

Programme Specification

1	Awarding body	University of London
2	Teaching Institution	Birkbeck College
3	Programme Title(s)	MA Cultural and Critical Studies
4	Programme Code(s)	TMACUCRS_C
5	UCAS code	N/A
6	Home Department	English, Theatre and Creative Writing
7	Exit Award(s)	PG Cert, PG Dip
8	Duration of Study (number of years)	FT 1 year PT 2 years
9	Mode of Study	FT x PT X DL
10	Level of Award (FHEQ)	7
11	Other teaching depts or institution	N/A
12	Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body(PSRB) details	N/A
13	QAA Benchmark Group	N/A

14	Programme Rationale & Aims
	<p>The MA in Cultural and Critical Studies explores cultural debates across the disciplines and through the examination of work in a range of media - for example, literature, print culture, painting, film, photography, music, digital formats. The course is designed to provide grounding in the theoretical debates that inform contemporary investigations in a number of areas such as modernity, identity, subjectivity, ethnicity, technology, aesthetics, the everyday and cultural history, fetishism and reification, and global cultures. A flexible modular scheme of option courses and independent research allows students to work on themes and problems in past and present media and cultural thought. The insights and analyses of twentieth and twenty-first century forms of critique – Idealist aesthetics, Marxism, critical theory, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, speculative realism, techno-cultural theories and ideological and political critique - are employed in relation to cultural artefacts and events. The course engages with new technologies, disparate cultural forms and the modes of enquiry that have recently transformed the traditional disciplines. It studies themes such as neoliberalism, intersectionality, post-humanism, the social construction of space, visual perception and technologies of the gaze, the politics of sexuality, the 'everyday', the organisation of knowledge, questions of high and low culture, new materialism and the object, sensory perception, the notion of tradition and cultural production and reproduction.</p> <p>Students are exposed to a broad range of topics and approaches and are mentored in researching their own particular projects in response to the modules.</p>

15	Entry Criteria
	Students are normally expected to have a good honours degree of second class or above in a relevant subject - for example, English, History, Philosophy, Visual Culture, Media

<p>Studies, or an interdisciplinary programme with a strong Humanities or Arts component. We operate also a policy of providing places to those with non-standard entry qualifications, and candidates with other kinds of experience or professional training if good grounds are given at interview and in the application. Given the nature of the material we study, we require that students for whom English is not a first language have an IELTS of 7.</p>
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<p>16 Learning Outcomes</p>

<p>To gain the qualification the learner will have demonstrated the following skills specified in the learning outcomes for approved modules in the programme and for the programme as a whole:</p> <p>Subject Specific:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exposure to late 19th, 20th and 21st century cultural and critical theory 2. Ability to digest sophisticated theoretical texts and apply their findings to original examples 3. An understanding of the historical context in which intellectual ideas develop 4. Ability to structure an understanding of various cultures and societies in the context of prevailing theoretical debates, thus reiterating the arrangement of theory and local knowledge <p>Intellectual:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Ability to apply theoretical materials to self-chosen examples 6. The ability to read texts closely and critically and to fathom arguments in close co-ordination with practice and experience 7. The ability to consider a certain topic from a variety of viewpoints and to evaluate which of these is most appropriate for particular topics 8. Engagement with questions of communicating difficult ideas to an audience of peers <p>Practical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. To improve skills of expression in writing and also discussion and presentation skills 10. To enhance bibliographic research skills 11. Where appropriate to enhance and devise modes of data gathering (in interviews or via other types of primary research such as archival work.) <p>Personal and Social:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. To encounter a range of students from different disciplinary and cultural backgrounds 13. To conduct discussion and listen to others' opinions in a productive manner 14. The ability to work independently 15. The opportunity to work as part of a group 16. The development of confidence in expressing opinions and the cultivation of the ability to listen

