

MA Cultural Studies

Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

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

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Name of Final Award and Programme Title: MA Cultural Studies

Name of Interim Exit Award(s): Not applicable

Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time or 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: December 2020

Home Department: Media, Communications and Cultural Studies

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

Anthropology; Computing; Confucius Institute for Dance and Performance; English and Creative Writing; History; Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship; Politics and International Relations; Sociology.

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.

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).

Aims of the programme

Specifically, the MA Cultural Studies aims to enable students:

- 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.

What you will be expected to achieve

Students who successfully complete the programme will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	demonstrate conceptual awareness of the contours of advanced cultural theory in the context of contemporary cultural practice;	all modules
A2	show awareness of the dynamic relationship between text and image in cultural theory and practice within a Cultural Studies context;	all modules
A3	show understanding of a range of methodological issues surrounding the production of innovative research in Cultural Studies;	all modules

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A4	have furthered their understanding of related subject areas in which they have an interest through the choice of options offered on the programme;	all modules
A5	demonstrate, via the dissertation, an in-depth, critical understanding of one particular issue in contemporary culture in relation to the broader Cultural Studies field studied in compulsory and option courses;	all modules

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;	all modules
B2	critically analyse the complex interaction of theory and cultural practice;	all modules
B3	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;	all modules

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	debate salient academic, ethical and technical issues relevant to research methods, and draw on this awareness in designing an effective research project (dissertation);	all modules
C2	demonstrate that they can produce an extended piece of written work of a high academic standard (i.e. adequately researched, planned and structured, clearly written, well- presented and following academic conventions);	all modules

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C3	show 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.	all modules
C4	design, formulate and conduct small-scale research on a range of topics relevant to theory, policy, practice or activism;	all modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	communicate ideas and present arguments clearly in speech and writing;	all modules
D2	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;	all modules
D3	confidently design and carry out research on a broad range of topics in the future within the cultural field and/or in academic areas related to cultural studies;	all modules
D4	exercise initiative and personal responsibility in effective independent work with the attendant skills of work organisation, time planning, independent decision-making and keeping to deadlines;	all modules
D5	systematically and creatively engage in debates around culture, relating cultural theory and research to cultural issues arising in a range of contexts	all modules

How you will learn

Knowledge and understanding [K1(a-d)] are developed through recognised protocols of lectures and seminars, in which the development of understanding is reinforced and monitored through student presentations and group discussion. Seminars also foster skills

in critical thinking, debate and oral communication [K2(a-c), K3(a), K4(e)]. Students are encouraged to study independently and to make use of the many excellent libraries available to all University of London students [K3(c), K4(d)].

Guidance and support for independent study are provided through individual tutorials. Tutorials are also a means of supporting the planning and production of written assignments, in particular the dissertation [K1(e), K3(d), K4(c)].

Students are strongly encouraged to enhance knowledge and understanding by attending many of the wide range of relevant lectures, seminars and workshops taking place throughout the University of London and beyond [K(a-d)]. Events of particular interest to this cohort are publicised through the noticeboard in the department, the Events listings on the department and college websites, and via an e-mail list.

How you will be assessed

Typically, a 30 CAT module will be assessed by a 5-6,000 word essay, sometimes a practical project

Dissertation (Methodology and Research) Total 60 CATS

- 2000-word critical analysis of research methods (20% weighting).
- Dissertation, completed Summer term: 10-12,000-word Dissertation, end of August

Learning Outcomes

- To demonstrate a high level of knowledge and critical understanding of selected key theoretical texts in the fields of cultural studies and related fields.
- To show critical analytical skills in exploring and/or applying concepts in written work.
- To demonstrate convincing use and engagement with relevant data and source materials.
- To survey and select appropriate primary and secondary sources for written work using library facilities.

Marking 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.

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
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.

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
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.

How the programme is structured

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 CATS to graduate - the equivalent of 4 x 30 CATS and a dissertation (including methods) valued at 60 CATS.

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 CATS 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 CATS (or 2 x 15 CATS) 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 CATS) is a normal requirement in order to be permitted to submit the dissertation.

Full-time mode

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Cultural Studies and Capitalism	MC71222A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Doing Cultural Studies	MC71225A	30	7	Compulsory	2
Dissertation Cultural Studies (Methodology and Research)	MC71205A	60	7	Compulsory	1-3
Optional modules equal to the value of 60 credits, chosen from an approved list published annually	Various	60	7	Optional	1-2

Part-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Cultural Studies and Capitalism	MC71222A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Doing Cultural Studies	MC71225A	30	7	Compulsory	2
Optional modules equal to the value of 30 credits, chosen from an approved list published annually	Various	30	7	Compulsory	1-2

Academic year of study 2

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
Dissertation Cultural Studies (Methodology and Research)	MC71205A	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 twice 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 [Academic Skills Centre](#) 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.

Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects

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.

The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree

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

Modules are defined as:

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

Progression

Some programmes may require students to pass specific modules prior to completion of the dissertation/major project (or equivalent). Additionally, where a programme of study extends beyond one calendar year, students may be required to pass specific modules in their first year of study before progressing to the second year. Where this is the case, these requirements will be set out in this Programme Specification.

Award of the degree

In order to graduate, students must successfully complete all modules specified for the programme, as set out within the section “How the programme is structured” above.

Classification

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.

Interim exit awards

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](#).

Programme-specific rules and facts

General programme costs

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

Specific programme costs

Not applicable.

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 are formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year, such as in departmental committees, a variety of student feedback mechanisms and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires. Every programme has at least one External Examiner who reviews comments annually on the standards of awards and student achievement. External Examiner(s) attend Boards of Examiners meetings and submit an annual written report.

Modules, programmes and/or departments are also subject to annual and periodic review internally, as well as periodic external scrutiny.

Quality assurance processes aim to ensure Goldsmiths' academic provision remains 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 these procedures are published on the [Quality Office web pages](#).