Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

MA Cultural Studies

Awarding Institution:

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

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Final Award: MA Cultural Studies

Programme Name: MA Cultural Studies

Total credit value for programme: 180 credits

Name of Interim Exit Award(s):

Postgraduate Certificate in Cultural Studies

Postgraduate Diploma in Cultural Studies

Duration of Programme: 1 year and 2 years part time

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s): (101233) Cultural Studies

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

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

Not applicable

Programme overview

The MA Cultural Studies offers an interdisciplinary approach to the study of contemporary culture. Students are introduced to a variety of perspectives and traditions as well as to the creative interface between such disciplines. The programme addresses art and the city, the culture industries, politics and globalisation, and media in the information age, as central themes. It incorporates the basic themes and leading figures of classical Cultural Studies as well as the latest developments in Cultural Studies and Cultural Theory.

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 grounded in practice and current issues and debates. In addition to their theory options, students can choose up to 30 credits of practice option

modules. Students are also given opportunities to apply theory to actual empirical problems through their dissertation project and additional assignments and presentations.

Programme entry requirements

This Masters course is aimed at graduates with an interest in working in Global Cultural Studies widely defined. Some candidates may come via the traditional academic route, while others will have experience of working within the cultural field in some way prior to undertaking the course. Candidates will normally have an undergraduate degree in the humanities or social sciences. An upper second class honours degree or its equivalent in a relevant discipline is normally required. Non-native speakers will normally have to satisfy Goldsmiths' requirements of IELTS (6.5).

Programme learning outcomes

The programme aims:

- to engage critically with the most advanced cultural theory;
- to consider the political context of the operations of global culture and cultural industries;
- to understand the relationship between text and image within a range of Cultural Studies contexts;
- to understand the methodological issues surrounding the production of innovative research in Cultural Studies;
- to pursue and consolidate their particular areas of interest through the choice of options offered on the programme;
- via the dissertation, to pursue an in-depth exploration of one particular issue in contemporary culture in relation to the broader Cultural Studies field as studied in compulsory and option courses.

A Postgraduate Certificate in Cultural Studies will be awarded to students who achieve 60 CATS by passing both compulsory modules, Doing Cultural Studies and Cultural Studies and Capitalism. Students awarded the Postgraduate Certificate will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Systematically understand key aspects of the contours of advanced cultural theory in the context of contemporary cultural practice	Doing Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies and Capitalism
A2	Demonstrate awareness of the dynamic relationship between text and image in	Doing Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies and Capitalism

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
	cultural theory and practice within a Cultural Studies context	

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Critically analyse the political context of the operations of global culture and cultural industries;	Doing Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies and Capitalism
B2	Critically analyse the complex interaction of theory and cultural practice.	Doing Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies and Capitalism

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Systematically and creatively engage in debates relating to cultural theory and relate these to contemporary cultural issues, e.g. within cultural policy, practice or activism in original and imaginative ways.	Doing Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies and Capitalism
C2	Display evidence that they can make convincing use of secondary data (library-based, fieldwork-based or statistical data) to develop a critical and coherent argument, and/or conduct original primary research.	Doing Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies and Capitalism
C3	Design, formulate and conduct small-scale research on a range of topics relevant to theory, policy, practice or activism.	Doing Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies and Capitalism

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Adapt concepts and methods studied and employed flexibly and imaginatively to pursue future specific aims (e.g. professional, political, artistic, academic) within the cultural field.	Doing Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies and Capitalism
D3	Exercise initiative and personal responsibility in effective independent work with the attendant skills of work	Doing Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies and Capitalism

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
	organisation, time planning, independent decision-making and keeping to deadlines.	

A Postgraduate Diploma in Cultural Studies will be awarded to students who achieve 120 CATS by passing both compulsory modules, Doing Cultural Studies and Cultural Studies and Capitalism, 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
A2	Consolidated and deepened their understanding of related subject areas in which they have an interest through the choice of options offered on the programme.	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

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Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Engage with and apply wider debates and practices in media, communications and cultural studies.	Option modules
C2	Demonstrate that they can produce significant pieces of written work of a high academic standard (i.e. adequately researched, planned and structured, clearly written, well- presented and following academic conventions).	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 cultural theory.	Option modules

