

Dr Jennifer Gouck

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Academic Positions

2025: Women in Research (WiRe) Fellow, University of Münster, Germany

Project Title: Exploring The ‘Abortion Road Trip’ in American Young Adult Fiction

My current project explores literary and cultural representations of teen pregnancy and abortion in contemporary American Young Adult (YA) texts, situating these representations within the rapidly changing, unstable, and increasingly conservative sociopolitical environment in America. By combining textual analysis of three novels (*Unpregnant* by Jenni Hendricks and Ted Caplan [2019]; *Girls on the Verge* by Sharon Biggs Waller [2019]; and *Plan A* by Deb Caletti [2023]) with real-life data, this research takes an interdisciplinary approach to examine what I term the ‘abortion road trip’ – a journey undertaken by a young female protagonist to access abortion care. The research conducted during this fellowship will lay the groundwork for a future book project entitled *Beyond the Problem Novel: Representing Teen Pregnancy, Abortion and Parenthood in Twenty-First Century American YA Fiction*.

2024: Library and Information Officer, Belfast Metropolitan College, Belfast, Northern Ireland

I provided research support to students and faculty across a diverse range of disciplines within the Arts and Humanities, IT, and vocational qualifications such as Motor Vehicle and Sports Massage. I also developed and lead the “Library Explorers” initiative. This project aimed to increase the confidence of students aged 14-16 from Special Schools in Northern Ireland in engaging with library services. Library Explorers also encouraged these students to read for pleasure, consequently complementing their academic growth, increasing overall literacy, and fostering a culture of lifelong learning.

2019–2024: Occasional Lecturer and Tutor, School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin, Ireland

I designed, delivered, and convened two undergraduate courses: a third year seminar, ‘Girlhood in Twenty-First-Century American YA’ and a first year elective course, ‘Banned in the USA: Banned, Challenged and Controversial YA Fiction in America’. I also lectured and taught on the team-taught second year survey modules, ‘Modern American Literature’ and ‘Philosophy and Literature’.

2018–2023: Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholar

Thesis Title: “If people were rain, I was drizzle and she was a hurricane.”: An Exploration of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl in Contemporary American Young Adult Literature.

My doctoral thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach to understand how the Manic Pixie Dream Girl (MPDG) trope manifests across contemporary American YA literature, media, and culture. I argue that the seemingly-quirky Pixie is a hyperfeminine cultural steam valve who merely masquerades as difference while reinforcing the norm -- a character designed as an object of patriarchal fantasy and who, to paraphrase film critic Nathan Rabin, simply disappears once her work is done.

My project was fully funded by a nationally-competitive Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship. I am one of a handful of recipients in the field of Children’s and Young Adult Literature since the award’s establishment in 1999.

Education

2018–2023: PhD in English, University College Dublin (funded by the Irish Research Council)

2015–2016: MA English Literary Studies (American Studies Pathway), Queen’s University Belfast

2012–2015: BA (Hons) English, Queen’s University Belfast

Research

Publications in Process

2025 “Audiences vs. Authors.” *Children’s Literature and Culture: An Introduction*, edited by Rebecca Rowe, Routledge.

Journal Articles

2023 “The Problematic (Im)Persistence of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl in Popular Culture and YA Fiction.” *Women’s Studies*, vol. 52, no. 5, 2023, pp. 525-544. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00497878.2023.2216933>.

2021 “The Manic Pixie Dream Girl in US YA Fiction: Introducing a Narrative Model.” *The International Journal of Young Adult Literature*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2021, pp.1–20. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24877/IJYAL.49>.

2018 “The Viewer Society: ‘New Panopticism’, Surveillance, and the Body in Dave Eggers’ *The Circle*.” *Irish Journal of American Studies Online*, no. 7, 2018, pp.57-64.

Journal Contributions

2020 Corbett, Emily and Leah Phillips. “Ploughing the Field: A Discussion About YA Studies.” *International Journal of Young Adult Literature*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2020. Invited participant.

Other Publications

2024 Review of *Us in the Before and After* by Jenny Valentine. *Inis Magazine*.

2023 Review of *Mia and the Lightcasters* by Janelle McCurdy. *Inis Magazine*.

2022 Review of *Baby Love* by Jacqueline Wilson. *Inis Magazine*.
Review of *The Dangerous Life of Ophelia Bottom* by Sue Bower. *Inis Magazine*.
Review of *The Girl With No Soul* by Morgan Owen. *Inis Magazine*.

