Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

MA Brands, Communication and Culture
Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Final Award: MA Brands, Communication and Culture

Programme Name: MA Brands, Communication and Culture

Total credit value for programme: 180

Name of Interim Exit Award(s):

Postgraduate Certificate in Brands, Communication and Culture

Postgraduate Diploma in Brands, Communication and Culture

Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time or 2 years full-time

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s):

(100444) Media and Communication Studies 60%

(100505) Sociology 40%

QAA Benchmark Group: Not applicable

FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7

Programme accredited by: Not applicable

Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: July 2023

Home Department: Media, Communications and Cultural Studies (MCCS)

Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:

Sociology

Programme overview

This exciting degree offers you the opportunity to study one of the major areas in contemporary media and communications – branding. The MA introduces you to the variety of ways in which brands are developed and used, and helps you to understand how the growth of branding – in business, but also in politics, government, sport and culture – has changed the societies we live in. The philosophy of the MA is to take brands and branding seriously as social, cultural and communicative phenomena that sit at the intersection of a range of contemporary developments in economics, culture and technology. This MA offers a unique opportunity to explore brands in a creative and varied way, to enhance your practical and intellectual engagement with the world of branding.

The programme is embedded in the Department's ethos of diversity and interdisciplinarity. This is reflected in the combination of theory and practice which allows us to challenge norms and engage with real-world issues.

The programme is theory-driven, but with a potentially significant practice element as you can choose up to 30 credits of practice option modules. You are also given opportunities to apply theory to actual empirical problems through their dissertation project and additional assignments and presentations.

Programme entry requirements

Applicants will normally be expected to hold a good first degree in a relevant subject area, and non-native speakers of English will be expected to possess an IELTS score of 6.5, or equivalent. However, consideration may also be given to students without an academic background in a relevant subject area if they have professional experience in this area or are able to demonstrate their ability and commitment to the pursuit of a programme of rigorous academic study

Programme learning outcomes

A Postgraduate Certificate will be awarded to students who achieve 60 CATS by passing both compulsory modules, Branding I and Branding II. Students awarded the Postgraduate Certificate will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Develop a systematic and in-depth understanding of the history of branding, and the social, political and cultural factors that have influenced its development.	Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice; Branding II: Key Themes and Debates
A2	Discuss and appraise different theoretical models that have been developed to explain the significance of branding, and the ability to evaluate these critically and creatively.	Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice; Branding II: Key Themes and Debates
A3	Identify and assess current debates within branding practice and branded culture, from the perspective of branding professionals and academics.	Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice; Branding II: Key Themes and Debates

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A4	Evaluate these debates critically, using appropriate evidence and reasoning.	Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice; Branding II: Key Themes and Debates

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Develop a high degree of critical reasoning and significant independence of thought.	Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice; Branding II: Key Themes and Debates
B2	Structure complex arguments, and communicate these with clarity in written and verbal form	Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice; Branding II: Key Themes and Debates

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Explain the intellectual and practical concerns that underpin research on brands; ability to contribute to this research through use of appropriate skills, methods and resources	Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice; Branding II: Key Themes and Debates

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Demonstrate advanced communication and discussion skills in written and oral contexts.	Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice; Branding II: Key Themes and Debates

A Postgraduate Diploma will be awarded to students who achieve 120 CATS by passing both compulsory modules, Branding I and Branding II, as well as 60 CATS of options. Students awarded the Postgraduate Diploma will also be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Present advanced and systematic knowledge of recent and relevant literature in the field of media, communications and cultural studies and demonstrate a critical awareness of current theoretical problems.	Option modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Systematically and creatively engage in debates and develop reflective commentary taking into account a range of views and perspectives from media, communications and cultural studies.	Option modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Contextualise the critical theories that underpin research on brands by engaging with and learning from wider debates and practices in media, communications and cultural studies.	Option modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Demonstrate a range of advanced communication and discussion skills in written and oral contexts that deepen your knowledge of branding debates.	Option modules

In addition to the Learning Outcomes for the Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma, students who successfully complete the MA Brands, Communication and Culture will also be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Demonstrate a systematic and advanced understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and methodologies, identifying strengths, weaknesses and gaps.	Final Dissertation

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Identify and apply appropriate theoretical concepts and methodologies in response to existing empirical or theoretical problems and/or suggest lines of enquiry relevant to those contexts.	Final Dissertation

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Design and undertake a specialist research project, organise the findings, and present them in the form of a single-authored, original piece of academic writing.	Final Dissertation
C2	Act autonomously in the execution of a piece of research and take responsibility for both ethical and practical decisions, and for presenting the findings in a clear and coherent form.	Final Dissertation

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Show independence and creativity in self-learning, exercise initiative and taking personal responsibility for work.	Final Dissertation

