

Research and Innovation Overview 2024

Department of Media Studies

During the 2022-23 academic year, the Department of Media Studies at Maynooth University employed 8.5 full-time staff, including a Department Executive Assistant. Two additional fixed-term contract staff covered a vacant post and a research buyout, and the department hosted three postdoctoral researchers funded through major grants. With a vibrant PhD programme, the department supported eight PhD students, two of whom commenced in 2022-23, and saw one student successfully complete their degree. The department produced a remarkable range of research outputs, including three books, five book chapters, 19 peer-reviewed journal articles, and one exhibition.

Head of Department:s Dr Sarah Arnold



Research Themes and Focus Areas

The department's research covers a broad range of media studies topics, with key focus areas including:

- **Gender and Work in the Creative Industries:** Research exploring the intersections of Creative Industries, media work, digital labour, and feminist theory continues to be a significant focus, contributing to global discussions on gender and technology.
- **Cultural and Consumer Studies:** Faculty members examine media consumption patterns, advertising culture, and the evolving role of media in shaping societal norms.
- **Digital Arts and Humanities:** The department contributes to the development of feminist approaches to digital arts and humanities, with a focus on amplifying marginalized voices.



Significant Research Outputs

In 2022-23, the department produced several high-impact publications and secured prestigious research grants:

Publications

- Dr Kylie Jarrett's book *Digital Labour* was published by Polity and explores digital labour in the media industries
- Dr Stephanie Rains published "Advertising and Consumer Culture in Ireland 1922-1962" (Liverpool University Press), contributing to the field of Irish media history.
- Dr Sarah Arnold and Dr Anne O'Brien published a paper titled, "I'm so lucky": narratives of struggle, unfairness and luck in among new entrants to the Irish media industries, in the *Creative Industries Journal*. Their paper described the complexities and contradictory nature of career narratives and experiences..

Awards and Grants

- The department secured five active grants totaling €1,080,380. Notable projects include RESIST, a multi-institutional and international research project funded through Horizon Europe, with €400,000 in funding awarded to Maynooth University.
- The Full Stack Feminism project, led by Dr Jeneen Naji, received €264,470 from the AHRC/IRC Digital Humanities fund, while *Women in Focus*, led by Dr Sarah Arnold, received €128,278 to explore women's amateur films.



Collaborations and Partnerships

The department actively collaborates with national and international research partners, fostering interdisciplinary projects:

- **Women in Focus Project:** Dr Sarah Arnold collaborates with the Irish Film Archive to explore amateur filmmaking by women between 1930 and 1970, building on the IRC New Foundations Invisible Women Project and, which has led to the recently funded Empowering Archives initiative.
- **Full Stack Feminism:** Led by Dr Jeneen Naji, this project engages community groups, artists, and archivists across the UK and Ireland to develop feminist digital art practices. It hosts events in museums and universities to amplify underrepresented voices.



Research Impact and Societal Contributions

The department's research has broad societal impact, particularly in gender studies and media education:

- **Public Engagement:** The RESIST project, led by Professor Gavan Titley, unites 40 queer feminist collectives across Europe to combat anti-gender politics, fostering community-based activism and engagement.
- **Gender Equality in Education:** The GEMINI project, involving Irish secondary schools, engages with students and teachers to develop an online toolkit for teaching gender equality through serial drama, set to be piloted in 2025.



Future Directions

The department will continue to build on its research in Creative Industries and work, equality and media, and digital humanities. Future projects will include expanding collaborations on feminist digital practices and further exploring media's role in social justice movements.

The Department of Media Studies at Maynooth University remains a leader in research, contributing to important discussions on media, gender, and society. With strong international collaborations, impactful publications, and successful grant applications, the department continues to shape the future of media studies both in Ireland and internationally.