

MA Black British History

Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

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

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Final Award: MA Black British History

Programme Name: MA Black British History

Total credit value for programme: 180 credits

Name of Interim Exit Award(s):

Postgraduate Certificate in Black British History

Postgraduate Diploma in Black British History

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

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s): (100302) History

QAA Benchmark Group Not applicable

FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7

Programme accredited by: Not applicable

Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: October 2022

Home Department: History

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

Not applicable

Programme overview

Black British history has been at the margins of academia for too long. MA Black British History is the first taught MA programme in the country to focus exclusively on the histories of peoples of African origin and descent in the United Kingdom. Built by the tireless work of independent scholars and community activists, the field is now growing within UK universities. As a student of MA Black British History, you will make vital contributions to this timely and socially important field of scholarship.

You will learn about the extraordinary and everyday lives of Black Britons. You will study their lives in context, exploring the historical phenomena that produced Black British subjects and citizens, and the history of places from which Black people migrated, in particular the Caribbean and Africa. Key themes include imperialism, slavery and emancipation, and migration. The MA situates Black British history within the histories of the

African diaspora and Black European studies and engages with some of the key theoretical interventions of Black studies.

The emphasis of the MA is on early modern and modern history. The programme features the following themes:

- The long histories of race and racialization in the British context;
- Black British history and the African diaspora;
- Histories of slavery and emancipation, colonialism, and migration;
- Shifting historical understandings of race, citizenship and identity;
- Radical Black social movements and organizing traditions, from slave rebellions to Black Lives Matter;
- Black intellectual worlds, art movements, and media, including radio, television and film;
- Regional histories;
- The relationship between Black British history and British history; and
- The methodologies, ethics, and practices.

Another emphasis is Black British urban history. While London is a key focus of study, with opportunities to engage with the rich local history around Goldsmiths, the programme will also examine Black British experiences outside the capital, introducing a regional approach to Black British history.

The programme also addresses methodological questions of archival recovery; the historiography on race, racialisation, and racism; and the varied sources, including oral histories and non-written materials, necessary to producing these histories. It attends as well to blackness and whiteness as historically-specific, culturally-constituted racial constructions.

MA Black British History's unique focus on the history of the Black British experience contributes significantly to diversifying the curriculum at Goldsmiths and UK higher education. The programme has a strong outreach and engagement component. Its focus on the Black British experience serves as a healthy corrective to the prominence of US Civil Rights in the teaching of Black history at UK schools and universities. It insists that Black history and histories of race are essential to understanding British history. Britain is reassessed and reconfigured through the histories of Africa, the Caribbean, and North America.

MA Black British History connects with the interdisciplinary research and teaching strengths of the department and the Goldsmiths. It creates synergies with other MA programmes. In its close attention to questions of power, the programme joins our MA Queer History in asking how race, sexual orientation, and gender identity have often become interlinked in

oppressive ways. There are also synergies with MA Black British Writing, and MA Race, Media and Social Justice. You can elect to take a relevant module from these other MA programmes.

Your learning will be supported by peers and one-to-one sessions with tutors and supervisors. You will undertake an independent research dissertation on a theme of personal interest. You will have the opportunity to organize and present your work at an internal departmental postgraduate conference. You will have access to extensive archival collections at Goldsmiths and Senate House collections, such as the Black British History Collection in the Institute for Historical Research Wohl Library. You will be part of the vibrant University of London research community.

Programme entry requirements

- An undergraduate degree (2:1) in History or a related subject
- Personal suitability assessed by a screening interview in cases referred to department by Admissions
- ELTS 6.5 with a 6.5 in writing

Students should normally have, or expect to gain, a first degree (2:1 or above) in history or another appropriate subject.

Applicants who are not graduates, or who have a degree in an unrelated field, or any other candidates may be subject to a qualifying examination in the form of essay work.

Non-native speakers normally possess IELTS of 6.5, or equivalent.

Programme learning outcomes

The MA Black British History explores current approaches to historical research and the interdisciplinarity required when historical enquiry focuses on the use of a broad variety of source material.

