

Programme Specification

Postgraduate Programmes

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| Awarding Body/Institution | University of London |
| Teaching Institution | Goldsmiths, University of London |
| Name of Final Award and Programme Title | MRes in Visual Cultures |
| Name of Interim Award(s) | N/A |
| Duration of Study/Period of Registration | 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time |
| UCAS Code(s) | N/A |
| HECos Code(s) | (100306) History of Art |
| QAA Benchmark Group | N/A |
| FHEQ Level of Award | Level 7 |
| Programme Accredited by | N/A |
| Date Programme Specification last updated/approved | August 2017 |
| Primary Department/Institute | Visual Cultures |

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| Departments which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme |
| Not Applicable |

Programme overview

This programme is for students who have a special interest in contemporary visual culture, including those without a formal academic qualification in art history, art theory, visual cultures, or cultural studies. It offers a challenging, flexible, and advanced scheme of study which explores a range of theoretical perspectives that shape attitudes towards visual culture understood globally in the late 20th / early 21st century. Invigorated by current research, the programme encourages students to engage in an exploratory interrogation of the relationships between critical theory and visual practice understood broadly.

Programme entry requirements

The standard requirement is of an upper second class BA or equivalent degree in Fine Art, History of Art & Design, Visual Culture, Cultural Studies, Philosophy, Film Studies, or in a related discipline such as Literature or Music. Above all, students should be able to demonstrate an aptitude for theorised enquiry in the field of contemporary art and critical studies, and/or in the humanities more broadly. This may be evident in candidates who do not have the above requirements, and, depending upon assessment at interview, it may be possible for them to be admitted with knowledges and competences developed outside of academia in the world of work. If these are deemed insufficient, however, candidates may be advised to take a preparatory year of study in the Department of Visual Cultures: either the Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Art History or the MA Contemporary Art Theory. Applications are welcomed from EU students (full-time or part-time) and overseas students (full-time only). Non-English language speakers are required to have passed the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) with at least 6.5 overall.

Aims of the programme

Through both teaching and research, this programme aims to:

- 1) expand students' knowledge of contemporary cultural developments and critical discourse
- 2) deepen their understanding of the inter- and trans-disciplinary nature of contemporary academic discourses in visual culture
- 3) enhance independent critical and analytical skills through research
- 4) encourage students' self development by practicing skills of research and communication in written, oral, and visual domains
- 5) facilitate a learning environment that offers an appropriate foundation for further scholarly research in visual culture and related humanities fields.

This Programme will attract applicants who are interested in doing a post-graduate degree with a stronger focus on research than a normal MA Degree. This Programme will produce graduates with a better preparedness for doctoral research.

What you will be expected to achieve

Students who exit the programme with an MRes in Visual Cultures will have completed one MA Special Subject module (see Programme Structure and Requirements below) and attended the MPhil-PhD Seminar. They will also have delivered a 45 minute oral presentation of their research at the MPhil-PhD seminar and have written a 20,000 word dissertation. They will demonstrate:

| Knowledge and Understanding | | Taught by the following modules |
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| A1 | A significant understanding of the inter- and trans-disciplinary nature of contemporary academic discourses in visual culture. | All Modules |
| A2 | A working understanding of the relations between theoretical discourse and visual culture | All Modules |
| A3 | An in-depth knowledge of a particular problematic within the field of contemporary visual culture, drawing, as appropriate, upon the discourses of art history, performance studies, philosophy, psychoanalysis, queer theory, post-colonial studies, and museology. | Special Subjects, Oral Presentation, Dissertation |

| Cognitive and Thinking Skills | | Taught by the following modules |
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| B1 | The ability to develop an independent argument that is informed by, but not wholly dependent on, authorities in the field of visual culture | All Modules |
| B2 | The ability to critically utilise ideas and debates from a range of theoretical sources and disciplines beyond the framework of art criticism and art history more narrowly defined | All Modules |

| Subject Specific Skills and Professional Behaviours and Attitudes | | Taught by the following modules |
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| C1 | The ability to be inventive in thinking theoretically about the novel affects, experiences and representations afforded by visual culture | All Modules |

| Transferable Skills | | Taught by the following modules |
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| D1 | The ability to present and defend their research | |