2021 “Beyond the Books: Where a Love of YA Can Take You.” *Paper Lanterns: The Teen and Young Adult Literary Journal*, regular feature Issues 2–6.

2020 “Reflections on ‘YA Studies Around the World’.” *YA Studies Association Blog*.

2019 “Conference Reflections: ISSCL, PCA, and CBC2019.” *YA Literature, Media and Culture Network*.

2018 “Flash Review: *What If It’s Us?* by Becky Albertalli and Adam Silvera.” *YA Literature, Media and Culture Network*.
Author Interview: Cethan Leahy. *YA Literature, Media and Culture Network*.
Review of Louise O’Neill’s *The Surface Breaks*. *YA Literature, Media and Culture Network*.

2017 Irish Association for American Studies Postgraduate Symposium Report. *Irish Association for American Studies Blog*,

2015 “‘Because of who we are’: American Exceptionalism, Images, and the War on Terror.” *American Literature and Culture at Queen’s*.

Invited Talks and Guest Lectures

November 2024 Panellist: International Journal of Young Adult Literature Special Panel. YA Studies Association Conference. Online.

March 2024 “Everyone gets a miracle”: Exploring Idealised Girlhood in John Green’s *Paper Towns*. EL503: Picture, Books, and Film, MA Children’s and Young Adult Literature, Dublin City University. Dream Girl, Dream Boy, Dream Gay? The Possibility of ‘Alt Pixies’ in Young Adult Literature. Goldsmiths’ Children’s and YA Literature Research Forum, Centre for Language, Culture and Learning, Goldsmiths, University of London.

February 2024 Adolescence When There Is No Future? Young Adult ‘Sick Lit’ and John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars*. ENG41670: Contemporary US Genre Fiction, MA Literature and Culture, University College Dublin.

September 2022 Teaching Close Reading. School of English, Drama and Film Tutor Induction Day, University College Dublin.

April 2022 UCD, Manic Pixies, and Me: My PhD Journey. International Structured PhD Program, University of Limerick.

Conference Presentations

November 2024 Teaching Banned Books. YA Studies Association Conference. Online. Podcast format with Jamie Bienhoff, Ayanni Cooper, and Corinne Matthews.

June 2024 Exploring the Manic Pixie Dream Boy in Jenn Bennett's *The Anatomical Shape of a Heart*. Children's Literature Association 2024: Looking Back, Looking Forward, ChLA at 50. University of Wisconsin-Madison, United States.

February 2024 Banned in the USA, Taught at UCD: Teaching Banned YA Books in Ireland. 2024 Summit on Research and Teaching of Young Adult Literature. Online conference hosted by Oklahoma State University and Aquinas College.

June 2023 Drizzle, Rain, Hurricane: An Ecocritical Reading of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl. Children's Literature Association 2023: Sustainability Through Story, University of Washington Bellevue.

June 2021 John Green's *Paper Towns* as a Manic Pixie Dream Girl Interventionist Text. Popular Culture Association 2021. Online conference hosted by the Popular Culture Association.

January 2021 "Who knew reinventing yourself could be so easy?": Fashioning the Manic Pixie Dream Girl. Fashion, Body and Culture. Online conference hosted by the London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research.

October 2020 Becoming Pixie: Conceptualising the Manic Pixie Dream Girl. Conceptions of Girlhood Now and Then: "Girl's Literature" and Beyond. Online conference hosted by Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden.

June 2020 Who's That Girl? Tracing the Pop-Culture Footprint of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl. Children's Literature Association 2020, University of Washington Bellevue. *Cancelled due to COVID-19*.

April 2020 Putting the 'Manic' in Manic Pixie Dream Girl? Representing Mental Health in MPDGYA. Poster presentation, MindReading 2020, RCPI Dublin. *Cancelled due to COVID-19*.

May 2019 "I contain multitudes": Echoing the Canon in Manic Pixie Dream Girl YA Narratives. Child and the Book, University of Zadar.

April 2019 Manic Pixie Dream Girl: Twenty-First Century Invention or Modern Muse? A YA Perspective. Popular Culture Association 2019, Washington DC.

May 2018 "The Homosexual Agenda? I think it's more like the Homo Sapiens Agenda. That's really the point, right?" Reading Gender, Sexuality, and Power in *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*. Reading YA Symposium, University of Birmingham.

