

# Graduate Diploma in Media, Culture and Social Sciences

## Programme Specification

**Awarding Institution:** University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

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

**Final Award:** Graduate Diploma in Media, Culture and Social Sciences

**Programme Name:** Graduate Diploma in Media, Culture and Social Sciences

**Total credit value for programme:** 120

**Name of Interim Exit Award(s):** Not applicable

**Duration of Programme:** 1 year full-time

**UCAS Code(s):**

**HECoS Code(s):**

**QAA Benchmark Group**

**FHEQ Level of Award:** Level 6

**Programme accredited by:** Not applicable

**Date Programme Specification last updated/approved:** October 2022

**Home Department:** Centre for Academic Language and Literacies

**Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:** Media, Communications and Cultural Studies; Sociology

## Programme overview

The Graduate Diploma suite of programmes is aimed at postgraduate students who wish to develop or consolidate their academic English language skills and/or undertake preliminary study in the subject areas they would like to study at Master's level. They will gain insight into how disciplinary knowledge is constructed and studied. The aim is also to enable students to become familiar with UK academic culture, in particular at Goldsmiths, and in the standards required at postgraduate level. It may help students who have not yet decided on their choice of Master's degree to identify their specific focus. Through taking modules related to their interests, and with one-to-one tutorial guidance, they can find the future degree best suited to them.

Students who successfully complete the programme at the required level are guaranteed a place on a relevant Goldsmiths postgraduate degree. Students who wish to go on to study

elsewhere in the UK will be given the appropriate tutorial support to complete their applications and write an impactful personal statement; their personal tutor will write a supporting reference.

The core modules introduce and develop the following skills:

## **1. Reading**

Through a wide range of academic texts, students are introduced to a range of contemporary theoretical ideas that are important to studies in the humanities and social sciences. These relate to the nature of knowledge, identity, culture, gender, democracy, inequality and social justice. Knowledge and understanding of key concepts are invaluable to successful postgraduate study. Language development is embedded: through their reading, students are exposed to a variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary. They are also encouraged to read independently, developing the skills of reading for gist and specific information in order to acquire the information they need from academic texts.

## **2. Writing**

Students are taught how to write in a range of settings, with emphasis given to appropriate academic style. Students become familiar with the organisation of key writing genres, learning how arguments are presented and how to use language appropriately. Lecturers support a move away from the kind of writing that students may have been coached to produce for English language tests; instead, there is a focus on research-informed writing and using evidence to support claims.

## **3. Listening and Speaking**

Regular use is made of up-to-date broadcasts and contemporary discussions, with the aim of introducing students to a range of challenging and engaging material related to contemporary issues. We make use of Goldsmiths' excellent audiovisual collection, and interrogate themes like the relationship between theory and practice, interdisciplinary studies, climate inequality and social justice. The aim is to develop students' familiarity with current aspects of British culture, to build on their existing knowledge and experience, and provide opportunities for the development of their own interactive skills. Students learn how to give researched presentations and interact effectively in seminars.

## **4. Research skills**

The programme aims to develop essential research skills: using the library; performing critically engaged web-based research using search engines such as Google Scholar; assessing the validity and reliability of sources and avoiding plagiarism. Students learn how

to make the most effective use of the texts they identify and to use these effectively in their researched writing. The focus is on students to develop the independent research skills that will enable self-discovery and equip them for Master's level study.

## Programme entry requirements

- Students must normally be at least 18 years of age on submission.
- A minimum score of 5.5 in IELTS (with no sub score lower than 5.5) or equivalent in other English Language examinations.
- Students must normally have already completed (or be about to finish) an undergraduate degree in their country.