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| | orally in the context according to the conventions of the academic conference paper, supporting it with relevant visual, audio-visual and/or other documentation | MPhil-PhD Seminar |
| D2 | The ability to pursue a major research project culminating in a 20,000 word dissertation. | One to One Tutorials, Dissertation |

How you will learn

Students on the MRes in Visual Cultures follow a taught programme consisting of two modules:

1. The MPhil-Phd Seminar
2. One MA Special Subject

Full time students take the MPhil-PhD Seminar in the Autumn and Spring Terms and from November (immediately after Reading Week), take an MA Special Subject Module (15 Weeks). Part time students take the MPhil-PhD Seminar in the Autumn and Spring Terms during the first year and the MA Special Subject in the second year.

In the Autumn Term, the MPhil-PhD Seminar explores the practical and intellectual demands of carrying out advanced research in visual culture from a variety of perspectives, drawing both on the expertise and experience of colleagues and from key theoretical texts. Details of the MPhil Seminar curriculum is available on the VLE site for the MPhil-PhD Programme as are details of, and links to the reading materials. In the Spring term, the MPhil-PhD Seminar explores the current research of first year MPhil students. It is in this context that you will outline orally the questions, context, methodology, and structure of your future dissertation.

Students are also expected to attend the regular Visual Cultures Public Programme, which takes place on Thursday evenings throughout the terms. These give you the chance to participate in discussing the current work of different theorists, artists, curators and critics, as well as watch and discuss emergent and classic artists' films and video. This is a mandatory part of the programme. Attendance will be monitored as it is a requirement for the award of the MRes, even though there is no formal examination attached to it. The Thursday Visual Cultures Public Programme is optional for year 1 part time students but compulsory in year 2.

Both full time and part time students also have the opportunity of auditing the MA Core Module strands (A or C and B or D) during the first five weeks of the year. The Core Module strands introduce you to the problematic that resides at the heart of the MA programme: how to explore the relations between critical theory and contemporary visual arts practices. Core A,C and B,D present differently articulated contemporary perspectives on 'art' and 'theory' drawn from a variety of traditions (e.g. Post-structuralism, Performance Studies, Contemporary Continental Philosophy, Phenomenology, Psychoanalysis and Post-Colonial Studies). Please note that as Auditors, the MRes Students are not required to submit a diagnostic essay at the end of the Core Modules.

The MA Special Subjects are based on the current research interests of staff and enable you to focus on an aspect of contemporary art, cultural theory or contemporary thought that particularly interests you. The MA Laboratory is one of the Special Subjects and it provides an interactive and experimental environment for engaging with a question that is central to the programme as a whole: the exploration of notions of 'Critical Practice' as these might be played out within the contexts of visual practice/theory.

How you will be assessed

Students on the MRes in Visual Cultures will first be required to undertake formative assessment for your Special Subject. This is outlined in the following section.

Students will then be required to deliver an oral presentation of approximately 45 minutes duration on an aspect of your MRes Dissertation topic at the MPhil-PhD Seminar. This oral presentation is expected to be a focused investigation of the dissertation topic. It should not be a simple 'report' on books read or the different ideas the students have been thinking about. It is expected that the student delivers a coherent, well argued presentation of your work-in-progress. Though tied to the dissertation the oral presentation is assessed as a separate and autonomous piece of examined work.

At the end of the year, students will need to submit their Special Subject essay(s) and/or projects. This is also outlined in the following section.

Finally, in addition to fulfilling the attendance/assessment requirements for the two main elements of the taught programme, and attending the regular Visual Cultures Public Forum, the students will also be required to submit a dissertation.

Tutorial consultation on the dissertation begins during the summer term for full-time students and during the summer term of year two for part-time students. Full-time students are required to hand in a dissertation proposal at the end of the Spring term whereas part-time students are required to hand in a dissertation proposal by the end of the Spring term in the second year.