The programme aims to:

- examine and evaluate the historiography of, and current research within, Black British history
- develop ability to locate, use, and critically reflect upon, a variety of source material for historical enquiry in to the past
- develop ability to think systematically and creatively about developments in the field of black British history

- enhance critical and analytical skills
- enhance ability to develop and sustain original arguments
- encourage self-development into professionally organised and interactive individuals by practising skills of research, evaluation, and communication in written, oral, and visual domains
- encourage personal and professional development in areas related to activism, entrepreneurship and public history
- facilitate a learning environment that offers an appropriate foundation for further scholarly research in history, cultural studies, and other related disciplines in the humanities

What you will be expected to achieve

Students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Black British History will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	demonstrate an understanding of the historical and critical debates in Black British history	All modules, especially. Explorations and Debates in Black British History
A2	recognise the interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary nature of Black British history	All Modules
A3	recognise the possibilities and limitations of using a broad variety of source material for historical analysis of Black British experiences in the past	All Modules, esp. Research Skills
A4	demonstrate a sound knowledge of current debates between Black British history and race studies	All modules, esp. Explorations and Debates in Black British History
A5	recognise the historical specificity of black and white identities and experiences in the past	All Modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	interpret a broad variety of source material in the context of historical enquiry	All Modules, esp. Research Skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B2	develop and sustain original arguments that are informed by, but not wholly dependent on, authorities in the field of history	All Modules
B3	Expand their analytical, evaluative, critical and reflective capacities	All Modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	employ a critical and measured approach to historical source material and historiography	All Modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	interpret a variety of sources closely and critically	All Modules
D2	give oral presentations	All Modules
D3	write creative and critical historical analysis	All Modules
D4	assess evidence critically	All Modules
D5	integrate multiple and diverse forms of evidence	All Modules
D6	formulate coherent and persuasive interpretations and arguments informed by standards of scholarly accuracy	All Modules

In addition to the learning outcomes above, students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Diploma in Black British History will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	an in-depth understanding of the possibilities and limitations of using a broad variety of source material for historical analysis across a variety of historical themes	All Modules, esp. Optional Modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	develop and sustain original arguments that are informed by, but not wholly dependent on, authorities in the field of Black British history across a variety of historical themes, periods and regions	All Modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	AS ABOVE	All Modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	formulate coherent and persuasive interpretations and arguments informed by standards of scholarly accuracy across a variety of historical themes, periods and regions	All Modules

Students who successfully complete the MA Black British History, will have demonstrated achievement of all of the above outcomes and, in addition, be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	a systematic understanding of knowledge, and critical awareness of current problems and /or new insights much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline of Black British history	All Modules
A2	a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship	All Modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	apply the methods and theories of interdisciplinary approaches to Black British history in their own research	All Modules
B2	evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in Black British history	All Modules
B3	undertake research reflexively, reflecting on their own role as researchers	All Modules and Dissertation

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	creatively undertake historical research by applying innovative approaches	All Modules
C2	demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems	All Modules
C3	demonstrate critical use and evaluation of primary source documents to support thesis	Dissertation

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	undertake independent research	All Modules
D2	identify and address suitable topics for extended, reflective independent study	All Modules
D3	ability to manage complexity and to communicate complex ideas	All Modules
D4	organise and present a paper at an academic workshop	All Modules, especially the dissertation as the process of writing includes participating in organising, and presenting at, the Department's MA dissertation conference

Mode of study

The programme creates an intellectually stimulating environment which embraces diversity, and encourages and supports your independence, creativity, and confidence.

Teaching is seminar-based. Some sessions will include teaching by expert guest contributors. In addition to collaborative learning and critical engagement with readings, you will present readings to peers. You will apply acquired skills and knowledge through formative and summative assessments. You will also have regular meetings with your academic supervisor to support your dissertation work.

You will have additional opportunities to participate in workshops, conferences, speaker series' and other events run by the history department both locally and in collaboration with other bodies and events in London, for example the seminars run by the Institute of Historical Research.

COMPULSORY MODULES

The Explorations & Debates in Black British History module investigates the ways historians have conceptualised and contested historical practice within the field of Black British history, focusing especially on the modern and early modern periods. It considers the relationship between History and other disciplines, in particular studies of race and whiteness, as well as ways of using a range of sources for historical enquiry. Presentations, discussions in seminars, and assessment provide you with the opportunity to investigate the key theoretical and conceptual questions.

The Research Skills module trains you in the use and interpretation of a wide range of source material: textual, oral, visual, and material. In addition to seminars, the module includes non-classroom-based workshops (i.e. for ICT skills) and visits to museums, galleries, and archives, where you are addressed by archivists and specialists in these fields. Understanding is tested through a series of preparatory formative tasks for class discussion and through summative coursework.