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

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
A2	Appreciate a range of methodological issues surrounding the production of innovative research in Cultural Studies.	Final Dissertation
A3	Advance their critical understanding of one particular issue in contemporary culture in relation to the broader Cultural Studies field.	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
C3	Debate salient academic, ethical and technical issues relevant to research methods, and draw on this awareness in designing an effective research project.	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)	Marks above 80 are awarded for work that not only meets all the criteria for a 70-79% mark, but displays exceptional standards of scholarship and originality. Such work is considered outstanding, and of publishable quality.
70-79%	Distinction	Awarded when candidates show evidence of extensive relevant reading and relevant cultural phenomena. Candidate shows an outstanding grasp of 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 and be exceptionally clear, focused and cogent. Where work in electronic media has been used in conjunction with written material as part of course assessment, this work must be distinguished and thoroughly integrated with the central theses of the written material.
60-69%	Merit	Awarded when candidates show consistency and fluency in discussing and evaluating cultural phenomena and theories drawn from a wide range of sources. They will demonstrate an

		ability to relate this reading to their topic, and will clearly have understood and assimilated the relevant literature. Where work in electronic media has been used in conjunction with written material as part of course assessment, this work must be competent and well-integrated with the content of the written material.
50-59%	Pass	Awarded where there is clear evidence of knowledge and understanding, but there may be limited development of ideas, critical comment or methodology. There will be reference to relevant reading and cultural phenomena, though not necessarily critical evaluation. Within these limitations there will be indication that the candidate has grasped fundamental concepts and procedures in the field. Where work in electronic media has been used in conjunction with written material as part of course assessment, this work is poorly integrated with the content of the written material.
30-49%	Fail	A fail grade indicates that a candidate has not satisfied the examiners that they have read and understood the essential texts of the course and that there is inadequate organisation of the work. Research involved in the writing of the coursework or the dissertation may be poorly organised and inadequately discussed. There may be confusion and incoherence and unfocused comment on literature. Where work in electronic media has been used in conjunction with written material as part of course assessment, this work is poorly integrated with the content of the written material.
10-29%	Bad fail	Represents a significant overall failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes.
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

The MA consists of a combination of compulsory and option modules and a dissertation (for which teaching in research methods is provided). Students are required to accumulate 180 credits to graduate - the equivalent of 4 x 30 credits and a dissertation (including methods) valued at 60 credits.

Variations to the standard part-time route:

Students may be permitted, at the discretion of the module convenor, to vary the way their optional modules are spread across the two years. The standard route set out below is

balanced, in that it allows students to complete modules with a value of 90 credits each year, yet there may be other equally viable routes. In recognition of the fact that students taking the programme on a part-time basis may have variable professional working patterns and other commitments over the two years, as much flexibility as possible is offered in terms of when they the optional modules are taken. For example, students may choose to take one of their 30 credits (or 2 x 15 credits) options in Term 2, Year 2 instead of Term 1, Year 1 or Term 1, Year 2. This would maintain a fairly even workload across all terms. Other variations might lead to a near-full-time workload in one term while substantially freeing up another.

In all cases where a student wishes to deviate from the standard route the programme convenor should be satisfied that (a) the route they are choosing is the most viable, taking into account both the requirements of the programme and their external (e.g. working) commitments; (b) they are able to cope adequately with any extra workload that will result from the variation to the recommended standard route.

Compulsory modules must normally be completed within the framework set out below, since the completion of Cultural Theory and Crisis and Critique are progression requirements for entering year 2, and the completion of all other modules (to a total value of 120 credits) is a normal requirement in order to be permitted to submit the dissertation.

Programme structure

Full-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Doing Cultural Studies	MC71225A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Cultural Studies and Capitalism	MC71222A	30	7	Compulsory	2
Option modules chosen from an approved list published annually (30 or 15 credit value)	Various	60	7	Optional	1 and 2
Dissertation (Methodology and Research)	MC71205A	60	7	Compulsory	2 and 3

Part-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Doing Cultural Studies	MC71225A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Cultural Studies and Capitalism	MC71222A	30	7	Compulsory	2

Academic year of study 2

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Option modules chosen from an approved list published annually (30 or 15 credit value)	Various	60	7	Optional	1 and 2
Dissertation (Methodology and Research)	MC71205A	60	7	Compulsory	2 and 3

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

None

Employability and potential career opportunities

Careers

The programme has had very favourable reports from external examiners and students have gone on to take advantage of the generalist versatility of the degree to gain work in cultural industries, media, NGOs, voluntary organisations and political groups.

Around half of students completing this programme progress to PhD level, and others go into practical work – in the creative industries and in NGOs in a great number of countries.

Skills

High-level knowledge of cultural research; transferable skills within social and critical theory, aesthetics and performance, communication and multimedia; ethnography skills; critical appreciation of current debates in the media, the culture industries and the wider contemporary cultural environment.

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