

Course record information

Name and level of final award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Arts - Cultural and Critical Studies <p>The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible</p>
Name and level of intermediate awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate Diploma (Pg Dip) - Cultural and Critical Studies • Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) - Cultural and Critical Studies
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Primary: Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	N/A
Professional statutory or regulatory body	N/A
Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA Cultural and Critical Studies FT, Full-time, September or January start - 1 year standard length • MA Cultural and Critical Studies PT, Part-time day, September or January start - 2 years standard length
Valid for cohorts	From 2023/4

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all postgraduate 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: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply>.

Aims of the programme

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 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This suite also includes the MAs in English Literature and in Art & Visual Culture.

The course is an inherently trans-disciplinary one, and aims to offer you 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 you to construct a programme of study in which you can follow particular themes that most interest you. 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.

Supporting the University of Westminster's Black Lives Matter Commitment Plan as well as the wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity agenda, the course has been developed using an inclusive approach that ensures you will have a learning experience that respects diversity, encourages active participation, considers students' varying needs, encourages and enables you to tailor your learning according to your career and individual aspirations, and equips you with the skills to work in a changing and diverse world.

Our aims are underpinned by three principles: provision of an inclusive learning environment, both physical and digital; diversification and decolonisation of the curriculum, and provision of diverse and inclusive co-and extra-curricular activities. We aim to eliminate all arbitrary barriers to your learning and to work with you to achieve that.

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 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 you 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, cultural policy and communications industries. You are encouraged to explore the wide applicability of your skills in other fields, to facilitate movement into and between different careers in rapidly-changing professional worlds. You will be able to take the Work Placement module as an option if you wish, giving you experience and a chance to apply your knowledge in a professional You will have access to the University's extensive career support and development programme which includes one-to-one advice as well as workshops and training packages that you can tailor to your ambitions.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Course learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning.

These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

The overall knowledge and understanding you will gain from your course (KU)

Graduate attributes are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA)

Professional and personal practice learning outcomes are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)

Key transferable skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

Level 7 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- 001 critically examine a range of theoretical problematics, texts, artefacts, and other forms of cultural production (KU)
- 002 demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the historical development of cultural criticism and theory (KU)
- 003 demonstrate a thorough knowledge of recent theoretical developments in cultural and critical studies (KU)
- 004 demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the various interdisciplinary intersections intrinsic to the study of culture (KU)
- 005 demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge of particular cultural forms and their histories (KU)
- 006 deploy advanced theoretical and critical approaches to various cultural forms, texts, artefacts, and critical ideas (KU)
- 007 demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge of current scholarly debates within cultural and critical studies (KU)
- 008 use of an appropriate theoretical, scholarly and critical terminology (SS)
- 009 critical skills in the close reading and analysis of texts, artefacts and other cultural forms (SS)
- 010 critical skills in the reading and assessment of a range of theoretical, historical and other scholarly works (SS)
- 011 sophisticated research skills in the retrieval of scholarly information (SS)
- 012 sophisticated awareness of different disciplinary and generic conventions as they impact upon the study of the locations, products and systems of culture (SS)
- 013 the ability to place theoretical and critical arguments within a range of different historical and conceptual discourses (SS)
- 014 an ability to articulate how different cultural contexts affect the nature of theory production, knowledge and criticism (SS)
- 015 advanced skills in effective communication and argument, oral and written (SS)
- 016 appropriate scholarly skills, including accurate citation of sources and use of bibliographic conventions (SS)
- 017 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 (KTS)
- 018 the capacity to critically examine any form of discourse using close reading and analysis of texts (KTS)
- 019 the ability to acquire quickly substantial quantities of complex information of diverse kinds in a structured way involving the use of sophisticated interpretative skills (KTS)
- 020 competence in planning and execution of essays and other kinds of work (KTS)
- 021 capacity for independent thought and judgement (KTS)
- 022 advanced skills in critical and theoretical reasoning (KTS)
- 023 the ability to comprehend and develop intricate concepts in an open-ended way which involves an understanding of purposes and consequences (KTS)

- 024 the ability to work with and in relation to others through the presentation of ideas and information (KTS)
- 025 the ability to understand, interrogate and apply a range of theoretical positions and the ability to understand the importance of alternative perspectives (KTS)
- 026 the ability to handle information and argument in a critical and self-reflective manner (KTS)
- 027 sophisticated research skills, including scholarly information retrieval (KTS)
- 028 information-technology skills such as word-processing and electronic data access information (KTS)
- 029 interpersonal and team skills, relating to the ability to work flexibly and creatively with other people and engage in rational debate (KTS)
- 030 time-management and organisational skills, as shown by the ability to plan and present findings effectively and to deadline (KTS)
- 031 confidence in expression and the articulation of complex ideas (KTS)

How will you learn?