17	Learning, teaching and assessment methods
	<p>The programme is taught through a combination of lectures, seminars, individual tutorials, workshops, VLE exercises, posts and polls and small group discussions and project presentations. These various forms allow for a fully-rounded educational experience. Engagement with online learning environments increases access to the programme materials and encourages programme engagement outside of the classroom. The variety of materials examined – written, visual, sonic etc – allow for the multifaceted engagement with cultural forms and a reflection on whether and how the medium shapes the message. Such questions are followed up specifically in study skills sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation is encouraged by small group teaching and workshop formats, as well as in the project evenings in the Summer term, where students are encouraged to presents work to the rest of the class and to comment on the work of their peers in constructive ways. • A compulsory but unweighted exercise run through the VLE gives students input into the curriculum and greater ownership of the programme by allowing them to suggest and vote on readings for the final session of term. • The teaching and learning methods encourage personal development of students because work such as essay work and project work can be directed by the students' own interests and individual tutorials enable the students to relate their ideas cogently to the theoretical subject matter of the programme • Students write longer and shorter essays, as well as a short critical bibliography. They also present for 20 minutes and learn how to communicate ideas orally in an effective manner, much as one might do in a teaching role.
18	Programme Description
	<p>Over the course of the degree the students complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Core courses: Key Concepts in Cultural and Critical Studies and New Directions in Cultural and Critical Studies • Two 10-week Options courses, or equivalent • A Summer term set of activities, which include project presentations by students. • A Dissertation –15,000 words <p>Full-time students complete the degree in one year as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autumn Two Core courses • Spring Two Options • Summer Project Presentation and Dissertation <p>Part -time students carry this over a two-year period as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st year Autumn Core course Key Concepts in Cultural and Critical Studies • Spring Option • Summer Project Presentations • 2nd year Autumn Core course New Directions in Cultural and Critical Studies • Spring Option • Summer Project presentations and Dissertation <p>Most teaching is by seminar. The emphasis is on discussion, debate and the sharing and exploration of ideas. Core Course seminars take place on Monday evenings, 6.00–7.30 pm</p>

and (for full-time or second year part-time students) Thursday evenings, 6.00-7.30pm, in the Autumn Term. These are followed by less formal sessions – which we call ‘Second Half sessions’ - on Mondays at 7.40-9.00pm. Year One and Year Two students are strongly encouraged to attend these sessions. These sessions are enhanced by a Student-led MA Cultural and Critical Studies Reading Group.

On Wednesdays for the first four weeks of the summer term we run a series of dissertation workshops, in conjunction with the MA Modern and Contemporary and Contemporary Literature and Culture. A small cluster of free-form classes is also run in the summer term. These are optional classes, but they are a chance for students to come to an agreement about an extra area of study they want to pursue through a series of staff-led lectures/seminars. MA convenors for the MA Cultural Critical, Modern and Contemporary MAs gather suggestions from students in Week 1 of summer term (25 April), then set a small amount of reading for the lectures in week 7, 8, 9. Staff leading the seminars will depend on the topics chosen.

There are also a number of study skills workshops throughout the year, especially pertaining to dissertation preparation and research.

Assessment

Autumn Term

Submit Core 1 Compulsory Critical Bibliography: 2000-word commentary on 4-6 pieces of Core 1 reading – deadline: November

Spring Term

Submit Core 1 essay 5000 words – deadline: January

full-time students also submit Core 2 essay 5000 words – deadline: January

In the second half of the Spring Term: full-time and Year Two students will be asked to submit Dissertation title and abstract

Summer term

Submit Option 1 essay 5000 words – deadline: April

full-time students also submit Option 2 essay 5000 words – deadline: April

Dissertation, 15000 words: The deadline is mid- September. Full-time students submit at this time in year 1 (one year later for part-timers)

19	Programme Structure			
Full-Time programme – 1 year				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ENHU003S7	Key Concepts in Cultural and Critical Studies	30	Core
7		Option from range of approved modules in field	30	Option
7	ENHU004S7	New Directions in Cultural and Critical Studies	30	Core
7		Option from range of approved modules in field	30	Option
7	ENHU001D7	Dissertation MA Cultural and Critical Studies	60	Core

Part-Time programme – 2 years				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ENHU003S7	Key Concepts in Cultural and Critical Studies	30	Core
7		Option from range of approved modules in field	30	Option
Year 2				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ENHU004S7	New Directions In Cultural And Critical Studies	30	Core
7		Option From Range Of Approved Modules In Field	30	Option
7	ENHU001D7	Dissertation MA Cultural And Critical Studies	60	Core
Indicative Options List				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	ENHU035S7	Aesthetics and Cultural Theory	30	Option
7	AREN188S7	Postcolonialism: In Theory	30	Option
7	ENHU053S7	Contemporary US Fiction	30	Option
7	AREN197S7	Freud in the world: psychoanalysis, literary writing and the legacies of history	30	Option
7	AHVM053S7	Gender, Modernity and the City	30	Option
7	ARVC076S7	Exhibiting the Body	30	Option
7	ENHU122S7	Language Matters	30	Option
7	ARMC194S7	Issues in Global Television: Analogue, Digital, National, Transnational	30	Option
7	ARMC172S7	Theoretical Perspectives on Media	30	Option

Status*

CORE – Module must be taken and passed by student; *COMPULSORY* – Module must be taken, mark can be reviewed at sub-exam board; *OPTIONAL* – Student can choose to take this module

20	Programme Director	Professor Esther Leslie
21	Start Date (term/year)	Prior to 2008/09
22	Date approved by TQEC	Prior to 2008/09
23	Date approved by Academic Board	Prior to 2008/09
24	Date(s) updated/amended	20 July 2020