The Dissertation module provides guidance and support for your independent history research projects. Through a series of dissertation workshops, and discussions with supervisors, you will develop a suitable project, identify relevant sources, and carry out original primary-source research in archives, museums, galleries and libraries. You will build upon archival research skills acquired in compulsory modules on the programme, particularly the Research Skills, while also utilising the subject knowledge and critical analytical skills acquired in the compulsory Explorations and Debates module and the other module options.

A formative student-run dissertation conference gives you the experience of conference organisation and presentation. It provides opportunities to formulate and receive engaged feedback on research projects from each other and history department staff. Organising the conference develops key transferable skills such as, time management, planning and organisation, group work and collaboration. You will also develop their skills and abilities in publicly presenting original academic work and public speaking.

OPTIONAL MODULES

Optional modules offer a range of regional, conceptual, and methodological positions from which to research and investigate Black British history across a range of periods. Options can take a temporal or geographic focus, a thematic or methodological emphasis, or survey recent and significant scholarly work in the field of Black British History. Options are exemplars of research-teaching synergies as they are derived from academics' current research. They also provide a valuable research environment where academics work in partnership with students. Alongside the compulsory modules, option modules prepare you to carry out research projects and the dissertation by orientating you within the subject and helping you explore possibilities and opportunities. The option modules develop many of the same subject and transferable skills as the compulsory modules.

While support is offered to students through individual tutorials, the expectations of the MA Black British History require significant investment of time in individual study of module readings and self-directed study and research in support of the 15,000-word dissertation.

Grading Criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	Exceptional work of potentially publishable quality, showing originality and based on extensive research and independent thought. Represents the achievement of the learning outcomes to an outstanding level.
70-79%	Distinction	Excellent work. In addition to the qualities expected at lower levels, shows independence of thought and judgement in relation to primary and secondary material and an ability to develop original ideas on a particular topic. Has a high level of analytical and critical skills. Able to put the topic in its regional context and to draw comparisons between places, periods and subjects. Imaginative and well- rounded work. Shows readiness to adopt new approaches and techniques. Represents the achievement of the learning outcomes to an excellent level.
60-69%	Merit	Good work, showing analytical and critical abilities, a wide knowledge of the topic under discussion, a sound grasp of the nature of the sources and of the subject's historiography. High standard of writing and presentation. Represents the achievements of the learning outcomes to a good level.
50-59%	Pass	Satisfactory work, showing an ability to analyse the main issues and support the analysis with adequate knowledge; able to write to the point; shows an awareness of the nature of the

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
		sources and historiography; some faults in English style, acceptable in examinations but not in essays and dissertations. Represents the achievement of the learning outcomes to a threshold level.
30-49%	Fail	Work based on inadequate knowledge and showing a failure to grasp the main issues and to tackle the problems under discussion; limited powers of analysis and argument. represents an overall failure to achieve the learning outcomes.
10-29%	Bad fail	Scrappy and totally inadequate work. 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.

Programme structure

The programme requires you to take two compulsory modules: Explorations & Debates in Black British History (one term, 30 credits) and Research Skills (one term, 30 credits); two 30-credit Option modules (one term each); a research dissertation (60 credits).

In discussion with the programme conveners in both departments, students may take one option from outside those offered by the MA Black British History programme. This can include any other History MA module or modules from other departments within the University of London. Black British history cannot be separated from other histories and so it is a great benefit to students to have the opportunity to draw from the rich expertise of historical work being done at Goldsmiths that is reflected in MA options each year. You may, for example, be interested in taking a module that offers them greater depth of understanding in a particular geographic or temporal context. You might also find particular value in a thematically organised module. If you choose a 15 credit module at a different University of London college the required 30 credits can be obtained by undertaking a 15 credit Independent Study Project administered by the Department of History at Goldsmiths.

Full-time mode

Full-time students usually take Explorations & Debates in Black British History, Research Skills, and one Option module in the first term. In the second term they take one Option module and begin work on their dissertation. In the third term students participate in the dissertation conference and complete their dissertation.

