MA Media and Communications

Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

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

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Final Award: MA Media and Communications

Programme Name: MA Media and Communications

Total credit value for programme: 180

Name of Interim Exit Award(s):

Postgraduate Certificate in Media and Communications

Postgraduate Diploma in Media and Communications

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

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s): (100444) Media and Communication Studies

QAA Benchmark Group: Not applicable

FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7

Programme accredited by: Not applicable

Date Programme Specification last updated/approved:

Home Department: Media, Communications and Cultural Studies

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

Not applicable

Programme overview

Our world-leading MA programme in Media and Communication aims to provide you with ways to think about what is happening now and why. There has never been a more exciting time to study media and communications. The digital age has transformed our communicative experiences from how we make sense of issues, our experience of a viral pandemic, how we connect with friends and even what counts as a friend across social media platforms, how we protest, lobby, and respond to humanitarian disasters, develop particular tastes and attachments to ideas and beliefs, and even what counts as truth. Our mediated worlds impact on the rhythms and rituals of our daily lives changing the way we think about and create things, even the way we conceive of ourselves. The news is available instantaneously, 24 hours a day. Social media has expanded exponentially in reach, transforming personal relationships, politics and business. At the click of a button we

can share our experiences and build solidarities across the world. The media are no longer just delivered to us but also things that we make and distribute ourselves. Mobile technology ensures we are tuned in and connected at all times.

At the same time all of our digital comings and goings are tracked and our data collected to sell on to those who profit from it. Digital surveillance is commonplace and privacy an ever more important concern. Multi-media conglomerates continue to replicate patterns of dominance of legacy media. Media and communications are so much a part of our daily lives that we rarely stop to think what they might mean for our own identities, our relationships, our working lives, our institutions, our economies, our environment or our citizenship. Yet, there has never been a more important time to do so. One of the principle aims of the MA is to provide you with the ideas you need to think about these social, cultural, economic, psychological and political transformations, to provide a critical appraisal of our mediated existences, and to provide tools to understand, survive and lead in the changing media landscape to come. There are no ready answers awaiting us around the corner. To work on these ideas is necessarily a collaborative venture, bringing in many different intellectual dispositions. It is also, necessarily, an interdisciplinary venture, calling upon a whole range of ways of thinking which have traditionally been compartmentalized.

The programme provides the tools to understand, survive and lead in the changing media landscape to come. It invites you to think critically about the larger, global media worlds of the present age, and about your own location in the mediated society in which you live. The MA is principally interdisciplinary and calls upon a wide range of ways of thinking, building on the different approaches of people working in the department, to encourage a broad and critical understanding of media and communications. Coursework is primarily theoretically based, so you will need some foundation in the (broadly conceived) intellectual arenas of the social sciences or the humanities in order to grasp the dominating aims and objectives of the programme. The programme is theory-driven but grounded in practice. Students can also choose up to 30 credits of practice based/professional skills option modules which include designated modules from the Screen school and Journalism (subject to availability).

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

The programme aims to offer you a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to the field of Media and Communications. It aims to bring together the two dominating perspectives which currently organise the field of inquiry: on the one hand, the sociological or political-economy discussion of media institutions, with its characteristic emphasis on the social power of media organisations; and on the other, the domains of subjective identities in mediated societies, which draws more from the intellectual traditions of cultural studies. In so doing, we borrow from a range of different academic disciplines: sociology, anthropology, geography, psychology, affect studies, literature, and history.

The programme offers knowledge and skills specific to the study of the media and communications. Its broadly conceived ambit, however, also allows you to engage in critical, reflexive thinking about what counts as media, and how to intervene effectively within the field in relation to contemporary debates and issues. We also offer a small pool of 15-credit practice-based options (subject to availability), that aim to complement and enhance knowledge of conceptual debates through the introduction of specified multi-media skills/professional skills relevant to a range of designated professions, such as journalism, social media and campaigns, and screen studies. The combined knowledge and skills are appropriate not only for future employment in the media, communication, and cultural industries, but in many cognate areas of employment as well.

Programme entry requirements

Students will normally hold the equivalent of an upper-second in the humanities or the social sciences and (if a non-native speaker) possess IELTS of 6.5 (with 6.5 in writing), or equivalent. They will also need to demonstrate a commitment to thinking reflexively and critically about the workings of contemporary media forms. It is not necessary for students to have an educational background in media and communications. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the programme, a broad range of undergraduate backgrounds can be appropriate. In some circumstances we can also accept candidates with a degree in the sciences, or with expertise in more vocational areas. There is no requirement for students to have any practical experience of working in the media, though if they do have this, it will clearly be an advantage, and students will be encouraged to make use of their past experiences in this MA.