Learning methods

The principal mode of learning is guided independent study. That independent study is anchored in weekly seminars for each module. Seminars are focused on student-centred, active learning, with use of non-assessed presentations and in-class projects to encourage your participation. You will be expected to read specific texts (or watch or listen to material in other media) for discussion prior to your seminars and there will also be tutor presentations, individual and small group work and task-based activity in the sessions. Other learning methods include: team/group work inside and outside of the classroom to enable you to further develop your teamwork skills; engagement with weekly post-class consolidation and/or practical tasks feeding into the next session; engagement with library and online sources to develop research and analysis skills; interaction with external speakers and study visits to relevant locations.

The course and each module within it are fully supported by Blackboard, the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), web-based teaching materials, and the Library and IT services. Blackboard functions as an interactive and dynamic digital learning platform and provides access to sites that give important information related to the course, individual modules, and general university information. The Blackboard module sites are used for online collaborative learning activities and provide ready access to online module readings, seminar plans and assessment schedules, pre-recorded lectures, activities to help prepare for seminars and assessments, guidance on further research and a wealth of other learning materials. Blackboard is also used for assessment purposes, including electronic coursework submission and feedback.

Teaching methods

Modules are taught in a weekly seminar. As well as seminars and tutorials, teaching will 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 as site visits are an important part of some modules. These are accompanied by staff, although you are also encouraged to visit particular locations or events outside class time, and may be given some specific direction as to particular visits that would be relevant to each module.

Tutorials are one-to-one or small group sessions that provide focused developmental work on group or individual tasks. You can meet with lecturers informally, but where tutorials are scheduled, they are part of the curriculum, for example a small group tutorial to agree a task topic. Individual supervision is provided to you while planning and working on your final Dissertation.

Assessment methods

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. Assessments and feedback are an integral part of the learning process and enable you to gauge your progress in relation to learning outcomes, reflect on what you have learned and identify areas in which you are strong and areas in which you can improve. All assessments and feedback mechanisms are thus designed to form part of the learning experience and will take a variety of forms. For example, assessments may involve practical exercises ranging from small tasks that might be completed during a seminar to more complex tasks, such as the design and creation of an artefact, or the investigation of or research into a critical or theoretical question. Some of the assessments are designed to be completed individually, whereas other assessments may require you to work as part of a team, emulating as closely as possible the environment you might face in a professional setting.

Assessments can be:

- formative (these are not marked, but help establish where you are in your learning journey, and feed into summative assessments)
- summative (these are marked and the marks count towards your final award)

Timely and forward-looking feedback is given for all assessments. Some feedback may be given in seminars or in discussion with peers or informally in tutorials. All summative assessments receive full written (or recorded) feedback that is matched against the marking criteria so that you can gain a clear idea of what you are doing well and how you can further challenge yourself to improve.

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. Additional free text information on the choices may also be included, for example where students must choose one of two modules.. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Modules

Level 7

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.

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.

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7CLST001W	Capitalism and Culture	Core	20	10
7HUMS001W	MA Dissertation	Core	60	30
7CLST012W	Problems and Perspectives in Cultural Studies	Core	20	10
7CLST024W	Digital Cultures	Option	20	10
7CLST005W	Engaging the Archive	Option	20	10
7ELIT011W	Queer Now	Option	20	10
7ELIT014W	Reading the Nation	Option	20	10
7CLST013W	Representing World Cultures	Option	20	10
7CLST015W	Urban Cultures	Option	20	10
7ELIT008W	Victorian Explorations	Option	20	10
7CLST018W	Work Placement in Cultural Institutions	Option	20	10

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot register for your first choice of option modules.

Professional body accreditation or other external references

N/A

Course management

The Course is hosted in the School of Humanities, one of the Schools in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences on the Regent site. The Course is directly managed by a Course Leader within the School of Humanities, and is 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 Head of the School has overall responsibility for the course.

The course teaching team consists of staff from the School of Humanities 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.

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 College, as well as both the research seminar series hosted by the School of Humanities and the various events and collaborative ventures organised under the umbrella of the Institute for Modern and Contemporary Culture.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

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 Campus Registry. 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. Further information on Blackboard can be found at <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard>

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. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. 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 in their College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services 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. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/student-advice>.

The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/students-union>

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel. University Panels normally include internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university, a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

The course is also monitored each year by the College 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 evidence of student surveys, student progression and achievement and reports from external examiners, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make changes where necessary.

A Course revalidation 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 revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years 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 student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.

- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College 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.
- Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

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 they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification is supplemented by the Course Handbook, Module proforma and Module Handbooks provided to students. Copyright in this document belongs to the University of Westminster. All rights are reserved. This document is for personal use only and may not be reproduced or used for any other purpose, either in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the University of Westminster. All copies of this document must incorporate this Copyright Notice – 2022©

draft

Published date: 27 March 2023