

# MA Sociocultural Linguistics

## Programme Specification

**Awarding Institution:**

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

**Teaching Institution:** Goldsmiths, University of London

**Final Award:** MA Sociocultural Linguistics

**Programme Name:** MA Sociocultural Linguistics

**Total credit value for programme:** 180 credits

**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):** (101016) Sociolinguistics

**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:** English and Creative Writing

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

Not applicable

## Programme overview

This interdisciplinary programme looks at language from a sociocultural perspective. It's designed for anyone with an interest in the relationship between language, culture and society but also provides students with a solid understanding of English language and linguistics.

The MA develops your understanding of historical and contemporary debates in (socio)linguistics and discourse analysis and enhances your analytic and linguistic skills by introducing different approaches to the analysis of written and spoken language use from a range of everyday and institutional contexts.

Topics covered include:

- language, discourse and ideology
- linguistic performances of identity (particularly language and gender, sexuality,

- ethnicity and social class) language and the media
- talk at work global English
- intercultural communication multilingualism and code-switching varieties of English  
You're encouraged to engage with these topics by drawing on your own social, linguistic,
- cultural and occupational backgrounds in class discussions and in your written work.

You're also encouraged to collect your own samples of written and spoken language use and learn to subject those to in-depth critical analysis.

This MA draws on findings, theories and methodologies from: sociolinguistics, semantics, pragmatics, spoken and written discourse analysis, ethnography, semiotics, feminist stylistics; multimodal analysis; interactional sociolinguistics, conversational analysis, membership categorisation analysis, performativity and narrative analysis.

The programme's distinct interdisciplinary ethos is also reflected in your opportunity to choose from a selection of relevant optional modules in other departments of the College.

## **Programme entry requirements**

The standard requirement is an Upper Second-Class BA or equivalent degree in an humanities/arts subject (e.g. English, Linguistics, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology); but other qualifications of equivalent level are considered; as are degree results below the upper second class where there are indications of academic strength in this specialism. A high level of competence in written and spoken English is also required.

## **Aims of the programme**

The programme specification is informed by: Goldsmiths' declared focus on 'the study of creative, cultural and social processes'; the UK Quality Code; the National Qualifications Framework; the English Benchmarking Statement (insofar as it applies to MA level) and the College's and the Department's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies.

The main purpose of the programme is to offer a challenging, flexible and advanced scheme of study invigorated by current research, which introduces or extends students' specialist knowledge and critical/contextual understanding of Applied Linguistics. The programme aspires to:

1. enhance independent critical and evaluative skills
2. develop and expand students' knowledge and understanding of social, cultural, historical and intellectual contexts of socio (cultural) linguistics

3. develop an understanding of linguistic theory and methodology deriving from diverse socio-cultural and historical perspectives
4. promote students' analytical engagement with the complexities of modern linguistics
5. enhance students' familiarity with and understanding of a variety of spoken and written linguistic genres
6. encourage students' self-development into professionally organised and interactive individuals by practising skills of selection, assimilation and communication in both written and oral domains
7. facilitate a learning environment that offers an appropriate foundation for further scholarly research in (sociocultural) linguistics

## Programme learning outcomes

Students who successfully complete the programme will have knowledge and understanding of:

### Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	an international body of literature related to linguistics, socio(cultural) linguistics and discourse analysis	All modules
A2	significant bodies of works in linguistics and socio(cultural) linguistics representative of major tendencies and problems in these inter-related fields	All modules, but the 'compulsory' modules in particular
A3	selected historical and contemporary theoretical debates about the relationship between language, culture and society and key sub-topics within these fields (e.g., gender, identity, representation, discourse, inter-cultural studies, Global English)	All modules, specific areas covered by each 'option' module
A4	the ideological implications of different approaches to linguistic analysis of texts	All modules
A5	appropriate use of methods and concepts in advanced linguistic and socio(cultural) linguistic research	All modules, but the 'compulsory' modules in particular

## Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Conduct detailed textual analysis informed by appropriate theoretical and methodological perspectives	All modules, but especially Analysing Discourse & Identity in Spoken Interaction; Language & Ideology in Written Discourse
B2	synthesise multiple, diverse, but relevant contexts and perspectives	All modules
B3	assimilate and critically evaluate alternative accounts of linguistic, social and cultural processes and practices	All modules
B4	formulate coherent and persuasive interpretations and arguments informed by standards of scholarly accuracy	All modules
B5	integrate diverse evidence into coherent comparative evaluations	All modules

## Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	perceive and account for interactions between socio- cultural contexts and linguistic genres and forms in the creation and reception of textual meanings	All modules: in particular English in a Multilingual World; Intercultural Discourse & Communication; Language in its Sociocultural Context
C2	use textual discourse analysis to produce critically informed independent interpretations of spoken and written texts	All modules: in particular, Language in its Sociocultural Context; Analysing Discourse & Identity in Spoken Interaction
C3	use a range of critical commentary and theoretical perspectives discriminatingly	All modules
C4	produce own written work to scholarly standards in organisation, relevance, expression, referencing, and bibliography	All modules

C5	research linguistic topics using data resources and collecting and sifting primary and secondary evidence	Dissertation (Sociocultural Linguistics) and all other modules
C6	understand and apply accurately the terminologies appropriate to advanced linguistic studies	All modules
C7	design and execute an independent project of linguistic research	Dissertation (Sociocultural Linguistics); Analysing Discourse & Identity in Spoken Interaction;
<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
		Language & Ideology in Written Discourse
C8	prepare, contribute to, and on occasion lead seminar discussion on topics in linguistics and socio(cultural) linguistics and the analysis of complex spoken and written texts	All modules

## Transferable skills

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
D1	enhanced communication and discussion skills, in written and oral contexts	All modules; the Dissertation (Sociocultural Linguistics); particularly reflecting the written skills
D2	facility in accessing verbal data using hard copy/electronic resources	All modules
D3	ability to compare and evaluate different textual materials	All modules, but especially Analysing Discourse & Identity in Spoken Interaction; Language & Ideology in Written Discourse
D4	capacity to handle ideas in rational, critical and evaluative ways	All modules
D5	open-mindedness and capacity for independent judgement	All modules

D6	management of own learning, including working effectively to deadlines	All modules
D7	application of skills of discourse analysis to a variety of texts and contexts	All modules, but especially in Analysing Discourse & Identity in Spoken Interaction; Language & Ideology in Written Discourse
D8	power to organise information, and to assimilate and evaluate competing arguments	All modules
D9	ability to make positive contributions to groups, and perception of group dynamics	All modules

## How you will learn

Teaching and learning methods and strategies linked to knowledge and understanding:

The Department is committed to the centrality of the lecture/seminar combination in the teaching and learning process. All modules provide a weekly lecture/seminar for every participant, which reinforces knowledge gained through reading and presentations, and enables students to enhance and develop their understanding. In the 'compulsory' module units, taken in the first and second terms by full-time and part time students, learning in each module is through a weekly 2 hour lecture/seminar combination. This combined structure provides contextual and theoretical perspectives through the lecture hour which is applied in more detail to texts in the seminar hour. These modules support and develop all of programme outcomes A1-5. Outcomes A2-5 are further supported and sustained by the specialist option modules taken in the first and second term; these are taught by a weekly 2hour lecture/seminar and underpinned by up-to date staff research specialisms.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies linked to these intellectual skills:

These skills are cultivated across the programme's syllabuses. Through seminars and lectures students are continuously exposed to - and encouraged to evolve - fresh perceptions and evaluations of linguistic theory and techniques of analysis; and through self-managed learning they further assimilate a range of contextual approaches to and analyses of them.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies linked to these subject-specific skills:

These skills are cultivated across the curriculum, though with varying emphases according to module. In addition, the Programme Handbook provides initial advice on aspects of C4, and Information Services on aspects of C5. Suitable bibliographical information is normative for each module and its efficacy tested in student evaluation. The foundation modules provide a grounding in C1-C3 and C6, and the option modules build further on that grounding, particularly in relation to C2. C7 is particularly addressed in the programme of individual supervision offered in the summer period, devoted to the dissertation and facilitated by guidance in the Programme Handbook. Seminars are the forum for C8.

