

Module Description

BA (Hons) Media Culture and Practice

Media Culture I

In this module students will engage with key theories in media studies and debates on historical, cultural, urban, and technological change and everyday experience. Upon completion of the module, students should be able to apply some of the main theoretical perspectives, critical enquiries and contemporary debates that inform the field of Media and Cultural Studies in describing and analysing cultural artefacts and behaviours.

Throughout the module students will be asked to pay critical attention to their own contemporary cultural, media and technological environment and experience. From this starting point in the contemporary moment and individual experience they will then look to cultural change. What signs of cultural and technological histories do they see around them in their own experience, the urban environment, media images and new technologies? What changes are occurring now, and can we spot them and describe them with reference to appropriate theoretical frameworks?

The assessment of the module focuses on an engagement with writing as a form of practice – thus the students submit a range of short written exercises including blog entries, descriptive tasks, field notes, creative writing extracts and one longer piece of more conventional academic writing.

Media Culture II *(Pre-requisite: Media Culture I)*

This module furthers the discussion of Media Culture I but with emphasis on rigorous techniques of academic research and essay writing. The aim of the module is to give students a greater ability to orient themselves within the field of Media and Cultural Studies and to do the kind of sustained self-motivated work required in their final year. Upon completion of the module, students should be able to formulate research questions that are critical to the field of Media and Cultural Studies and apply appropriate methods and approaches in the design of a research project.

By developing students' powers of creative thinking and their ability to ask pertinent critical questions about the mediated world around them, this module helps students design and apply research methodologies to research on media messages, media production and consumption. The module also aims to equip students with the independent research skills they will need to

flourish in academic and vocational contexts, and to carry out basic research in order to produce a piece of academic writing.

The assessment of the module focuses on the development of a piece of small scale independent research.

Web Media

On Web Media students will look at the history of the culture and technology of the Internet and networked media and study theories that chart the impact of digital or computer-based media on established media forms and in culture more broadly. Through production work students will put these theories into practice and explore the critical and creative possibilities web based media offer.

Screen Media

On this module students will engage with the rapidly changing nature of screen media in the contemporary world whilst also tracing back into history to study how they have developed up to the present day. This module will begin by focussing on the traditional medium of television as a means of exploring a range of issues relating to institutional structures and representational practices. Then the module will move on to digital media cultures which will include thinking about games, play and the growing role of User Generated Content in online environments.

Photo Media

The module aims to improve students' image-making skills, ability to read images and understanding of the nature of digital images. Tutorial discussions may also address questions such as: How do photographs differ from other documents and why does photography remain at the centre of media communication? How do images address or presume an ideal reader? How does context determine meaning? What are the social uses to which different kinds of images are put? What are the shared cultural resources required to read certain kinds of images? How do printing and networking technologies affect the image? How do technologies shape the ways we see and understand reality? Why are some kinds of image manipulation seen as more truthful than others? How does text work with image? And finally, how is narrative constructed through images without relying on text and how do text and image work together?

Photography and Visual Culture

This module aims to introduce students to theories of photography and representation. Students will inquire about how photographs are similar to and different from other kinds of images, what is the basis of our belief in their realism or truth, what do cameras do, how is photography related to seeing, how do we think about seeing? Students will go on to explore recent and current debates about the significance of digital technology for photography and the main uses of photography in modern culture.

Games, Simulation and Media

Over the past three decades computer and video games have challenged cinema and television for the attention, and money, of screen audiences. They draw on cinema and TV for their dramas, characters and storyworlds, but they are also a significantly new form of popular screen media with other origins and influences from the development of the digital computer, networked communications, and histories of gaming from war-gaming to dolls house play. In this module, students will explore this developing mediascape through forays into the burgeoning, interdisciplinary engagements in digital culture, games and new media studies. The module will take videogames and videogame play as a major focus, but will encourage students to make connections with other simulational media forms and with other types of games and play.

Dissertation *(Pre-requisites Media Culture I and Media Culture II)*

The dissertation is the culmination of the learning and teaching in the BA (Hons) Media Culture and Practice. Students should bring the skills they developed on this BA (Hons) programme to this module as it tests both the knowledge students have gained and understood and the practical and cognitive skills they have grasped. The aim of the module is to offer students with a capstone opportunity to think in depth over a period of time about one specific issue; to read relevant academic writings and to apply relevant theories in order to achieve a greater understanding of the subject under inquiry.

Intensive Production (*Pre-requisite: Web Media or Photo Media*)

The module aims for students to develop a strong sense of themselves as independent producers and to develop the ability to work with others in a media production context. Students will develop their command of a particular set of media technologies within their chosen area and project and a high degree of creative self motivation and time management. The module will facilitate each student in making two projects in his/her chosen area of expertise – Photography, Web Media and Video in relations to the context of Media and Cultural Studies' critiques of contemporary culture and media.