

**NEWNHAM COLLEGE**  
**CAMBRIDGE CB3 9DF**

**The Woolf Essay Prize 2018-19**

The Woolf Essay Prize is open to all **girls currently in Year 12** (Lower Sixth) at a UK school. It is designed to give students the opportunity to think and write about women in literature, history, society and culture, while developing their independent study and writing skills. Through exposure to the type of work they might be expected to do at Cambridge, we hope highflying students will be encouraged to consider applying to the University – and hopefully to Newnham, where women’s history and educational excellence are, of course, central.

This prize may be of particular interest to those studying English Literature, History, Politics, Philosophy or Sociology; but we welcome entries from interested students studying any combination of subjects. Entrants are invited to submit a response to any **one** of the questions overleaf, which should be between 1,500 and 2,500 words (including footnotes and captions). All sources must be appropriately acknowledged and cited, and a bibliography – including websites consulted – should be attached (though excluded from the word count). Up to **five** entries may be submitted per school.

The winning entries from previous competitions may be found on the Newnham College website and may be useful to you as you decide how to answer your chosen question. However, it is to be noted that there are many angles from which to approach each question and those available on the website are only a limited sample. Good essays will present a clear argument using specific examples, but outside of this many different approaches are welcome.

Each of the Newnham Essay Prizes has a first prize of £400, a second prize of £200, and third prize of £100.

It is **strongly advised** that students read *A Room of One’s Own* before answering any of these questions. The quotations used are all taken from this text, and knowledge of their context will almost certainly be helpful (at least initially). An uncluttered, easily accessible and comparatively cheap edition of the text can be found in the Penguin ‘Great Ideas’ series, though it is by no means compulsory to use this version.

Entrants should upload their submissions to the webform, found here:  
<http://www.newn.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduates/newnham-essay-prizes/>

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The **cover sheet** should also be uploaded to this webform. Please ensure that a school/college representative has completed the appropriate section. Entries will not be valid without this information.

The deadline is **12pm on Friday 8th March 2019**. For any queries not answered here, please contact Sophie Parry (Schools Liaison & Outreach Officer) by email at [slo@newn.cam.ac.uk](mailto:slo@newn.cam.ac.uk) or by telephone on 01223 330471.

**The Woolf Essay Prize 2018-19 Questions:**

1. *“When the guns fired in August 1914, did the faces of men and women show so plain in each other’s eyes that romance was killed?”*

How did the wars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries affect the portrayal of women in either film or fiction?

2. *“I tried to remember any case in the course of my reading where two women are represented as friends... But almost without exception they are shown in their relation to men.”*

To what extent are fictitious friendships reliant on the opposite sex?

3. *“Fiction is like a spider’s web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners.”*

Explore in relation to two contemporary novelists of either the nineteenth or twentieth centuries.