

# African Literary Metadata (ALMEDA) Two Online Doctoral Courses

Department of English, Uppsala University

## What is ALMEDA?

ALMEDA (African Literary Metadata) is a 5-year research project focusing on creating a database of African literary information not regularly captured online or in formal catalogues. The project has received funding from the European Research Council (Grant agreement no. 101097763)

Read more about the project at [almedaresearch.org](http://almedaresearch.org)

## Administrative information

The two courses will be offered by Professor Ashleigh Harris (PI for ALMEDA), with contributions from researchers and digital humanities experts attached to the research project.

The courses will be run online and are open to any student registered for a PhD anywhere in the world. There are no registration costs or tuition fees.

A limited number of students will be accepted. Acceptance is based on the relevance of the coursework for students' PhD research.

Certificates will be given to students who successfully complete the course. Equivalence for course credits at students' home universities is the responsibility of the supervisor at the home university and not of Uppsala University.

The medium of instruction is English, but data-sets can be created on materials in other languages.

## To apply for a place on a course:

Email the following information to [almeda@uu.se](mailto:almeda@uu.se) by the stated deadlines:

- proof of registration for a PhD
- an abstract of your PhD research
- a statement as to why you are interested in the course in question
- a letter of formal support from your supervisor

## Distant Reading World Literature in English (7,5 credits)

Course Dates: February-April 2025

The course runs from 10 February to 18 April 2025 at approximately 50% of full-time study. Specific times will be communicated to students accepted on to the course.

**Deadline for application: 5 November 2024**

## Literary Metadata from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present (7,5 credits)

Course Dates: September-November 2025

The course runs from 8 September to 14 November 2025 at approximately 50% of full-time study. Specific times will be communicated to students accepted on to the course.

**Deadline for application: 2 June 2025**



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# Online Doctoral Course

## Distant Reading World Literature in English

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### Distant Reading World Literature in English (7,5 credits)

This course focuses on developments in digital humanities methods and their relevance for the field of Anglophone world literature. The course critically engages with big data methods, such as those developed by Franco Moretti and the Stanford Literary Lab. We will investigate the kinds of data that are available for literary study at larger scales and investigate how literary scholars might fill the gaps left by commercial metadata, such as ISBN numbers.

Students will be introduced to methods of data collection, annotation, and cataloguing of literary materials for the purposes of creating online databases. Students will also be introduced to the basics of how to upload their data on Linked Open Data repositories, such as Wikidata.

### Course Structure

Meetings	Content
1.	Mapping the Literary Field I: Theories
2.	Distant Reading: Methods
3.	Mapping the Literary Field II: The 'Great Unread'
4.	The Basics of Data Capture on Literary Materials
5.	Digital Tools for Literary Studies I: Introduction to Databases
6.	Digital Tools for Literary Studies II: Working with Wikidata and Open Refine
7.	Data and World Literature

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### Assessment

Students will compile their own datasets on a case-study of their own choosing. They will then clean this data and prepare it for upload into a database. Students will write research notes throughout the process of compiling their dataset and will write a critical reflection of their case-study, in which they consider the ways in which their catalogued materials challenge established methods of world literature, including literary interpretation, creation of course syllabi, and selection procedures of literary prizes.

For more information, contact Ashleigh Harris at  
[ashleigh.harris@engelska.uu.se](mailto:ashleigh.harris@engelska.uu.se)



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# Online Doctoral Course

## Literary Metadata

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### Literary Metadata from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present (7,5 credits)

This course considers the ways in which literature has been classified and described through various global metadata standards and systems. From library cataloguing standards, to ISBN numbers, to AI-driven algorithms, the course investigates the ideological, economic and cultural freight of literary metadata from the 19th century to the present day.

Students will be introduced to the history of cataloguing and metadata standards for literary materials and will critically examine this history in relation to global norms of literary study and the very concept of the idea of 'literature'. Students will also learn what the blind-spots of such standards have been for literary works from previously colonized lands, especially those in indigenous languages, and for ephemeral and pulp literatures not considered to have aesthetic or literary value.

### Course Structure

Meetings	Content
1.	Pax Britannica, Colonial Books Collections and Bibliographic Metadata
2.	Decoding 19th Book Metadata: paratexts, title pages, tables of contents, and indexes
3.	Library Standards and Colonial Ontologies
4.	Books vs Oral Traditions: the making of a dichotomy through colonial metadata
5.	Card Catalogues and Author and Subject Indexes
6.	Commercial Metadata and Literary Form
7.	Global Book Data: access and algorithms

### Course Dates: September-November 2025

The course runs from 8 September to 14 November 2025 at approximately 50% of full-time study. Specific times will be communicated to students accepted onto the course.

**Deadline for application: 2 June 2025**

### Assessment

Students will create two case-studies with the help of a supervisor: one from the 19th century and one from the 20th or 21st centuries. For students without access to suitable materials at their home institutions, materials can be chosen from a range of freely accessible digitized material that will be included in the course materials. Students will compile and annotate a set of bibliographic metadata extracted from literary texts and from available cataloguing metadata from the time the book emerged. Students will write two essays in which they critically examine their collated and annotated data.

For more information, contact Ashleigh Harris at  
[ashleigh.harris@engelska.uu.se](mailto:ashleigh.harris@engelska.uu.se)



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