## Programme learning outcomes

### Knowledge and understanding

| Code | Learning outcome   | Taught by the following module(s)  |
|------|--|--|
| A1   | Ability to speak and write critically, fluently, accurately and appropriately for a variety of academic contexts | LS61002B Academic Writing and Language Development<br><br>LS61003A Academic Listening and Speaking |
| A2   | Apply relevant knowledge to a variety of spoken and written academic genres                                      | All modules  |
| A3   | Apply the academic and study skills necessary to succeed on a Level 7 programme in a UK HE environment.          | All modules  |

### Cognitive and thinking skills

| Code | Learning outcome   | Taught by the following module(s) |
|------|--|-----------------------------------|
| B1   | Interpret communication in a cross cultural and intercultural environment;                                     | All modules                       |
| B2   | Ability to construct and support an argument.  | All modules                       |
| B3   | Ability to understand, analyse, and engage critically with a range of academic texts, both written and spoken. | All modules                       |

## Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

| Code | Learning outcome  | Taught by the following module(s)   |
|------|---|---|
| C1   | Acquire an awareness of the assumptions and expectations of a student studying at Level 7 in a UK HE institution. | All modules   |
| C2   | Structure and communicate ideas effectively both orally and in writing.   | All modules   |
| C3   | Engage critically with selected readings and lectures from the discipline.  | LS61001C Contemporary Theories<br><br>LS61004B Images and their Interpretations<br><br>LS61005A Issues around Modern Knowledge, Modern Power<br><br>LS61008B Issues around Media and Technologies |

## Transferable skills

| Code | Learning outcome  | Taught by the following module(s) |
|------|---|-----------------------------------|
| D1   | Engage with and respond to tutors and students from a range of disciplinary, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. | All modules                       |
| D2   | Acquire the necessary skills to become an independent, creative and lifelong learner.                             | All modules                       |
| D3   | Participate effectively in groups, assessing the relevance and importance of the ideas of others.                 | All modules                       |

## Grading Criteria

| Mark | Descriptor | Specific Marking Criteria |
|------|------------|---------------------------|
|------|------------|---------------------------|

|         |                               |  |
|---------|-------------------------------|--|
| 80-100% | 1st: First (Exceptional)      | Overall achievement is at an exceptional level. Work is analytical, evaluative and clearly positioned, demonstrating independence of thought. Work follows a clearly focused line of argument with no irrelevance and contains excellent support and referencing throughout evidencing solid and wide-ranging research. It is exceptionally coherent and logically organized with no unnecessary repetition. There is exceptional control of communication in both general academic content and specific theoretical ideas. There is a high level of grammatical accuracy and appropriacy, and an exceptional range of structures and subject specific vocabulary are used.                                    |
| 70-79%  | 1st: First (Excellent)        | Overall achievement is at an excellent level. Work is analytical, evaluative and clearly positioned, demonstrating independence of thought. Work follows a clearly focused line of argument with no irrelevance and contains strong support and appropriate referencing throughout evidencing solid and wide-ranging research. It is fully coherent and logically organized with no unnecessary repetition. There is excellent control of communication in both general academic content and specific theoretical ideas. There is a high level of grammatical accuracy and appropriacy, and a very wide range of structures and subject specific vocabulary are used.  |
| 60-69%  | 2.1: Upper Second (Very good) | Overall achievement is at a very good level. There is effective analysis and a good attempt at evaluation and positioning although these may not be consistent throughout. Work follows a largely well focused and supported line of argument. There is appropriate research and competent referencing with very occasional weaknesses. It is coherent and logically organized although there is occasional repetition. There is good control of communication in both general academic content and specific theoretical ideas. Grammar is largely accurate and appropriate, and a wide range of structures and subject specific vocabulary are used with only minor errors which do not impede understanding. |
| 50-59%  | 2.2: Lower Second (Good)      | Overall achievement is at a good level. There is some attempt at analysis and evaluation, although these may not be consistent, and positioning may be absent or unclear. Work contains adequate support and follows a clear main line of argument although this may be weak in part. Referencing is generally competent, but not always thorough. Research is limited. A good attempt at organization although there may be some irrelevance or repetition. There is effective control of communication in general academic content although there may be some difficulty with specific theoretical ideas. Grammar is generally accurate and appropriate, and a good  |