Marking criteria

| Mark | Descriptor | Specific Marking Criteria |
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| 80-100% | Distinction (Outstanding/Exceptional) | <p>Overall an exceptional level of response to the set tasks. The work is rigorously researched; the conceptual coherency of the work is advanced and ideas are researched and deployed within a clearly defined contextual framework. Work demonstrates high levels of independence of thought, which might include the identification of new areas of inquiry. Research shows ample evidence of sustained academic enquiry; the work draws on a wide range of sources all of which are critically evaluated; issues are readily identified and contextualised using appropriate theoretical frameworks.</p> <p>Text-based work/individual & group presentations: work is exceptionally well structured. Ideas are articulated and synthesised clearly through a cogent argument. The work demonstrates a nuanced understanding of appropriate relationships between the form and the content of the argument presented. Correct scholarly procedures employed throughout with care and accuracy.</p> |
| 70-79% | Distinction | <p>Overall an excellent level of response to the set tasks. The work is rigorously researched; the conceptual coherency of the work is strong and ideas are researched and deployed within a clearly defined contextual framework. Work demonstrates independence of thought. Research shows ample evidence of sustained academic enquiry; the work draws on a wide range of sources all of which are critically evaluated; issues are readily identified and contextualised using appropriate theoretical frameworks.</p> <p>Text-based work/individual & group presentations: work is extremely well structured and ideas are articulated and</p> |

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| | | synthesised clearly through a cogent argument. Correct scholarly procedures employed throughout with care and accuracy. |
| 60-69% | Merit | Overall a very good level of response to the set tasks. Evidence of strong research; the conceptual coherency of the work is good and ideas are researched and deployed within a defined contextual framework. Research shows evidence of sustained academic enquiry; the work draws on a wide range of sources most of which are critically evaluated and synthesised within a clear argument/structure; most issues are identified and contextualised using appropriate theoretical frameworks Text-based work/individual & group presentations: work is well organised, with sound underlying structure. Ideas are articulated clearly. Correct scholarly procedures employed throughout with accuracy. |
| 50-59% | Pass | Overall mainly adequate level of response to the set task; the conceptual coherency of the work is largely adequate. Ideas are researched and deployed with an inconsistent recognition of the need for a contextual framework. Research shows some evidence of the identification of relevant issues; limited range of sources; evidence of some analytical, contextual and critical skills but these are inconsistently employed. Text-based work/individual & group presentations: work is structured around an argument although the focus is not always clear; largely correct scholarly procedures employed. |
| 30-49% | Fail | Overall the work may not be without merit but not Masters standard. Inadequate level of response to the set task; the realisation of the concept does not utilise a sufficient range of sources and processes; level of response is not always appropriate or consistent. Research shows little evidence of the identification of relevant issues; limited and inadequate range of sources; little evidence of analytical, critical and contextual skills. Text-based work/individual & group presentations: work is lacking structure and/or a sound argument; the focus is not clear; incorrect scholarly procedures, inaccurate references. |
| 10-29% | Bad fail | Overall the work may not be without merit but not Masters standard. The concept is realised inappropriately or is under developed. Research: Range of sources is very limited; little interpretation or analysis; lacking breadth or awareness of relevant contextual frameworks. Text-based work/individual & group presentations: Weak organisational structure lacking in discussion and commentary; unfocused or lacking coherent argument; incorrect scholarly procedures employed. |
| 1-9% | Very bad fail | A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes (shall be deemed a non-valid attempt and unit must be re-sat). |
| 0% | Non submission or | A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit |

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| | plagiarised | an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment. |
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How the programme is structured

Autumn Term First 5 Weeks: FT
Optional MA Core Module A or C
Optional MA Core Module B or D MPhil-PhD Seminar
Visual Cultures Public Programme
PT Yr 1
Optional MA Core Module A or C
PT Yr 2
Optional MA Core Course B or D Visual Cultures Public Programme

Reading Week

Final 5 Weeks:
FT
MPhil-PhD Seminar MA Special Subject
Visual Cultures Public Programme
PT Yr 1
MA Special Subject
PT Yr 2
MPhil-PhD Seminar
Visual Cultures Public Programme

Christmas Break

Spring Term First 5 Weeks
FT
MPhil-PhD Seminar MA Special Subject
Visual Cultures Public Programme
PT Yr 1
MA Special Subject
PT Yr 2
MPhil-PhD Seminar
Visual Cultures Public Forum

Reading Week

FT
MPhil-PhD Seminar MA Special Subject
Visual Cultures Public Programme
PT Yr 1
Special Subject
PT Yr 2
MPhil-PhD Seminar
Visual Cultures Public Programme

