

CFP: Nobody Cares but Everybody Should: Toward a Smarter History of the Novel
Special Issue of *Studies in the Novel* 2024

The history of the novel as we reflexively rehearse it often ignores well-documented and under-acknowledged research from other areas of the discipline. In the wilds of literary criticism—reading essays, reviewing books, listening to conference papers—many of us know what it is to encounter a received truth about the novel that we recognize, from a more specialized perspective, to be untrue. This special issue is dedicated to the targeted demolition of the commonplaces that can work as the foundations of our scholarship—convenient assumptions that are neither shared nor demonstrably true.

Studies in the Novel is an ideal forum for cross-temporal and cross-regional projects; a truism in one field is a truth bomb in another. What does it take to move knowledge from one area of study into another, especially when those key findings upend central assumptions in that field? This special issue uses the novel as a shared object of study to bring those perspectives into conversation. To this end, we seek work drawn from world literatures, comparativist ethnic studies, and contemporary genre forms, as well as the realist tradition in English. Evidence drawn from computational data is especially encouraged.

To be considered for this special issue, please submit a 4,000-word essay by September 1, 2023.

Earlier expressions of interest and proposals of topics are also welcome; the editors, Sarah Allison and Megan Ward, would be happy to correspond further. Given the breadth of the topic, the issue will include 12-15 short pieces rather than longer articles.

Essays should identify a "true fact" about the novel that can be disproven by well-documented and underacknowledged research or data already in circulation. Why is the received truth false— and pervasive? What body of evidence needs to be considered? And why does it matter?