November 2017 "Welcome to your tape." Union and Disunion in Jay Asher's *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Irish Association for American Studies Postgraduate Symposium, Trinity College Dublin.

April 2017 "Destroying the Lie?" The Manic Pixie Dream Girl in American Young Adult Fiction. IAAS 2017, Ulster University.

November 2016 "They're good boys really. This all just got out of hand." Representing Rape (Culture) in Louise O'Neill's *Asking for It*. IAAS Postgraduate Symposium, University College Cork.

June 2016 The Viewer Society: 'New Panopticism, Surveillance, and the Body in Dave Eggers' *The Circle*. Common Ground VII, Queen's University Belfast.

Funding, Prizes and Awards

2024 Research Bursary, Irish Association for American Studies

2022 Exceptional Contribution to Learning Award, UCD Teaching and Learning Awards.

2022 Laura Bassi Scholarship, Bassi Foundation. Noteworthy Applicant Award.

2020	International Research Society for Children's Literature Mentoring Program. Awarded mentorship with Dr Blanka Grzegorczyk, University of Cambridge.
2019	Postgraduate Conference Bursary, Irish Association for American Studies.
2019	Popular Culture Association Michael Schoenecke Travel Grant for Graduate Students. Shortlisted.
2018	Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship.
2018	Irish Society for the Study of Children's Literature Biennial Award for an Outstanding Thesis on Children's Literature. Shortlisted.
2017	IAAS Conference Bursary, Irish Association for American Studies.
2016	WTM Riches Essay Prize, Irish Association for American Studies.
2015	Postgraduate Committee of the School of English Postgraduate Bursary, Queen's University Belfast.
2013	Queen's University Belfast School of English Annual Prize.

Public Engagement

2024	What Are Kids Reading These Days? Guest Speaker for Ards Peninsula University of the Third Age (U3A), Northern Ireland.
2023	Interview: The Manic Pixie Dream Girl Archetype, Campus Magazine, PUC-Campinas, Brazil.
2022	Expert Consultant for graphic journalism piece on the history and development of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl, Fnewsmagazine, School of the Arts Institute of Chicago.

Teaching Experience

Undergraduate Teaching

a) Course Coordinator

2024: Banned in the USA: Banned, Challenged, and Controversial YA Fiction in America (Stage One)

- Designed, implemented, and coordinated the course, an elective which explores book banning in the United States since the turn of the twenty-first century. The module asks why these books are banned and by whom, discusses the complicated relationship between prizewinning and banned books, and examines the cultural shift from challenging books to challenging authors.
- Prepared and delivered weekly one-hour lectures to 50 undergraduate students from across the University (majors included English, History, and Electronic Engineering).
- Designed and assessed innovative student assignments including a reflective response assignment and a report or presentation in which students plan events for Banned Books Week.

2021–2024 Girlhood in Twenty-First-Century American Young Adult Fiction (Stage Three)

- Designed, implemented, and coordinated the course, which explores conceptualisations of girlhood across a range of YA fiction published in the United States between 2005 and 2021.
- Prepared and delivered seminars to over 50 Stage Three undergraduates across this period.
- Supervised final projects.
- Designed and assessed student assignments including close readings, essay proposals, and traditional essays.

b) Tutor

2024: Philosophy and Literature (Stage Two)

- Collaborated with colleagues on this team-taught module.
- Designed curriculum materials for tutorials.

- Prepared and delivered one-hour tutorials on topics such as: research skills, library skills, writing an annotated bibliography, and writing an academic essay.

2019–2024: Modern American Literature (Stage Two)

- Collaborated with colleagues on this team-taught survey module.
- Designed curriculum materials for tutorials.
- Prepared and delivered one-hour tutorials to over 300 Stage Two undergraduates across this period.
- Assessed students' contribution to class (both in-person and via worksheets), traditional essays, and exams.

Selected Student Feedback

“Jennifer Gouck was the most helpful and supportive tutor I have ever had. Her feedback on worksheets and the midterm essay greatly advanced my essay writing skills.”

“Ms. Gouck is an excellent teacher. Her style of teaching is professional but still just personal enough that it makes me as a student feel like my learning is her utmost priority.”