Grading Criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	Awarded when a candidate satisfies the requirements for a Distinction, but to an outstanding degree. Such work may be of publishable quality and will make a significant contribution to debate within the field.
70-79%	Distinction	Awarded when the assessed work demonstrates the application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the Learning Outcomes of the module to a very effective extent. The work will show evidence of extensive relevant reading and an impressive grasp of the current major issues in the field. This knowledge will have been reviewed critically with insight and independence of thought. Arguments and the presentation of evidence will demonstrate sophisticated reasoning, with clear awareness of issues of methodology and evidence, and will be particularly clear, focused and cogent.
60-69%	Merit	Awarded when the assessed work demonstrates the application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the Learning Outcomes of the module to an effective extent. The work will show consistency and fluency in discussing and evaluating evidence and theories drawn from a wide range of sources. The candidate will demonstrate the ability to relate their reading to the topic, and will clearly have understood and assimilated the relevant literature.
50-59%	Pass	Awarded when the assessed work demonstrates the application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the Learning Outcomes of the module to a satisfactory extent. There is clear evidence of knowledge and understanding, but there may be limited development of ideas, critical comment or methodology. Within these limitations there will be an indication that the candidate has grasped fundamental concepts and procedures from the module
30-49%	Fail	Awarded when the candidate demonstrates an unsatisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the Learning Outcomes of the module.
10-29%	Bad fail	Awarded when the candidate demonstrates an especially unsatisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the Learning Outcomes of the module.

| 1-9% | Very bad fail | A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes. |
| 0% | Non submission or plagiarised | A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment. |

Mode of study

On campus.

Programme structure

Attendance at all lectures and seminars is mandatory. In order to gain an MA, students are required to pass two compulsory modules, optional modules to a value of 60 credits and a dissertation. The compulsory modules will be worth 30 credits each, the options modules will be to a total value of 60 credits, and the dissertation will be worth 60 credits.
Students who successfully complete both core modules (60 credits) may exist with the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Brands, Communication and Culture.
Students who successfully complete both core modules plus option modules (120 credits) my exist with the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Brands, Communication and Culture.

Full-time mode

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice	MC71110A	30	7	Compulsory	Autumn
Branding II: Key Themes and Debates	MC71111B	30	7	Compulsory	Spring
Dissertation	MC71112C	60	7	Compulsory	Spring/Summer
Optional modules to the value of 60 credits	Various	60	7	Optional	Autumn/Spring

Part-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Branding I: History, Contexts and Practice	MC71110A	30	7	Compulsory	Autumn
Options	Various	60 in total	7	Compulsory	Autumn or Spring

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
		across 2 years			

Academic year of study 2

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Branding II: Key Themes and Debates	MC71111B	30	7	Compulsory	Spring
Dissertation	MC71112C	60	7	Compulsory	Spring/Summer
Options	Various	60 in total across 2 years	7		Autumn/Spring

Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are allocated a Personal Tutor (one in each department for joint programmes) who has overall responsibility for their individual progress and welfare. Personal Tutors meet with their student at least three a year either face-to-face, as part of a group and/or electronically. The first meeting normally takes place within the first few weeks of the autumn term. Personal Tutors are also available to students throughout the year of study. These meetings aim to discuss progress on modules, discussion of the academic discipline and reports from previous years if available (for continuing students). This provides an opportunity for progress, attendance and assessment marks to be reviewed and an informed discussion to take place about how to strengthen individual learning and success. All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors and Personal Tutors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the Library and information available on Learn.gold (VLE) so that they have access to department/ programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the [Goldsmiths website](#) and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The [Disability](#) and [Wellbeing](#) Services maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.
The [Careers Service](#) provides central support for skills enhancement, running [The Gold Award](#) scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report ([HEAR](#)).

The [Centre for Academic Language and Literacies](#) works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

Placement opportunities

MA Brands, Communication and Culture does not include programme-specific placements

Employability and potential career opportunities

The Department of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies has a strong record of employment prospects for its graduates. Graduates from other postgraduate programmes in the department have won numerous awards for their practice work, and have gone on to a variety of jobs: some in the media industries, some in professional fields less directly related to the media, and some into further academic research.

MA Brands, Communication and Culture graduates can expect to enter a wide range of careers, but two particular trajectories are anticipated. First, the programme will equip students seeking professional development with the knowledge and skills necessary to

pursue (or enhance) careers related to branding, marketing and promotion, as well as other related communications roles. Such students will be encouraged to seek work experience in relevant institutions during the programme, although these will not be compulsory and will not be organised by Goldsmiths. Students will also be encouraged to develop specialist 'routes' (if they so wish) via their choice of optional modules. The compulsory modules on the programme will be supplemented with regular talks from visiting speakers; these will enable students to make relevant industry contacts and to gain an understanding of how their degree can be used in a professional context. Second, the programme will equip students seeking to conduct further research (for example at PhD level or in other research roles) with an in-depth and high-level understanding of current academic debates about branding in particular, and related areas such as economic sociology, political communications and media and cultural theory more broadly. Students in this category will also benefit from a programme with a substantial research component, and from the exceptional research environment offered by the departments of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies, and Sociology, in particular.

Programme-specific requirements

None

Tuition fee costs

Information on tuition fee costs is available at: https://www.gold.ac.uk/students/fee-support/

Specific programme costs

None