

PART ONE : PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	MA Cultural and Critical Studies
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma in Cultural and Critical Studies Postgraduate Certificate in Cultural and Critical Studies
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	University of Westminster, Regent site
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Dr David Cunningham
Course URL:	westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/english/postgraduate-courses/full-time/p01fpcus-ma-cultural-and-critical-studies
Mode and length of study:	Full-time or Part-time
University of Westminster course code:	W50
JACS code:	
UKPASS code:	035444
QAA subject benchmarking group:	Not available
Professional body accreditation:	Not applicable
Date of course validation/review:	May 2007
Date of programme specification:	December 2006

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are normally required to have a good first degree or equivalent in a relevant subject. Students whose first language is not English must have an IELTS certificate with an overall score of 6.5, with at least 7.0 in writing, or be able to demonstrate an equivalent level. Applicants will also be required to give two academic references and, in most instances, to attend an interview (for applicants resident in the UK) or submit a 1500 word essay (for applicant's resident overseas).

AIMS OF THE COURSE

The MA Cultural and Critical Studies is part of a suite of Masters programmes under the title of Cultural, Critical and Literary Studies that is based within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. This suite also includes the MAs in English Literature and in Art & Visual Culture.

The course is an inherently transdisciplinary one, and aims to offer students the opportunity for advanced study of critical and cultural debates in the humanities across a range of fields, such as the literary, visual and historical, as well as in contemporary critical and cultural theory. Modules are offered from a number of different subject areas, with the intention of enabling the student to construct a programme of study in which they can follow particular themes that most interest them. The MA is taught by staff who, while they have specific expertise in particular fields, also engage in research that crosses many conventional disciplinary divides. Students are similarly asked to explore the relations between different disciplines, and their respective histories and methodologies, in the critical examination of cultural phenomena that may not fall neatly within traditional subject boundaries, and to consider the use of concepts and ideas (for example, 'gender', 'modernity', or 'space') that may operate across multiple disciplines and discourses in varied ways.

Specifically, the MA Cultural and Critical Studies programme intends to:

- develop and scrutinise ideas of culture and criticism within an interdisciplinary contextual framework
- provide an advanced, wide-ranging knowledge of the historical development of cultural criticism and theory as well as of modern and contemporary debates
- examine recent trans- and inter-disciplinary theoretical developments within cultural and critical studies
- conduct specific examination of particular cultural forms and their histories
- foster an ability to apply sophisticated theoretical and critical perspectives to the various cultural forms, texts, and critical ideas considered by the course
- develop advanced skills in argument, synthesis and critical expression
- enhance and extend advanced skills of research and presentation
- provide a route to further research

EMPLOYMENT AND FURTHER STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

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

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, 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, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision

- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements which will inform the service delivered to students.

The MA Cultural and Critical Studies 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, especially heritage and museum work and cultural policy.

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

Graduates of the MA will be able to:

- critically examine a range of theoretical problematics, texts, artefacts, and other forms of cultural production
- demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the historical development of cultural criticism and theory
- demonstrate a thorough knowledge of recent theoretical developments in cultural and critical studies
- demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the various interdisciplinary intersections intrinsic to the study of culture
- demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge of particular cultural forms and their histories
- deploy advanced theoretical and critical approaches to various cultural forms, texts, artefacts, and critical ideas
- demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge of current scholarly debates within cultural and critical studies

Specific Skills

Graduates of the MA will be able to demonstrate a range of advanced scholarly and critical skills such as:

- use of an appropriate theoretical, scholarly and critical terminology
- critical skills in the close reading and analysis of texts, artefacts and other cultural forms
- critical skills in the reading and assessment of a range of theoretical, historical and other scholarly works
- sophisticated research skills in the retrieval of scholarly information
- sophisticated awareness of different disciplinary and generic conventions as they impact upon the study of the locations, products and systems of culture
- the ability to place theoretical and critical arguments within a range of different historical and conceptual discourses

- an ability to articulate how different cultural contexts affect the nature of theory production, knowledge and criticism
- advanced skills in effective communication and argument, oral and written
- appropriate scholarly skills, including accurate citation of sources and use of bibliographic conventions

Key Transferable skills

Graduates of the MA will be able to demonstrate:

- advanced literacy and communication skills and the ability to apply these in appropriate contexts, including the ability to present sustained and persuasive written and oral arguments cogently and clearly
- the capacity to critically examine any form of discourse using close reading and analysis of texts
- the ability to acquire quickly substantial quantities of complex information of diverse kinds in a structured way involving the use of sophisticated interpretative skills
- competence in planning and execution of essays and other kinds of work
- capacity for independent thought and judgement
- advanced skills in critical and theoretical reasoning
- the ability to comprehend and develop intricate concepts in an open-ended way which involves an understanding of purposes and consequences
- the ability to work with and in relation to others through the presentation of ideas and information
- the ability to understand, interrogate and apply a range of theoretical positions and the ability to understand the importance of alternative perspectives
- the ability to handle information and argument in a critical and self-reflective manner
- sophisticated research skills, including scholarly information retrieval
- information-technology skills such as word-processing and electronic data access information
- interpersonal and team skills, relating to the ability to work flexibly and creatively with other people and engage in rational debate
- time-management and organisational skills, as shown by the ability to plan and present findings effectively and to deadline
- confidence in expression and the articulation of complex ideas

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.

Further to this each student will be assigned an academic tutor from among the staff with whom they will have at least one timetabled session in the first semester.