Easter Break

Summer Term: For all FT and 2nd year PT students
May – September: Dissertation tutorials arranged as needed between student and tutor. September –
Dissertation submission

Academic Year of Study 1 or 2

| Module Title | Module Code | Credits | Level | Module Status | Term |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------|-------|---------------|-------|
| MA Special Subject | | 30 | 7 | Core | 1-2 |
| Research Methods Presentation | HT71021A | 30 | 7 | Core | 1,2,3 |
| MRes Visual Cultures Dissertation | HT71097B | 120 | 7 | Core | 3 |

Academic support

Support for learning begins with a summer reading project that includes texts of a conceptual nature, and references to materials specifically designed to guide students with respect to the practicalities of reading, researching and writing within academic learning environments.

At the beginning of the programme, a number of departmental and college-level inductions introduce students to the range of learning support available to them. The students are also introduced to their personal tutors.

The programme attempts to support the students' learning with high quality lectures, seminars, and workshops. The workshops provide particular support in the exploration of research and writing methods. The tutorial support network within the programme is extensive. Students can discuss both academic and personal problems with their personal tutor and, where appropriate, they can discuss matters relating to the programme as a whole with the MRes Programme Leader. Regular discussion of issues takes place each week in relation to the Guest Lecture, after which we organise a social meeting for more informal discussion of ideas and problems. In addition we organise occasional trips to museums, galleries and other sites of appropriate interest — as 'field work' — in order to enhance understanding.

The programme as a whole, as well as individual modules, are fully supported by a Virtual Learning Environment (learn.gold) which not only acts as an archive for all programme and module documentation, but also as an accessible site for interactive, online learning, discussion, and feedback. There is also a Post-Graduate Virtual Office which supplements the department's Postgraduate Office by providing ongoing administrative information and support.

In addition, the College offers language support services specially tailored for students in the Visual Cultures department for whom English is not their first language. The college also offers student services, counselling, and other services which further support student learning. These include: Hatcham House facilities for postgraduates (computers etc.); IT training in the Rutherford Building; and, in addition to the fine book, journals, CD, and video library at Goldsmiths, there are extended library facilities at Senate House, University of London.

Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects

MRes students graduating from the Visual Cultures department go on each year to undertake research degrees in art history, visual culture, cultural studies, performance studies, philosophy and related subjects both in the UK and abroad. Others find employment – again both here and abroad – in the spheres of arts administration, curating, teaching, arts journalism, community arts projects and other museums and galleries work. Some students opt to do a PGCE and go on to teach art / art history in schools and further education colleges. In this way, the department's MRes provision provides for pathways into many institutions of contemporary art and culture at various different levels.

The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree

Master's Degrees

All Master's degrees at Goldsmiths have a minimum value of 180 credits. Programmes are comprised

of modules which have individual credit values. In order to be eligible for the award of a Master's degree students must have passed all modules on the programme.

Intermediate Exit Points

Some programmes incorporate intermediate exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma, which may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. Individual programmes may specify which, if any, combination of modules are required in order to be eligible for the award of these qualifications. The awards are made without classification.

Final Classification

There are four possible categories of final classification for Master's degrees: Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail.

For further information, please refer to the Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Students, which may be found here: www.gold.ac.uk/governance/studentregulations/

Programme-specific rules and facts

Programme costs

General Costs

In addition to your tuition fees, you will be responsible for meeting standard costs associated with your study. Find out more information here: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/programme-costs>

How teaching quality will be monitored

Goldsmiths employs a number of methods to ensure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching on its programmes.

Programmes and modules must be formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year in departmental staff / student forums and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires. Every programme also has at least one External Examiner who produces an annual report which comments on the standards of awards and student achievement.

This output is considered with other relevant data in the process of Annual Programme Review, to which all programmes are subject, and which aims to identify both good practice and issues which require resolution.

Every six years all programmes within a department are also subject to a broader periodic review. This aims to ensure that they remain current, that the procedures to maintain the standards of the awards are working effectively and the quality of the learning opportunities and information provided to students and applicants is appropriate.

Detailed information on all of these procedures are published on the webpages of the Quality Office (<http://www.gold.ac.uk/quality/>).