Programme learning outcomes

The programme's subject-specific learning outcomes require students to think critically about a range of issues concerning the media, understood in the widest sense, and to be able to justify their views intellectually and theoretically. This in turn helps students to grasp the range of intellectual traditions which organise the current field of media and communication studies. In addition, students will also develop a wide range of transferable skills necessary for employment in a variety of different contexts, described by the Quality Assurance Agency as 'the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations, and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development".

A Postgraduate Certificate in Media and Communications will be awarded to students who achieve 60 CATS by passing the compulsory module, 'Introduction to Media and Communications Theory', and 30 credits of options. Students awarded the Postgraduate Certificate will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Review and acquire knowledge of at least one of the defining intellectual traditions of the field of media and communication studies.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory
A2	Map, evaluate and critique some of the key concepts that have informed academic debates within media, communications and cultural studies (such as power, inequality, representation and identity)	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; option modules
A3	Appraise the role of media and communication technologies in shaping historical and contemporary experience.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; option modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Utilise conceptual knowledge and critical reasoning skills in complex problem solving and the synthesis of arguments.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; option modules
B2	Initiate, prepare and deliver coherent, persuasive and well-constructed academic arguments in seminar presentations and essays.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; option modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Engage with and assess key thinkers, debates and intellectual paradigms within the field of media and communications.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; option modules
C2	Critically evaluate media and communications with reference to diverse societies	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; option modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Comprehensively demonstrate the ability to locate, retrieve and critically evaluate appropriate forms of information from a range of sources.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; option modules
D2	Engage with a broad range of methods and sources to construct academic arguments of your own.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; option modules

A Postgraduate Diploma in Media and Communications will be awarded to students who achieve 120 CATS by passing the core module, 'Introduction to Media and Communications Theory' and 90 credits of option modules. both compulsory modules. 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 media theory which includes traditional media, digital technologies and computational practices, such as artificial intelligence.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; Option modules
A2	Consolidate and deepen their understanding of related subject areas in which they have an interest through the choice of options offered on the programme.	Option modules
A3	Initiate an original critique of the defining intellectual traditions in the field of media and communications studies	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; 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
B2	Utilise conceptual knowledge and critical reasoning skills in complex problem solving	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; Option modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Engage with key thinkers, debates and intellectual paradigms within the field of media and communications.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; Option modules
C2	Demonstrate an advanced level of conceptual, methodological and empirical knowledge which can be applied to the analysis of a relevant example or case study.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; Option modules
C3	Act autonomously to examine media and communications with reference to the diversity of contemporary societies, and have an understanding of how different social groups variously make use of, and engage with, media and communications.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; Option modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Utilise a range of advanced communication and discussion skills in written and oral contexts that deepen your knowledge of media and communications theory.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; Option modules
D2	Demonstrate the ability to locate, retrieve and critically evaluate appropriate forms of information from a range of sources.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; Option modules
D3	Show independence and creativity in self-learning, exercise initiative and take personal responsibility for work.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory; Option modules

Students who successfully complete the MA Media and Communications will have demonstrated achievement of all the above outcomes and, in addition, an ability to:

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Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Acquire in depth knowledge of the defining intellectual traditions of the field of media and communication studies, in such a way that you can produce your own 'map' of the field	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation
A2	Gain an in-depth knowledge of key concepts that have informed academic debates within media, communications and cultural studies (such as power, inequality, representation and identity)	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation
A3	Synthesize and compare and contrast a knowledge of how key debates in the field of media and communications are informed by a range of other academic disciplines	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation
A4	Demonstrate a systematic and advanced understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and methodologies, identifying strengths, weaknesses and gaps	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Demonstrate the ability to work independently and critically in the production of an original research project	Dissertation
B2	Utilise conceptual knowledge and critical reasoning skills in complex problem solving	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Systematically and critically engage with key thinkers, debates and intellectual paradigms within the field of media and communications.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C2	Engage with and apply the broad methodological issues which are necessary for conducting research in the field of media and communications	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation
C3	Display advanced level of conceptual, methodological and empirical knowledge appropriate for a sustained piece of original research in the field	Dissertation
C4	Evaluate their own work in a reflexive manner with reference to academic debates and conventions	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Use a range of methods and sources to construct original and convincing arguments.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation
D2	Demonstrate the capacity to work resourcefully and independently.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation
D3	Communicate effectively and persuasively in a range of written and oral contexts.	Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, Option Modules, Dissertation.
D4	Apply humanities and social research methods to the analysis of media and wider social issues.	Dissertation

