Goldsmiths
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MA Political Communications
Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:

University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

Teaching Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London

Final Award: MA Political Communications

Programme Name: MA Political Communications

Total credit value for programme: 180

Name of Interim Exit Award(s):

Postgraduate Certificate in Political Communications

Postgraduate Diploma in Political Communications

Duration of Programme: 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

UCAS Code(s): Not applicable

HECoS Code(s):

(100444) Media and Communication Studies (75%)

(100491) Politics (25%)

QAA Benchmark Group: Not applicable

FHEQ Level of Award: Level 7

Programme accredited by: Not applicable

Date Programme Specification last updated/approved: July 2023

Home Department: Media, Communications and Cultural Studies (MCCS)

Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:

Not applicable

Programme overview

This MA offers teaching that is critical, innovative and diverse. It combines theory with practical, applied elements, and draws on a range of research and contemporary examples. These come from current work in politics, political science and media studies, and also from political sociology, cultural theory and journalism. The curriculum covers political communication, from the national and international down to the local and personal, from governments and parties to NGOs and local activist groups. It engages with cultural, alternative and digital, interactive communication as well as traditional mass media. This dynamic programme, first and foremost, offers critical engagement. It asks difficult questions about politics, economic policy, society and the media. Taking this programme

will not just give you an understanding of the forms and impacts of political communications. It will also help you contextualise that knowledge in relation to the structures, institutions and actors that are at the heart of politics and media. This programme is broadly conceptual in focus, but also offers several practical, applied options as well as skills-based components. All students take a research skills module and are supervised through a dissertation with a research component. There are options, such as Media and Political Campaigning, which are entirely practice-based and taught by professionals in the field. There are also several speaker series running each year with guests from the worlds of politics, journalism, business and campaigning coming to talk.

The programme is embedded in the Department's ethos of diversity and interdisciplinarity. This is reflected in the combination of theory and practice which allows us to challenge norms and engage with real-world issues. The programme is theory-driven, but grounded in practice. Students can choose up to 30 credits of practice option modules. Students are also given opportunities to apply theory to actual empirical problems through their dissertation project and additional assignments and presentations.

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 twice 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.

Programme entry requirements

Applicants will normally be expected to hold a good first degree in a relevant subject and (if a non-native speaker) possess IELTS of 6.5, or equivalent. However, consideration will be given to applicants without the necessary formal qualifications but who have professional experience in a related field and are able to demonstrate their commitment and ability to undertake a programme of rigorous academic study.

Programme learning outcomes

The programme's subject-specific learning outcomes require students to think critically about a range of issues concerning political communications and to be able to justify their views intellectually and theoretically. This in turn will help them to make their own the existing intellectual traditions which organise the current field of political communications. In addition, students will also develop a wide range of transferable skills necessary for employment in a variety of different contexts.

Students who exit the programme at the Postgraduate Certificate stage, having successfully completed both core modules, should be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Contribute comprehensively to current debates – both academic and professional – within the field of political communications;	Structures of Contemporary Political Communications; Critical Perspectives in Political Communications
A2	Critically assess the practical and theoretical contexts in which political communications actors work.	Structures of Contemporary Political Communications; Critical Perspectives in Political Communications
A3	Identify alternative paradigms of interaction between political actors, communicators and the public.	Critical Perspectives in Political Communications
A4	Systematically understand key aspects of the history and development of political communications with a particular focus on the UK and US.	Structures of Contemporary Political Communications

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Utilise conceptual knowledge and critical reasoning skills in complex problem solving.	Structures of Contemporary Political Communications; Critical Perspectives in Political Communications
B2	Deploy a range of intellectual skills and linguistic tools to produce academic work of an appropriate level.	Structures of Contemporary Political Communications; Critical Perspectives in Political Communications

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Interpret a variety of source material in the context of the analysis of political communications and associated fields.	Structures of Contemporary Political Communications; Critical Perspectives in Political Communications
C2	Use and reflect on a range of communications skills from journalism, politics and public relations.	Structures of Contemporary Political Communications; Critical Perspectives in Political Communications

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Demonstrate an appropriate range of transferable skills such as 'communication skills, skills of initiative and personal responsibility', decision-making and 'the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development'.	Structures of Contemporary Political Communications; Critical Perspectives in Political Communications

In addition to achieving the Learning Outcomes for the Postgraduate Certificate, students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Diploma in Political Communications will also be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Present advanced and systematic knowledge of recent and relevant literature in the field of media, communications and cultural studies and demonstrate a critical awareness of current theoretical problems.	Option modules
A2	Consolidate and deepen their understanding of related subject areas in which they have an interest through the choice of options offered on the programme.	Option modules

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Systematically and creatively engage in debates and develop reflective commentary taking into account a range of views and perspectives from media, communications and cultural studies.	Option modules

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Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Engage with and apply wider debates and practices in media, communications and cultural studies.	Option modules
C2	Demonstrate that they can produce significant pieces of written work of a high academic standard (i.e. adequately researched, planned and structured, clearly written, well- presented and following academic conventions).	Option modules

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Demonstrate a range of advanced communication and discussion skills in written and oral contexts that deepen your knowledge of cultural theory.	Option modules

In addition to the Learning Outcomes for the Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma, students who successfully complete MA Political Communications will also be able to:

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	Demonstrate a systematic and advanced understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and methodologies, identifying strengths, weaknesses and gaps.	Final Dissertation
A2	Appreciate a range of methodological issues surrounding the production of innovative research in Political Communications.	Final Dissertation
A3	Advance their critical understanding of one particular issue in contemporary culture in relation to the broader Political Communications field.	Final Dissertation

Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	Identify and apply appropriate theoretical concepts and methodologies in response to existing empirical or theoretical problems and/or suggest lines of enquiry relevant to those contexts.	Final Dissertation

Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	Design and undertake a specialist research project, organise the findings, and present them in the form of a single-authored, original piece of academic writing.	Final Dissertation
C2	Act autonomously in the execution of a piece of research and take responsibility for both ethical and practical decisions, and for presenting the findings in a clear and coherent form.	Final Dissertation
C3	Debate salient academic, ethical and technical issues relevant to research methods, and draw on this awareness in designing an effective research project.	Final Dissertation

Transferable skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
D1	Show independence and creativity in self-learning, exercise initiative and taking personal responsibility for work.	Final Dissertation

Grading Criteria

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.

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	Exceptional work of potentially publishable quality showing originality and based on extensive research and independent thought. Represents to the achievement of the learning outcomes to an outstanding level.
70-79%	Distinction	Awarded when the work demonstrates the application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the module to a very effective extent. The work will show evidence of extensive relevant reading and an impressive grasp of current major issues in the field. This knowledge will have been reviewed critically with insight and independence of thought. Arguments and the presentation of evidence will demonstrate sophisticated reasoning, with clear awareness of issues of methodology and evidence, and be particularly clear, well-focused and cogent.
60-69%	Merit	Awarded when candidates demonstrate the application of appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the module learning outcomes to an effective extent. The work will demonstrate sound analytical and critical abilities and will show consistency and fluency in discussing and evaluating evidence and theories drawn from a wide range of sources. It will demonstrate an ability to relate this reading to their topic,

		and will clearly have understood and assimilated the relevant literature.
50-59%	Pass	Awarded when the essay demonstrates the application of appropriate knowledge, understandings and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the module to a satisfactory extent. There is clear evidence of knowledge and understanding, but where there may be limited development of ideas, critical comment or methodology. Within these limitations there will be indication that the candidate has grasped fundamental concepts and procedures in the field.
30-49%	Fail	Indicates that a candidate has demonstrated an unsatisfactory application of appropriate knowledge, understandings and skills specified in the learning outcomes of the module. Such a mark will be awarded to work that is based on inadequate knowledge and that fails to grasp essential concepts.
10-29%	Bad fail	Below 30 (Bad Fail): Scrappy and totally inadequate work that demonstrates a systematic failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark that is assigned to a plagiarised piece of work.

Mode of study

On campus.

Programme structure

PG Certificate in Political Communications

Students who have completed modules to the value of 60 credits including the compulsory 30 credit modules 'The Structure of Contemporary Political Communications' and 'Critical Perspectives on Political Communications' which take place in the Autumn and Spring term respectively may exit with a Postgraduate Certificate in Political Communications.

PG Diploma in Political Communications

Students who have completed modules to the value of 120 credits including the compulsory 30 credit modules 'The Structure of Contemporary Political Communications' and 'Critical

Perspectives on Political Communications' and an additional 60 credits of option modules may exit with a Postgraduate Diploma in Political Communications.

MA Political Communications requires 180 credits as follows.

Full-time mode

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
The Structure of Contemporary Political Communications	MC71083A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Critical Perspectives on Political Communications	MC71084A	30	7	Compulsory	2
Module(s) to the value of 60 CATS within either the Media or the Politics department	Various	60	7	Optional	1 and 2
Dissertation	MC71140B	60	7	Compulsory	3

Part-time mode

Academic year of study 1

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
The Structure of Contemporary Political Communications	MC71083A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Critical Perspectives on Political Communications	MC71084A	30	7	Compulsory	2

Academic year of study 2

Module Name	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Type	Term
Module(s) to the value of 60 CATS within either the Media or the Politics department	Various	60	7	Optional	1 and 2
Dissertation	MC71140B	60	7	Compulsory	3

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.

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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

The Department of Media, Communications and Cultural Studies has a strong record of employment prospects for its graduates. Graduates from other postgraduate programme have won numerous awards for their practice work and have gone on to a wide variety of jobs: some in the media industries, some in professional fields only distantly related to the media, and - consistently - a small group from each annual intake go on to do further academic research. MA Political Communications graduates are likely to have a broad range of relevant careers within political consultancy and organising, advertising, marketing, journalism and research.

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).

Programme-specific requirements

All taught postgraduate degrees have a minimum total value of 180 credits and involve one calendar year of full-time study. Some programmes may extend over more than one calendar year and, when this is the case, they have a higher total credit value. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section "How the programme is

structured" above. Normally, all modules are at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework.

Tuition fee costs

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

Specific programme costs

In addition to these standard costs, you will also be expected to meet some costs which are specifically related to your programme, which are set out below:

You will need to print two copies of your MA dissertation. If you take any option modules with an audiovisual assessment, you may need to submit work on a USB drive, which you will need to provide, however it will be returned after marking. If you choose to take modules from other Departments, there may be additional costs - please check with the Department in question.