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 12,000 word dissertation. There are no formal examinations. Further details on the different forms of assessment can be found in [Section 4.1](#) below and in the Postgraduate Study Guide that accompanies this Handbook.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The Academic Environment

The MA Cultural and Critical Studies is part of a suite of Masters programmes under the title of Cultural, Critical and Literary Studies that is located within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) on the University of Westminster's Regent Street site. It is an interdisciplinary course based within the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, but taught by staff from various departments and sections including Architecture, Asian Studies, English Literature and Visual Culture. It is also accompanied by a series of regular research seminars and a visiting speaker programme. All MA students are invited to these events, where staff, PhD students and academics from other institutions present and discuss their work in progress.

The Course

The course is delivered in both full-time twelve-month (September-September) and two-year part-time modes. It is also possible to begin the course in January, on either full-time or part-time programmes. The course is modular with all modules at Level 7, a single module being valued at 20 credits and a double module at 40 credits. For the MA the student must accumulate a total of 180 credits. Courses in the University are semesterised; Semester One runs from September to January, Semester Two from January to June. Normally, full-time students take four modules per semester, part-time students two per semester. All students must take the core modules and the dissertation. The dissertation is completed for submission by the beginning of September at the end of the first year for full-time students and at the end of the second year for part-time students. January entrants submit in the following January.

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 in the academic year. Part time students will normally complete the 180 credits in two academic years. The MA consists of two core modules that provide the framework for the close analysis of the locations, products and systems of culture in the context of relevant

theoretical perspectives, as well as four option modules chosen from the list shown below. The dissertation of 12,000 words, along with the Research module (Knowledge, Cultural Memory, Archives and Research), is also a core module.

Module Title	Status	UK Credit	ECTS
1CCC7A1 Problems & Perspectives in Cultural Studies	Core	20	10
1CUS7A3 Capitalism and Culture	Core	20	10
SCUS701 Dissertation	Core	40	20
SENL700 Archives and Research	Core	20	10
1CUS7A1 Urban Cultures	Option	20	10
1CUS7A4 Sexuality and Narrative	Option	20	10
1VIS7A5 Representing World Cultures	Option	20	10
1VIS7A7 Interpreting Space	Option	20	10
1VIS7A8 Work Placement	Option	20	10
1VIS7A9 Creative Digital Technology	Option	20	10
1ENL7A6 Reading the Nation	Option	20	10
1ENL7A9 Reading Contemporary Culture	Option	20	10
1ENL7A0 Special Topic	Option	20	10

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

Academic Regulations

The MA Cultural and Critical Studies and its intermediate awards operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called Essential Westminster, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster. The following regulations should be read in conjunction with Section 18: Modular Framework for Postgraduate Courses and relevant sections of the current Handbook of Academic Regulations, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

Award

To qualify for the award of MA Cultural and Critical Studies, a student must have:

- obtained a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 (this may include a maximum of 30 credits at Level 6 where validated as part of the award);
 - attempted modules worth no more than 240 credits; and
- Note: A first attempt of any module will count as an attempt, and a re-attempt of any module that a student has failed will count as a further, separate attempt. Re-assessment following referral at the first sit will not count as a further separate attempt.
- satisfied the requirements contained within any course specific regulations for the relevant Course Scheme.

The University may award:

- a Masters Degree with Merit to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at Level 7.
- a Masters Degree with Distinction to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at Level 7.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Upon arrival, an orientation programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the Faculty Registry. Students will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at their Faculty. Students 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.

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.

[Student Affairs](#) provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The Student Affairs Hub is located at 101 New Cavendish Street, Cavendish House (1st Floor), with an additional office located at the Harrow Campus.

westminster.ac.uk/study/new-students/when-you-arrive

The [University of Westminster Students' Union](#) also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University. <http://www.uwsu.com/>

REFERENCE POINTS FOR THE COURSE

Internal

Primary internal reference points for teaching, learning and assessment policies on the MA are the University Handbook of Academic Regulations, the Quality Assurance Handbook, and the Guide to Higher Education and Career Management Skills produced by the Educational Initiative Centre (EIC).

The course is designed to enhance and extend the resources offered by research in cultural and critical studies going on within the University, as well as by the kinds of trans-disciplinary work across the areas of literary, visual and historical studies that is among the research and teaching strengths of the Faculty. It is situated within the suite of Cultural, Critical and Literary Studies MAs hosted by the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, and makes use of the wide range of cognate research interests and forms of expertise that exist across the various disciplines and staff members involved in the delivery of this programme.

The course structure meets the requirements of the modular frameworks and the academic regulations of the University, as well as of the Faculty Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy. At the same time, it is designed to take account of both the University Policies on skills development and employability and one of the key themes in the University strategic plan - creative and cultural industries - providing advanced theoretical and critical work relevant to these areas.

External

The primary external reference point for the academic infrastructure of the course is the Quality Assurance Agency (qaa.ac.uk); in particular, the Code of Practice for the assurance of quality and standards, the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and the details of programme specifications. For credit level descriptors (specifically 'M' level descriptors), the reference point is the South England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (seec-office.org.uk). Reference may also be made to the materials provided by various subject centres of the Higher Education Academy (heacademy.ac.uk), in particular Art, Design and Media; English; and History, Classics and Archaeology.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

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 Coordinator 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 and the Institute for Modern and Contemporary Culture, as well as colleagues from the Department of Social and Historical Studies, the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, and the Department of Architecture. 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 that is 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 the Regent 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 Institute for Modern and Contemporary Culture.

Course approval, monitoring and review

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2007. The Panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from academia and industry to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other Universities and the relevance to employers. Periodic Course Review helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

The course is monitored each year by Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues that might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from External Examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee considers the Faculty action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

Student involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal mechanism for feedback on the course is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group in various discussions. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

All students are invited to complete a Module Feedback 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 Student Experience Survey which elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience.

Students meet with Review Panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from Course Committees is part of the Faculty's quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course:

westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/english/postgraduate-courses/full-time/p09fpcus-ma-cultural-and-critical-studies

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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