Grading Criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	A mark of 80-100% is awarded when a candidate satisfies the requirements for a Distinction, but to an outstanding degree. Such work will demonstrate high levels of originality that are well-supported by critically- evaluated evidence and sophisticated and rigorous engagement with methods and/or theory. The work will be well-structured, clearly argued, meticulously presented and referenced and contribute to debate within the field.

70-79%	Distinction	A mark of 70-79% is awarded when the 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 current major issues in the field. This knowledge will have been reviewed critically with insight and originality, as well as independence of thought. Arguments and the presentation of evidence will be well-structured, demonstrate sophisticated reasoning, with clear awareness of issues of methodology, relevant theory and evidence, and be particularly clear, well focused and cogent. Presentation and referencing should be of a high level.
60-69%	Merit	A mark of 60-69% is awarded when candidates demonstrate the application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the module learning outcomes to an effective extent. The work will show consistency and fluency in structuring their arguments, discussing and evaluating evidence and theories drawn from a wide range of sources. The student will have demonstrated an ability to relate this reading to their topic, will have clearly understood and assimilated the relevant literature and will have shown evidence of independent thinking. Presentation and referencing will be good.
50-59%	Pass	A mark of 50-59% is awarded when the work demonstrates the application of appropriate knowledge, understandings and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the module to a satisfactory extent. There will be clear evidence of knowledge and understanding, but limited development of ideas, independent thinking critical comment or focus on the question. The work may be largely descriptive and weakly structured. Presentation and referencing are likely to be weak to satisfactory. Within these limitations there will be indication that the candidate has grasped fundamental concepts and procedures in the field.
30-49%	Fail	A mark of 30-49% is awarded when the candidate demonstrates an unsatisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the module. Key issues will not have been addressed and there will be insufficient evidence of reading, insight and analysis. Closer to the threshold, there will be evidence of ability to move beyond these problems. Presentation and referencing are likely to be unsatisfactory.
10-29%	Bad fail	A mark of 10-29% is awarded when the assessed work demonstrates a significant overall failure to achieve the

		learning outcomes, and where there is no evidence of recognition of the question, nor of how to respond to it. The work will contain largely irrelevant material or may be too brief to meet the 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 an assessment offence.

Mode of study

The programme is delivered on-campus. We combine face to face lectures, small group seminar discussion and one to one tutorials combined with workshops and meetings using TEAMS (our online platform), and a variety of supplementary materials to support the lectures and seminars.

By and large the optional modules are taught by a mix of lectures, seminars and tutorials, although there are some variations. Some options offer a greater input of workshop organisation, practice-based and mixed modes of assessment.

In preparing for the dissertation, all students will receive intensive one-to-one tutoring over a prolonged period, which allows you to develop your own independent project. Most, if not all of the learning outcomes — from developing the capacity to map the field, to retrieve and evaluate information, to work to deadline — are condensed and applied in the process of preparing and delivering the dissertation with the guidance of a designated dissertation supervisor.

Programme structure – Full time mode

Students are required to take one compulsory 30 CATs compulsory module: Introduction to Media and Communications Theory, which takes place in the autumn term. This is a formal lecture programme (combined with seminar and tutorials) which introduces the main intellectual traditions in the field, encouraging you to produce your own 'mapping' of the discipline. It draws from different disciplines to indicate the virtue of a wide plurality of approaches in coming to an understanding of the media. The module does serve as an 'introduction' — in that we assume that a number of the group will not previously have encountered media studies before coming to Goldsmiths. However, being an advanced module, with high expectations of students, we have to move fast. We work in the knowledge that students will normally have one or two intellectual 'entries' (from their previous undergraduate discipline) into the debates we introduce. Although we start from

basics, by the end of the module we aim that students will possess a sophisticated grasp of what are complex theoretical traditions.

Students are required to take 90 credits worth of optional modules. The Department has an extensive suite of option modules, but students are also able to choose up to 30 credits of options from other departments such as English & Creative Writing, Anthropology or Sociology.

