries) frequently comes available in its lists.