

Tiffany Watt Smith

‘Specialist to Storyteller’

Research Development

I help humanities researchers

- develop new projects
- apply for funding
- reach wider audiences



‘Tiffany has an almost preternatural ability to bring clarity to chaos. I found her research mentoring completely transformative. I have a much better understanding of what i am working towards, and so enjoyed being in Tiffany’s company’ - Senior Lecturer, English Literature, University of York

What I do

I’m a writer and former Reader in Cultural History at Queen Mary University of London, who loves helping researchers grow their research.

Whether you are developing a large-scale funding bid, contemplating a new direction, or crafting a ‘trade book’ proposal, I offer bespoke support in getting to the heart of your research, and help turn your beautiful, complex ideas into a clear, compelling narrative.

'Working with Tiffany was a lifesaver. I started working with her after I had been thinking about a project for years, so (obviously) I was drowning in ideas, and contexts, and theories and methodologies...After one session with Tiffany, I was buoyed, felt smart again, had clarity to my ideas, and had a pathway forward. Tiffany's skills in listening and asking the right questions is unparalleled' - Professor of Theatre & Performance, London

Who are you?

You are probably a busy, mid-career or senior humanities academic, who is considering the next phase of your career

You might

- want to apply for a major grant, but are struggling to carve out time to think, let alone pull all the disparate strands together
- be working on a large piece of research or writing, but have overthought and want to gain clarity on what it is 'really' about
- would love to write a 'trade' book, write journalistic think pieces or pitch a radio documentary but are not even sure where to begin

I know exactly what this feels like, and I want to help.

How I work

I offer a sounding board, accountability, structure and expertise.

Though my approach has been honed through years of mentoring other academics, I also know how hard it can be to ask busy colleagues for help. I offer the chance to work more deeply, over a sustained time-period, guilt-free.

- **Listen and explore:** I ask questions and create space for you to think in depth about your idea – what it means, why it matters and what it will reveal
- **Clarify and focus:** together we pin down the 'why?' of your project, and gain clarity on its form, structure and narrative heart
- **Refine and write:** you might want to schedule regular meetings over a longer time period, for accountability, and to share writing for discussion
- **Strategic support:** If you are writing a trade book proposal, I can talk you through the process of finding an agent and what they want. If you are applying for funding, I can help brainstorm funding streams and partners.

How often?

I suggest a minimum of three meetings, but there is no upper limit on how often we meet, and one-offs are always possible. We can figure out what will work best for you.

Where?

Online, or in person, either near King's Cross or Denmark Hill in London.

Who Am I?

I'm a historian of emotions who thinks widely across disciplines, including literature, performance, history, anthropology, social psychology and medical humanities.

I am author of three internationally translated trade books, most recently *Bad Friend* (UK: Faber, 2025), and one academic monograph. I am a frequent contributor on BBC Radio 4, a TED-speaker and my writing has appeared in the *Guardian*, *Financial Times* and the *Atlantic*, among others.

I loved being a university-based researcher and was good at it. I was regularly invited to give international keynotes and won awards, including a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship in 2011 and a Philip Leverhulme Prize in 2019. I taught arts-based undergraduate courses and supervised MSc and PhD projects to completion. I was Director of the Centre of the History of Emotions, where I mentored many colleagues.

I also led, or collaborated on, around twenty-five grant applications. Some were small conference or network bids. Successful larger bids ranged from a Leverhulme Artists in Residence Scheme award (c. £15k) to being part of the core team who applied for a Wellcome Trust Collaborative Award (c. £1.7 million). And there were plenty of knock-backs, including an application I made in 2021 for a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship (£1.5 million). So I'm battle-tested, and understand the lows as well as the highs.

I believe my talent lies in translating complex ideas in a way that makes sense to non-specialists, and helping others do the same. In 2024, when my department was being restructured, I decided to take the plunge and become a full-time writer and mentor, keeping in touch with the parts of academic life I enjoyed most.

I can't guarantee success, and getting knocked back can be heartbreaking. But I also know the time and effort spent honing a new idea is never wasted, and that you'll certainly enjoy the journey.

You can find out more about me [here](#).

Fees

£250 per hour

Package of 3 x hour-long sessions, £650

The price includes reading and giving feedback on up to 2000 words.

- If you want to share longer pieces of writing with me for feedback and editing, please get in touch
- I anticipate this work will be paid for through either university research budgets or existing grants
- I offer a 10% discount for anyone privately funding their work with me

Interested?

If you'd like to schedule an informal chat about how we might work together, I'd love to hear from you.

Drop me an email on
hello@tiffanywattsmith.co.uk