|        |                               |  |
|--------|-------------------------------|--|
|        |                               | range of structures and subject specific vocabulary are used although there are errors which may impede understanding.   |
| 40-49% | 3rd: Third (Pass)             | Overall achievement is at a satisfactory level. There is an attempt at an argument, but this may not be easy to follow. There is a reliance on description over analysis and there is insufficient research. There are attempts to follow academic notions of support, but these are not always consistent or appropriate. There is an attempt at logical and appropriate organization although this is not always successful. Able to communicate in general academic content but some difficulty with theoretical ideas. An adequate range of vocabulary and structures are used although errors sometimes impede understanding. |
| 25-39% | Fail                          | Learning outcomes have not been satisfactorily met. There is an over-reliance on description and arguments are not adequately developed, showing little or no research. Grammar is confined to simple sentences with frequent errors which impede understanding. There is a limited range of vocabulary and errors are clearly evident. There is little evidence that an argument can be supported and referenced correctly.   |
| 10-24% | Bad fail                      | Learning outcomes have not been met. Content is purely descriptive and there is no attempt at analysis or personal argument. Communication is poor due to the lack of basic grammar and vocabulary structures. There is little or no evidence of the academic conventions of argument, citation and referencing.   |
| 1-9%   | Very bad fail                 | A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes (shall be deemed a non-valid attempt and module must be re-sat).  |
| 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

On campus

## Programme structure

All modules are compulsory.

## Core modules:

### **LS61001C Contemporary Theories**

This module introduces a selection of theories that historically have informed and continue to inform contemporary European academic discourse and research. It presents these theories in their historical contexts and asks how these might operate today. The aim of the module is to familiarise students from different disciplines with the use of theory in argumentation and critical thinking in postgraduate study in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences in the UK. At its heart is the 'theory and example' essay, which asks students to critically apply a theory from the module to their individual interests. The module is taught through (i) a reading class, (ii) a lecture, and (iii) a follow-up seminar. These incorporate the development of skills in writing, listening, reading, and speaking in academic English. Teaching on this module emphasises the critical dissection of texts and ideas and stresses the students' individual responses to these based on individual experiences, feeling, and opinions.

### **LS61002B Academic Writing and Language Development**

This module develops students' ability to write, research, plan, draft, and edit an argumentative essay in accordance with the expectations of a British university. The first term covers the construction of paragraphs, academic rhetorical style, and the summarising and synthesising of academic sources. The first term also covers the construction of sentences, focusing on lexico-grammatical accuracy. The second term covers the elements of essay structure, the use of sources, the practice of referencing, the use of theory and example in argumentation, and editing strategies for second language writers. It prepares students for researching and writing extended argumentative essays on their future Masters' programmes.

### **LS61003A Academic Listening and Speaking**

This module develops the listening and speaking skills which students will need on their Masters programmes. Students will gain an understanding of the role of lectures, seminar discussions, presentations and tutorials in UK universities and will develop their ability to engage with and function within these formats. In doing this, students will work with a range of challenging and interesting authentic recordings related principally to culture, society and the arts. There will be a focus on vocabulary development as an essential component of successful listening. Students will produce a number of spoken texts on which they will work collaboratively which will prepare them for the types of interactions they can expect to have on their Masters degrees.

There will be one class a week for this module in the Autumn term, and two classes a week in the Spring term.

### **Interdisciplinary module:**

This module introduces students to some essential ideas and theories that are relevant and important within many of Goldsmiths' academic disciplines.

### **LS61004B Images and their Interpretations**

We live in a highly visual culture which is increasingly dominated by images and the media and attempts to influence us. Therefore, the aim of this module is to provide students with an introduction to some of the tools available in interpreting the kinds of images that surround us in everyday life. The module is particularly relevant to students going on to study within the fields of Media, the Creative and Cultural Industries or Social Sciences.

Initially, the module will focus on de Saussure's and Barthes' original approach to 'Semiology' - the 'study of signs' - and how these signs create a 'system of representation' and meaning through both language and image. Building on this, students will explore and discuss a variety of concepts that may help them to identify, understand and interpret disclosed or hidden messages conveyed by images and media texts, particularly in advertising. Reference will be made to the concepts of 'otherness' and the 'male gaze' and how these concepts can be utilized in an analysis of images within historical as well as contemporary contexts, including topics such as the portrayal of the black body and the female or male body in the media and contemporary art. Students will also be able to use their own experience to discuss how the cultural background of the viewer can change the meaning of an image.

This module is designed to help students develop academic and transferable skills required for Postgraduate study. In group discussions, presentations and short written texts, students will try out different approaches and apply some of the concepts to analyse images and their possible meanings. Students will have the opportunity to choose images, including those from their own culture, for analysis and are encouraged to do their own independent research to support their ideas.

