PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	**MA Cultural and Critical Studies** The MA Cultural and Critical Studies is a masters degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificate
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching 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
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	Full-time or Part-time September and January start
[QAA subject benchmarking group(s):](#)	Not available
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	Not applicable
Date of course validation/review:	September 2017
Date of programme specification approval:	July 2017
Course Leader:	Matthew Charles
Valid for cohorts:	From September 2018
Course URL:	westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate
Westminster Course Code:	PMENG02F (Full-time) PMENG02P (Part-time)
JACS code:	V900
UKPASS code:	P035444

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

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

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods

Learning

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.

Teaching

Modules are taught by one two-hour or three-hour seminar per week, depending on the subject. 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

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 the Course Handbook.

Course Structure

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 the dissertation at 60 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 is also a core module.

Credit Level 7				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK	ECTS
7CLST012W	Problems & Perspectives in Cultural Studies	Core	20	10
7CLST001W	Capitalism and Culture	Core	20	10
7HUMS001W	MA Dissertation	Core	60	30
7CLST015W	Urban Cultures	Option	20	10
7CLST013W	Representing World Cultures	Option	20	10
7CLST018W	Work Placement in Cultural Institutions	Option	20	10
7CLST005W	Engaging the Archive	Option	20	10
7ELIT010W	Trauma in American Modernity: The Nation and Its Limits	Option	20	10
7ELIT011W	Queer Now	Option	20	10
7CREW010W	Experimental Women's Writing, Photography and Film	Option	20	10
7CLST024W	Digital Cultures	Option	20	10

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

Academic Regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at
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. 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. 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.

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[1] 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.

---

[1] Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

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' 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 2007. 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.