

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

### Course record information

Name and level of final award:	<b>MA Art and Visual Culture</b> The MA Art and Visual Culture is a Masters degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma Art and Visual Culture Postgraduate Certificate Art and Visual Culture
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Regent Street, University of Westminster
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	September and January Full Time (1 year) or Part Time (2 years)
<a href="#">QAA subject benchmarking group(s)</a> :	n/a
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	n/a
Date of course validation/review:	June 2016
Date of programme specification approval:	July 2017
Valid for cohorts:	From 2016
Course Leader:	Sara Dominici
Course URL:	<a href="http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate">westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate</a>
Westminster Course Code:	PMVCL01F (Full-time) PMVCL01P (Part-time)
JACS code:	W900
UKPASS code:	P021674

## **ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS**

There are standard minimum [entry requirements](#) for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: [westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply](http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply)

## **AIMS OF THE COURSE**

The MA Art & Visual Culture aims to familiarise students with a range of historical and contemporary debates around the significance of visual arts and culture, and to develop their expertise in critical analysis. It aims to enable them to reflect upon their own experience and awareness to develop a critical framework and individual perspective with which to evaluate and situate the role of Visual Culture Studies and visual culture.

The MA aims to give an understanding of the role of historical and theoretical practices in Visual Culture Studies, and in the practices of visual culture itself, through its emphasis on the arts and other creative industries. By drawing on the intellectual and cultural resources of institutions in London, the course also aims to balance theoretical accounts of visual culture and thinking with the application of these perspectives to visual representations in various contexts such as museum exhibitions and gallery curatorial practice.

The course aims to give students intellectual, vocational, and research skills, such as the ability to think critically, operating within different artistic and conceptual frameworks, and to work in interdisciplinary ways in the media, creative, and cultural industries.

In addition, the MA aims to be a student-centred course (i.e. that students' experience, interests and points of view are considered and reflected in the content and the presentation of the course) and aims to enable students from a diverse range of backgrounds and professional experience to benefit from the course.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND FURTHER STUDY OPPORTUNITIES**

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e., employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills (which might include research skills) are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students

- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors

The MA Art & Visual Culture is intended to provide students with sophisticated critical skills and a widely applicable knowledge base. This enables further study at MPhil or PhD levels, but is also particularly relevant to a range of professions in the creative and cultural industries.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. They are threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

On successful completion of the course, students will be expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate a wide knowledge of the critical and theoretical concepts and debates, past and present, relating to Visual Culture Studies and visual culture itself
- Critically evaluate the complex relations between theory and practice
- Develop and utilise a comprehensive framework with which to articulate contemporary debates relating to the significance, place and value of visual culture in contemporary society
- Undertake research into visual and cultural practices using appropriate methodologies
- Use a variety of ways to examine and interpret images, objects, and environments for their historical significance and their meanings within the context of the museum or gallery and public display
- Analyse and criticise archival, display and curatorial practices
- Analyse the experience of various public and private spaces encountered during site visits (Interpreting Space)
- Critically analyse different forms of digital technology, how they relate to artistic and cultural practice and how they are used in exhibition and display (Creative Digital Technology).

### **Specific Skills**

On successful completion of the course, students will be expected to be able to:

- Undertake academic research using university and specialist external libraries and institutional archives and the Internet
- Select and apply appropriate research techniques to a specific subject area in Visual Culture Studies
- Demonstrate practical research skills using exhibitions and specific site visits
- Demonstrate analytical research skills in compiling bibliographic details of texts, collecting ephemera, reports, and essays related to specific topics
- Reflect on their direct experience in working in the cultural industries sector (Work Placement) and make proposals for continuing development.

## Key Transferable skills

On successful completion of the course, students will be expected to be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to understand, interrogate and apply a range of theoretical positions and the ability to understand the importance of alternative perspectives
- Demonstrate sophisticated research skills, including scholarly information retrieval
- Demonstrate information-technology skills such as word-processing and electronic data access
- Demonstrate interpersonal and team skills, relating to the ability to work flexibly and creatively with other people and engage in rational debate
- Demonstrate time-management and organisational skills, as shown by the ability to plan and present findings effectively and to deadline
- Make oral presentations to a professional standard using appropriate audio-visual aids
- Demonstrate competence in planning and execution of essays and other kinds of work

## Learning Outcomes matrix

<b><i>Knowledge and Understanding</i></b>	7CLST016W	7CLST017W	7CLST004W	7CLST013W	7CLST008W	7CLST018W	7CLST015W	7CLST001W	7CLST005W
Demonstrate a wide knowledge of the critical and theoretical concepts and debates, past and present, relating to visual culture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Critically evaluate the complex relations between theory and practice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and utilise a comprehensive framework with which to articulate contemporary debates relating to the significance, place and value of visual culture in contemporary society.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Undertake research into visual and cultural practices using appropriate methodologies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Use a variety of ways to examine and interpret objects for their historical significance and their meanings within the context of the museum or gallery and public display	X	X	X	X		X			X
Analyse and criticise archival, display and curatorial practices	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
Analyse the experience of various public and private spaces encountered during site visits	X		X		X				X
Critically analyse different forms of digital technology, how they relate to artistic	X	X		X	X	X			X

and cultural practice and how they are used in exhibition and display									
<b>Specific Skills</b>									
Undertake academic research using university and specialist external libraries and institutional archives and the Internet	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Select and apply appropriate research techniques to a specific subject area in visual culture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Demonstrate practical research skills using exhibitions and specific site visits	X		X	X	X	X			X
Demonstrate analytical research skills in compiling bibliographic details of texts, collecting ephemera, reports, and essays related to specific topics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Key Transferable skills</b>									
demonstrate the ability to understand, interrogate and apply a range of theoretical positions and the ability to understand the importance of alternative perspectives	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
demonstrate sophisticated research skills, including information retrieval	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
demonstrate information-technology skills such as word-processing and electronic data access information	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
demonstrate time-management and organisational skills, as shown by the ability to plan and present findings effectively and to deadline	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
make oral presentations to a professional standard using audio-visual aids	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
demonstrate competence in planning and executing essays and other work	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Codes given (e.g. 7CLST016W) relate to the individual module codes – the full titles of the modules are given in the module Proformas.

## TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

Modules are taught by one two-hour or three-hour seminar per week, depending on the subject. Seminars are focused on student-centred learning, with use of non-assessed presentations and in-class projects to encourage student participation. Students will be expected to read specific texts for discussion prior to their seminars. Lists for each module can be found in the Module Proformas in this Handbook, which are indicative of suggested reading. Further details, and specific indications of reading for each seminar class, will be provided by seminar tutors.

The University is committed to Guided Independent Study (GIS) as a means by which students learn to work on their own, adopt enquiry-led approaches to learning, develop

their individual learning habits and become self-aware about their learning capabilities, so that they graduate as lifelong learners. At postgraduate level, this includes giving support in applying work-based experience to student learning, and studying at a greater level of intellectual demand and autonomy. At least one week per semester is designated for GIS in each module.

As well as seminars and tutorials, teaching will also involve the use of London institutions as a resource. Depending on module choice, this may include the directed use of various archives, museums, and galleries. Site visits are an important part of some modules. These are accompanied by staff, although students are also encouraged to visit particular museums or galleries, archives, events etc outside class time, and may be given some specific direction as to particular visits that would be relevant to each module.

Assessment methods deployed on the course vary, and include coursework in the form of essays, case studies, projects and oral presentations, as well as the final 10,000-12,000 word dissertation. There are no formal examinations. Further details on the different forms of assessment can be found in the course handbook.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year.

### Module requirements for the award of MA Art & Visual Culture

Core and option modules to the value of 180 credits must be passed as follows:

Credit Level 7					
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS	Semester
<b>CORE MODULES to the value of 100 credits:</b>					
7CLST004W	Visual Culture: Dissertation	Core	60	30	Two
7CLST016W	Visual Culture: Production, Display and Discourse	Core	20	10	Two
7CLST017W	Visual Culture: Theoretical and Critical Perspectives	Core	20	10	One

<b>OPTION MODULES to the value of 80 credits selected from the following (please note not all modules may be available each year):</b>					
<b>Module code</b>	<b>Module title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>UK credit</b>	<b>ECTS</b>	<b>Semester</b>
7CLST031W	Representing world cultures	Option	20	10	Two
7CLST005W	Engaging the archive	Option	20	10	One
7CLST018W	Work placements in cultural intuitions	Option	20	10	Two
7CLST015W	Urban cultures	Option	20	10	One
7CLST001W	Capitalism and culture	Option	20	10	Two
7MUST010W	Museum narratives	Option	20	10	Two
7CLST024W	Digital Cultures	Option	20	10	TBC

*NB: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year*

In addition to the above option modules offered as part of the MA Art & Visual Culture, students may be able to take an 'elective' module from other MA programmes in the Department, Faculty or the rest of the University.

## **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at [westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations)

## **HOW WILL YOU BE SUPPORTED IN YOUR STUDIES?**

### **COURSE MANAGEMENT**

The Course is hosted in the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, one of the Departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities on the Regent site, but modules are offered from a number of different disciplines and subject areas, both from within the Department and across the Faculty as a whole. The Course is directly managed by a Course Leader within the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, and will be overseen by a Programme Director with responsibility for the management and co-ordination of the Cultural, Critical and Literary Studies MAs suite as a whole. Each module on the course also has a designated Module Leader responsible for the administration and monitoring of its design and delivery.

The course teaching team consists of staff from the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies (Visual Culture, Cultural Studies, Critical Theory, and English Literature), and additional sessions may be contributed by staff from elsewhere in: the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, ; the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment; and the Faculty of Media, Art, and Design. Key members of the course team meet regularly each year to identify and address ways of improving the design and delivery of the course. Staff in each Department involved in the course undergo annual appraisal and observation of their teaching by colleagues leading to staff development through course attendance and/or research and scholarly activity. Staff

teaching on the course also attend events organised by Academic Standards and the Site Teaching and Learning Groups around current teaching, learning and assessment issues.

The MA course intersects with, and draws upon, the institutional resources provided by the wider set of events and research initiatives co-ordinated by staff within the Faculty, as well as both the research seminar series hosted by the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, and the various events and collaborative ventures organised under the umbrella of the Westminster-Smithsonian Colloquium.

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students

## **LEARNING SUPPORT**

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students<sup>1</sup> can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

The University of Westminster Student Affairs department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The University of Westminster Students'

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<sup>1</sup> Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.



Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University.

## **HOW DO WE ENSURE THE QUALITY OF OUR COURSES AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?**

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2000. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committees is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

## **HOW DO WE ACT ON STUDENT FEEDBACK?**

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.
- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty and university committees.
- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.
- The University also has an annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey or PTES which helps us compare how we are doing with other institutions, to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that you value.

**Please note:** This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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