### **Subject-specific modules:**

These modules offer students the opportunity to prepare for a relevant Master's programme.

### **LS61005A Issues around Modern Knowledge, Modern Power**

This module introduces students to key sociological approaches to social divisions and differences. These approaches are and continue to be highly influential to the postgraduate programmes MCSS students intend to follow. The module fosters students' knowledge and understanding of the development of sociological thinking through the study of classical and contemporary accounts of social power, identity and inequality. It also enables students to analyse and contrast differing approaches to the study of core sociological topics, including class, gender, race, religion and nation.

This module is taught through 3 weekly sessions: (i) a reading class which contextualises



the lecture content, introducing students to key concepts and vocabulary, (ii) a lecture delivered by a subject specialist within the Sociology Department which we will audit, (iii) a post-lecture seminar which enables students to build and develop their understanding by comparing notes, checking comprehension, discussing key arguments and themes, and connecting these to their own area of interest.

### **LS61008B Issues around Media and Technologies**

This module explores the role of media technologies in mediating identities and in shaping how the world has been seen and experienced. It starts by looking at some of the different ways in which artists have used media and technology across different historical periods. Through this, it introduces aesthetic concerns to the study of media, raising questions about cultural appreciation, value and taste, but also about social and political issues concerning art. The notion of ‘art’ as a unified field of specialist cultural production is then put into question in the context of the wider discussions of creativity and amateur media practices. By studying contemporary forms of media production via social media, open web, etc., we consider whether in the age of online media and cheap digital technology everyone is potentially an artist. Blurring the boundary between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’, the module attempts to get students to *think about media* and *make media* as part of the same classroom experience and module assignment.

This module is taught through 3 weekly sessions: (i) a reading class which contextualises the lecture content, introducing students to key concepts and vocabulary, (ii) a lecture, and (iii) a post-lecture seminar which enables students to build and develop their understanding by comparing notes, checking comprehension, discussing key arguments and themes, and connecting these to their own area of interest.

### **Academic year of study 1**

| <b>Module Name</b>                           | <b>Module Code</b> | <b>Credits</b> | <b>Level</b> | <b>Module Type</b> | <b>Term</b> |
|--|--------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Contemporary Theories                        | LS61001C           | 30             | 6            | Compulsory         | 1,2         |
| Academic Writing and Language Development    | LS61002B           | 15             | 6            | Compulsory         | 1,2         |
| Academic Listening and Speaking              | LS61003A           | 15             | 6            | Compulsory         | 1,2         |
| Images and their Interpretations             | LS61004B           | 30             | 6            | Compulsory         | 1,2         |
| Issues around Modern Knowledge, Modern Power | LS61005A           | 15             | 6            | Compulsory         | 1           |
| Issues around Media and Technologies         | LS61008B           | 15             | 6            | Compulsory         | 2           |

## 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 three 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 [Centre for Academic Language and Literacies](#) 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

## **Placement opportunities**

Not applicable

## **Employability and potential career opportunities**

This programme is designed to support progression to further study

## **Programme-specific requirements**

Students on this programme should have English as an additional language.

The pass mark is 40%. Students must pass all modules of the programme to be awarded the Graduate Diploma.

If a student passes all elements of the programme and achieves an overall average mark of 50% or above, they will be guaranteed progression onto the following postgraduate programmes:

MA Applied Anthropology and Community & Youth Work

MA Applied Anthropology and Community Development

MA Applied Theatre: Drama in Educational, Community & Social Contexts

MA Art & Politics

MA Brands, Communication & Culture

MA Contemporary Art Theory

MA Cultural Studies

MA Culture Industry

MA Film and Screen Studies

MA Gender, Media & Culture

MA Human Rights, Culture and Social Justice

MA International Relations

MA Media & Communications

MA Musical Theatre

MA Performance Making

MA Political Communications

MA Postcolonial Culture and Global Policy

MA Promotional Media: Public Relations, Advertising & Marketing

MA Social Anthropology

MA Social Research

MA Understanding Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence

MA Visual Anthropology

## **Tuition fee costs**

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

## **Specific programme costs**

Not applicable