Teaching and learning methods and strategies linked to these transferable skills:

Powers of expression and discussion, and the handling of ideas, are developed everywhere in the module, since all modules require production of written work that communicates and argues well, and all modules use seminar discussion as part of the learning process, thus supporting D7-D8) in particular. Staff give module-specific help with D2. D3-D5 should be demonstrated to students by staff and peer example. D6 is a crucial skill everywhere fostered in a timetabled curriculum.

## **How you will be assessed**

Assessment of knowledge and understanding:

Summative assessment takes the following forms, allowing students to demonstrate a range of appropriate skills: (i) for each of the foundation modules, 'Core issues in English

Language & Linguistics', by 1500-word blog (30%) and 3500-4500-word essay (70%) and

'Language in its Sociocultural Context', by critical review (30%) and 3500-4500-word essay (70%) (ii); for the two selected option modules, by 5,000-6,000-word essays; (iii) by 15,000word dissertation (100%) and a compulsory verbal presentation.

Assessment of intellectual skills:

These skills are assessed in the students' essays and dissertation.

Assessment of subject-specific skills:

The skills in C1-C6 are tested through the assessment methods of essays and dissertation.

C7 is tested in the dissertation and some of the option modules. C8 is included among the Department's measures of student progress but for technical reasons (policies on anonymity, verification) it is informally assessed.

Assessment of transferable skills:

(D1-D7) are repeatedly tested during the programme through the requirement to produce, by specified dates, written discussions, through the dissertation, and through the adoption of seminars as the key learning medium. Attainment in D1-D7 is measured in two kinds of assessed written work. D8 is an ubiquitous element of the programme: it is subject to formative tutor assessment by oral feedback.

Your written work is assessed with regard to (a) the Department's general assessment criteria, (b) the particular assessment criteria identified for a given module, and (c) the requirements of the specific essay or assignment or examination answer undertaken.

The Department's general assessment criteria for written work are as follows and you are invited to bear these in mind throughout their work for the degree programme:

- Relevance of discussion and argument to the topic; ability to discriminate between merely descriptive statements and critical analysis, and to identify pertinent issues with precision.
- Ability to present, sustain and conclude fluently a discussion, investigation or complex argument based on close and imaginative engagement with the text(s) in question, and to draw reasoned and logical conclusions.
- Clarity of the work in terms of legibility, spelling, punctuation and grammar; and the professionalism of the presentation. Assessed work is given a percentage mark. The following explanations will give an idea of how marks are assigned. (But note that marking criteria are flexible. An excellent discussion may be compromised by poor expression or organisation: an eloquent discussion may be fundamentally irrelevant. Examples of other factors adversely affecting a mark would be repetition, or manifest incompleteness or serious failure to meet the prescribed length.).

## Grading Criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction  (Outstanding/  Exceptional)	Candidate shows evidence of extensive relevant reading and 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, well-focused and cogent.



70-79%	Distinction	Mature and full grasp of issues raised by the question/topic, communicated fluently within a structured essay demonstrating analytical rigour and well substantiated independent thought and reaching cogent conclusions; supported by detailed insight into primary texts and into context and/or secondary criticism; a professional standard of execution.
60-69%	Merit	Lucid and analytical discussion showing clear understanding of the principal issues raised by the question/topic, and making aptly selective use of module text(s) and concerns and of relevant contextual or secondary criticism in a structured way to reach substantiated conclusions. Well-articulated and presented to a good standard of professionalism.
50-59%	Pass	Adequate discussion showing understanding of some of the issues raised by the question/topic, making use of module text(s) and concerns in a reasonably coherent way to reach sufficiently substantiated conclusions. Satisfactorily clear, with an adequate standard of presentation and execution.
30-49%	Fail	At this level of study, an essay, dissertation or examination answer may show adequate knowledge of the syllabus but fail on grounds of inadequate relevance to the question/topic; it may be fluently argued but lack adequate evidence of the student having understood the work set for the module; or it may be relevant and well-informed but incoherent in expression and argument.
10-29%	Bad fail	A submission that shows a significant overall failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes. Written work shows no evidence of an attempt to address the question.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment.