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Explorations and Debates in Black British History	HT71149A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Research Skills	HT71110E	30	7	Compulsory	1
Optional modules to the value of 60 credits from a list available annually from the Department. One Option may be chosen from another Goldsmiths Department or University of London College which participates in the intercollegiate scheme (If students choose a 15 credits intercollegiate Option Module, the required 30 credits can be obtained by undertaking a 15 credits Independent Study Project)	Various	60	7	Optional	1-2
Dissertation (15,000 Words)	HT71063C	60	7	Compulsory	2-3

Part-time mode

Part-time students usually take Explorations & Debates in Black British History in the first term of year 1 and EITHER Research Skills or one Option in the second term of year 1. In year 2, if they have not already taken Research Skills, they usually take the Research Skills module in the first term AND Option 2 in the first or second term, when they also begin work on their dissertation. In term 3 of year 2 students participate in the dissertation workshop and complete the dissertation.

Part-time students will normally be expected to have passed in the first year Exploration and Debates in Black British History and EITHER Research Skills OR an option module to the value of 30 credits in the first year, before proceeding to the final year. All students must have passed modules to the value of 90 credits before proceeding to the dissertation.

Students may choose to structure their studies differently, but this must be discussed and approved, in advance, by the programme convener.

Academic year of study 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Explorations and Debates in Black British History	HT71149A	30	7	Compulsory	1
EITHER Research Skills or optional modules to the value of 30 credits from a list available annually from the Department. One Option may be chosen from another Goldsmiths Department or University of London College which participates in the intercollegiate scheme (If students choose a 15 credits intercollegiate Option Module, the required 30 credits can be obtained by undertaking a 15 credits Independent Study Project)	Various	30	7	Optional	1-2

Academic year of study 2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
EITHER Research Skills (if not taken in Year 1) and 30 credits of options as below OR	HT71110E	30	7	Compulsory	1-2
Optional modules to the value of 60 credits from a list available annually from the Department. One Option may be chosen from another Goldsmiths Department or University of London College which participates in the intercollegiate scheme (If students choose a 15 credits intercollegiate Option Module, the required 30 credits can be obtained by	Various	30	7	Optional	1-2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
undertaking a 15 credits Independent Study Project)					
Dissertation (15,000 Words)	HT71063C	60	7	Compulsory	2-3

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

The programme envisages partnerships with the Black Cultural Archives and the George Padmore Institute which could facilitate career development opportunities such as placements and internships. A similar partnership with Goldsmiths Special Collections provides opportunities for research placements. Goldsmiths Special Collections hold numerous collections relevant to Black British history including, the Women of Colour Index 1985-1995 (relating to individual Black women artists working in the UK), Kenneth A. Gourlay Collection (of folk and traditional music from Africa), Future Histories (Black theatre and carnival archive), and the Vic Seidler, Ben Gidley and Andrew Goodman collections (on late 20th century society and social movements).

Employability and potential career opportunities

The MA Black British History develops a range of transferable skills that are highly relevant to a range of careers and areas of employment. These include: advanced research and analytical expertise; increased independence of thought; the ability to marshal, evaluate and communicate, in written and oral form, complex information and ideas; project management; and teamwork.

The programme prepares students for careers in diversity administration in private business, government, charities, social work, NGO's, archives and the education sector. As opposed to primarily theory-oriented subjects like race and ethnic studies, the programme

lays a solid empirical foundation in Black British history. This provides an excellent basis for a range of careers in and around issues of diversity.

The programme also prepares students for careers in journalism and the media, especially where students chose to study optional modules from the MA Race, Media and Social Justice (run by Media, Communications and Cultural Studies and Sociology).

The programme supplies general history skills in data gathering and analysis as well as effective written and spoken communication. These are skills that can be transferred into a wide variety of domains, from private business to the education and NGO sector. Opportunities also exist within the Careers Office's NMC Mentoring Scheme for Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic students.

The programme provides a gateway to further postgraduate research (PhD) study and careers in further and higher education.

Programme-specific requirements

All taught postgraduate degrees have a minimum total value of 180 credits and involve one calendar year of full-time study. Some programmes may extend over more than one calendar year and, when this is the case, they have a higher total credit value. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section "How the programme is structured" above. Normally, 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](#).

Modules are defined as:

- "Optional" – which can be chosen from a group of modules
- "Compulsory" – which must be taken as part of the degree

Final degree classification is calculated on the basis of a student's mean average mark (based on credit value) across all modules on the programme.

Masters degrees are awarded with the following classifications:

Distinction – 70%+
Merit – 60-69%
Pass – 50-59%

More detail on the [calculation of the final classification](#) is on our website.

Some programmes incorporate 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.

When these awards are incorporated within the programme, the relevant learning outcomes and module requirements will be set out within the “What you will be expected to achieve” 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

None.