

University of Reading Centre for Interdisciplinary Research into the Humanities and Science (IRHS)

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The study of the many ways in which the arts and humanities intersect with science is a growing part of research within the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science and across the University. The sciences and the arts and humanities are often seen as separate from one another, yet ever since they began to be defined in this way in the seventeenth century, they have looked to each other for elucidation and inspiration. They share a common interest in the most fundamental questions relating to the human condition: what do we know, how can we know it, and what is at stake if and when we ask?

Our work on this theme here at Reading is driven by a fundamental belief that scientists, artists and humanities scholars share an interest in the cross-fertilization of ideas and that our collective understanding will be advanced the more we work together from our different disciplinary perspectives. At the same time, our interdisciplinary field touches upon some of the most important subjects in intellectual enquiry today, from medical ethics and food security to climate change and the place of religion in society.

By bringing together historians, literary scholars and political scientists on the one hand and biologists, meteorologists and cyberneticists on the other, we aim to break new ground in understanding the place of science in culture and society, the interaction of the sciences and the arts, and the ways in which interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research can help us to tackle the most pressing social and political issues of the modern world. Working closely with leading scientific societies and museums, we aim to disseminate the benefits and results of this work across the academic community and to the public at large.

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