## Mode of study

Full-time or part-time

## Programme structure

The programme is available in full-time (12 months) and part-time (24 months) modes. All students take four taught modules (each worth 30 credits) and complete a dissertation (60

credits). The two compulsory modules are taken by both full-time and part time students in the first year. Two option modules are taken, normally one in each term (normally in the second year in the case of part-time students). Students can either choose two linguistics options from ECW, or one linguistics option and one option from another MA programme within the college (where specifically approved by the Programme Coordinator).

The dissertation is also compulsory and is submitted in September (of the second year in the case of part-time students). The oral presentation on the project of the dissertation constitutes a compulsory element of the dissertation. Presentations will be held in June of the year of dissertation submission. All the Department's modules, and especially the optional modules, are informed by the research interests of staff.

The compulsory modules and the options are each worth 30 credits, while the dissertation is worth 60 credits. In accordance with Goldsmiths' general MA examination regulations, you must pass all assessed elements in order to be awarded the degree.

Part-Time Mode - Year 1: 2 'compulsory' modules:

Core Issues in English Language & Linguistics Language in its Sociocultural Context

Progression requirements Yr 1 to Yr 2

Minimum of 1 module passed; any failed assessment to be retaken in Yr 2.

Part-Time Mode - Year 2

Two option modules (see list below); dissertation.

The list below indicates the Department's approved option module provision in linguistics. Each of these is worth 30 credits. Where any of these modules is unavailable in a particular year owing to staffing constraints, there will usually be an opportunity for part-time students to take such modules in the following year. Students may also choose up to 30 credits from non-linguistics MA modules taught by other departments in the college, where specifically approved by the Programme Co-ordinator.

Current range of 'option' modules taught in English and Creative Writing include Discourse & Identity in Spoken Interaction; English in a Multilingual World; Intercultural Discourse & Communication; and Language & Ideology in Written Discourse.

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Core Issues in English	EN71075C	30	7	Compulsory	1

Language and Linguistics					
Language in its Sociocultural Context	EN71076C	30	7	Compulsory	3
Option modules to a value of 60 credits chosen from the approved list available from the Department	Various	60	7	Optional	1 and 2
Dissertation (Sociocultural Linguistics)	EN71085B	60	7	Compulsory	1-3

Note: If a student has already successfully completed a previous linguistics degree which contains modules offering content which largely overlaps with one or both of our two compulsory modules (EN71075C or EN71076C), then the **student can apply to replace one of the compulsory modules with another linguistics** option (i.e. the student will complete one compulsory module and three option modules, out of which two need to be in linguistics). The student will need to specify which compulsory module should be replaced in their initial application. A transcript of the successfully completed previous linguistics degree as well as a course outline of relevant modules successfully completed needs to be submitted with the application which will be considered by the admissions tutor.

## 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.

## **Employability and potential career opportunities**

Careers: Publishing, journalism, British Council roles, public relations, teaching, research, translation, advertising, the civil service, business, industry, the media.

Skills: Transferable skills, including enhanced communication and discussion skills in written and oral contexts; the ability to analyse and evaluate a wide variety of spoken and written

texts from informal as well as institutional settings; an understanding of the concept of communicative competence; the ability to organise information, and to assimilate and evaluate competing arguments.

## **Tuition fee costs**

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

## **Specific programme costs**

Not applicable