“I have learned so much from Jennifer in tutorials this trimester! Her teaching style is interactive and engaging, yet she creates such a comfortable atmosphere for students to relax and express their opinions openly! Jennifer’s classes were always so innovative and unique and she creates a really light-hearted atmosphere for students to enjoy.”

Professional Development

November 2024	Reviewer Training, delivered by Julia Eccleshare MBE on behalf of Children's Books Ireland.
June 2024	Digital Badge in Universal Design for Learning, Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) and UCD University for All.
September 2023	Supporting Trans Students, UCD.
July 2023	Mental Health First Aid, Public Health Agency Northern Ireland and AwareNI.
February 2023	Engaging Students, UCD Teaching and Learning.
January 2023	Understanding Executive Functions, The Academic Writer's Space.
November 2021	LGBTQ+ Inclusion in the Classroom, UCD University for All and ShoutOut.
April 2021	ThesisIn3 Workshop on Research Communication.
August 2020	Take Your Teaching Online, Open University Short Course.
March 2020	Brightspace Online Learning Training, UCD School of English, Drama and Film.
September 2019	Tutor Training Workshop, UCD School of English, Drama and Film.
April 2019	Research Integrity (Arts and Humanities), Epigeum.
October 2019	Online Research Profiles and Bibliometrics, UCD.
October 2018	Identifying Your Transferable Skills, UCD.
August 2018	Pictures of Youth: An Introduction to Children's Visual Culture, University of York.
July 2018/19	Children's Literature Summer School, University of Antwerp, Belgium.
January 2018	Transgender Awareness Training, SAILNI and Queen's University Belfast.
September 2016	Disability Support Training, Disability Services, Queen's University Belfast.

Languages

French	Reading proficiency
German	Reading proficiency

Relevant Professional Experience

2016–2024: Student Support Provider, Disability Services, Queen’s University Belfast

I provided support to students with a range of disabilities and mental health needs such as autism, AD(H)D, dyspraxia, anxiety, and depression. Such support included study skills tutoring, note taking, and library assistance.

2016–2018: Senior Bookseller, Children’s and YA Department, Waterstones

I ran the YA section of the Children’s and YA Department in Waterstones, a bookshop in Belfast. This involved keeping on top of current trends in YA, making recommendations for store stock titles, and recommending titles for our customers.

Service to Profession

Institutional Service

2020–2022	PhD Representative, College of Arts and Humanities Research Forum, University College Dublin.
2020–2022	PhD Representative, School of English, Drama and Film Postgraduate Forum, University College Dublin.
2015–2016	Student Representative (Postgraduate Taught), Staff-Student Consultative Committee, Queen’s University Belfast.
2015–2016	Student Representative (Postgraduate Taught), Postgraduate Committee, Queen’s University Belfast.
2013–2015	Undergraduate Student Peer Mentor, Queen’s University Belfast.

Service to Discipline

2024–2027	Membership Committee, Children’s Literature Association.
2024–2025	Guest Editor, Reflecting on ‘The Teen Whisperer’: Twenty Years of John Green, Special Issue, <i>International Journal of Young Adult Literature</i> .
2024	Advisory Committee Member, Young Adult Studies Association.
2021–2023	Executive Committee Member and Digital Coordinator, Irish Society for the Study of Children’s Literature.
2020–2024	Secretary-Treasurer, Young Adult Studies Association.
2020–2022	Organiser and Co-Founder, Young Adult Studies Association Fiction Book Club.
2020	Co-Founder, Young Adult Studies Association Critical Theory Reading Group.

Conference and Seminar Organisation

2023	Organising Committee, YA Studies Around the World: The Second Series, YA Studies Association, online.
2022	Organising Committee, YA Studies Around the World II, YA Studies Association, online.
2022	Organising Committee, YA Studies Around the World: The Series, YA Studies Association, online.
2020	Organising Committee, YA Studies Around the World, YA Studies Association, online.
2020	Conference Assistant, MindReading 2020, RCPI, Dublin. <i>Cancelled due to COVID 19.</i>
2018	Conference Assistant, Metaphoric Stammers and Embodied Speakers, University College Dublin.
2016	Conference Assistant, IBAAS 2016, Queen’s University Belfast.

Professional Memberships and Associations

Children's Literature Association
International Girls Studies Association
International Research Society for Children's Literature
Irish Association for American Studies
Irish Society for the Study of Children's Literature
Popular Culture Association
Young Adult Studies Association (Founding Member)