All students are required to produce a Dissertation worth 60 credits. The Dissertation is an independent project under the supervision of a member of the Department. Individual supervisors are assigned early on in the Spring term.

There is a compulsory Research Skills/Methods Training component delivered in our Research Skills and Dissertation module which comprises of: three lecture/seminars in the autumn term and four seminar/workshop sessions focusing on particular methods and their methodological implications, commonly used in media and communications research. Students are required to attend these sessions (attendance mandatory) that assists with the preparation of their dissertation. The aim of the Research Skills Training is to provide basic understanding of what is expected of the master's thesis, research methodology and ethics as well as the practicalities of doing research. There will be a series of workshops across the autumn and spring terms. The autumn term sessions are designed to help students in formulating their research question and doing preliminary research, and to acquaint them with the structure of the dissertation as well as key ethical issues related to conducting research. The sessions in spring are designed to give students basic methodological tools for researching the thesis.

Students awarded the Postgraduate Certificate will have passed modules to the value of 60 credits including "Introduction to Media and Communications Theory".

Students awarded the Postgraduate Diploma will have passed modules to the value of 120 credits including "Introduction to Media and Communications Theory".

Full-time students take the programme over one calendar year, part-time students over two years. Formal teaching takes place in the autumn term (eleven weeks) and spring term (eleven weeks). The summer term is designed in part for revision, assessment and for intensive dissertation preparation.

In order to proceed into their second year, part-time students need successfully to complete the compulsory module and 30 credits of optional modules.

Full-time mode

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Introduction to Media and Communications Theory	MC71045A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Optional modules equal to the value of 90 credits, chosen from an approved list published annually	Various	90	7	Optional	1-2
Dissertation	MC71044A	60	7	Compulsory	1-3

Part-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Introduction to Media and Communications Theory	MC71045A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Optional modules equal to the value of 30 credits, chosen from an approved list published annually	Various	30	7	Optional	1-2

Academic year of study 2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Optional modules equal to the value of 60 credits, chosen from an approved list published annually	Various	60	7	Optional	1-2
Dissertation	MC71044A	60	7	Compulsory	1-3

Postgraduate Certificate

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Optional modules equal to the value of 30 credits, chosen from an approved list published annually	Various	30	7	Compulsory	1-2
Introduction to Media and Communications Theory	MC71045A	30	7	Compulsory	1

Postgraduate Diploma

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Optional modules equal to the value of 90 credits, chosen from an approved list published annually	Various	90	7	Optional	1-2
Introduction to Media and Communications Theory	MC71045A	30	7	Compulsory	1

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

We do not offer placements on the programme, but the department has an internships and work placements manager who works closely with the College's Careers Service. The manager advises students on internships and careers opportunities via our Jobs, Internships and other Careers Opportunities VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) page, which is constantly updated. Students can enrol onto the page to receive direct information.

Employability and potential career opportunities

The Department has a strong record of employment prospects for its graduates and has established strong links with the creative industries in London and beyond. We have a significant number of international students on the MA Media and Communications, some of whom come to the programme by arrangement with their employer in their home countries, and return to their jobs on completion. A number are seeking professional development and a career change, or are updating their skills and expertise in the fields of media and communications in order to enhance their role and to contribute to the innovation and development of the media, creative and cultural industries in their home countries. A

number of students, depending on visa arrangements, elect to stay in London and seek work in the media industries. Those who complete the programme go on to a wide variety of jobs including in the media and creative industries, advertising, marketing and public relations, broadcasting and print media, social media, NGOs and intergovernmental organisations as well as the arts and heritage sector among others. Some students set up their own businesses in the fields of media and communications and have helped to innovate the field and the future of media. A small group from each annual intake go on to do further academic research, such as a PhD.

Programme-specific requirements

The MA Media and Communications programme has a minimum total value of 180 credits and involves one calendar year of full-time study. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. The structure is set out in Programme Structure section. All modules are at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Interim exit awards

The MA Media and Communications programme incorporates interim exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and/or Postgraduate Diploma, which may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the minimum value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. The awards are made without classification.

These awards are incorporated within the programme, and the relevant learning outcomes and module requirements are set out within the "Programme Structure" section above.

The above information is intended as a guide, with more detailed information available in the Goldsmiths Academic Manual.

Tuition fee costs

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

Specific programme costs

Not applicable