

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	BA Liberal Arts (Level 6)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE, Cert HE
Is the programme offered with a Foundation Year?	Yes
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	Creative Arts, Culture and Communication
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (3 years; 4 yrs with Foundation Year) Part-time (4 years, 6 years; 6 years with Foundation Year) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	Not applicable
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	Not applicable:
UCAS code	Y400; Y401 (with FY)
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBALIBE_C (full-time, 3 years) UBALIBER_C (part-time, 4 years) UBALIBED_C (part-time, 6 years) UUBFLIBE_C (full-time with FY, 4 years) UBFLIBER_C (part-time with FY, 6 years)
HECoS Code	100065
Start date of programme	Autumn 2020
Date of programme approval	Summer 2019
Date of last programme amendment approval	June 2025
Valid for academic entry year	2025-26
Date of last revision to document	16/06/2025

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

UCAS tariff: 112 points (48 with Foundation Year)

A-levels: BBC

The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a [tariff calculator](#) for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

Foundation Year Degrees:

If you need extra support before starting an undergraduate degree, we offer the BA Liberal Arts with Arts Foundation Year degree, which provides an extra year of supported study to full-time students and two years of extra support for part-time students. This is an ideal route if you are returning to study after a gap, or if you have not previously studied this subject, or if you did not achieve the grades you need for a place on this degree.

Once you successfully complete the Foundation Year, you will automatically advance onto the main degree.

Course aims

Do you want to gain deeper knowledge about the world and its interconnections? Birkbeck's BA Liberal Arts is a flexible and innovative degree that enables you to pursue your own interests and strengths across different subject areas.

From a solid spine of dedicated liberal arts core modules that introduce diverse cultural perspectives on, and approaches to, what it means to be human in different times and contexts, you will be able to branch out into a breadth of subjects in the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences, including Creative Arts, Culture and Communication, History, Art History and Philosophy, and also the school of Law.

Select modules from literature, theatre studies, creative writing, film and media, modern languages (including Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese), art history, geography, law and criminology, management, philosophy, politics, psychology of education and psychosocial studies, to build a degree that suits you and which will fulfil your intellectual potential.

Employers highly value the analytical, critical and communication skills a liberal arts degree will give you. During your studies you can apply to take part in a competitive Industry Placement module, which will allow you to spend a term working in an arts-related organisation or arts-related role. The degree also provides ideal preparation for postgraduate study.

Aims:

- Provide a cogent and stimulating introduction to the Liberal Arts as taught at Birkbeck in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and as appropriate, within other faculties such as Business and Law.
- Provide progression from foundation year level to MA study in Liberal Arts and related subjects at Birkbeck.
- Enable students to develop their skills in academic writing and critical practice.
- Introduce students to diverse forms of cultural forms and representations, and equip them with critical methods allowing them to analyse a range of visual, verbal and other texts.

- Develop students' understanding of the histories, conventions, and processes of various genres and disciplines and to present lucid, logical, and well-structured work.
- Develop students' independent critical judgement and enable them to write on the subject matter of the modules at length (and at gradually and progressively extended length) and in a range of academic, and, as appropriate, creative, genres.
- Provide students with a broad and balanced understanding of the practices of academic reading, research and writing.
- Enable students to develop skills in editing and revising their own writing.
- Enable students to consolidate learning through lecturer/peer feedback.
- Enable students to engage imaginatively in the analysis and interpretation of texts/cultures and methods of knowledge production and study.
- Produce well-rounded graduates ready to make a contribution to the cultural sector through independent critical and cultural practice, or to progress to postgraduate studies.

Distinctive features:

- The carefully designed compulsory spine of Liberal Arts modules encourages students to reflect on their approach; consider inter-and multi-disciplinary approaches and creative and critical writing.
- The spine of compulsory Liberal Arts modules provides intellectual coherence while also preparing students to move between disciplines.
- The wide option choice allows students to pursue their interests, either across different subjects areas or, if they wish, by focusing on more specific areas.
- Students are offered detailed academic advice, as close as possible to a 'tailor-made' approach in which consultation with an academic tutor enables students to balance the acquisition and development of skills in methods against more content-based and disciplinary emphasis leading to an end-designated award.
- Students can apply to take part in a competitive Industry Placement module where they spend a term working in an arts-related organisation or arts-related role.
- Employers highly value the analytical, critical and communication skills a Liberal Arts degree provides.
- The degree also provides ideal preparation for postgraduate study, offering entry to a number of MA specialisms.

Course structure

(Please see Arts Foundation Year specification for Foundation Year module details)

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 3 years					
Year 1					
4	AREN257S4	Production of the Human	30	Comp	1
4	AREN256S4	Storytelling: Narrative Archetypes, Forms and Techniques	30	Comp	1-2
4	ENHU007S4	Writing London	30	Comp	2-3
4	SC04034S4	Rewriting Our World	30	Comp	3
Year 2					
5	AREN126S5	Connecting the Arts	30	Comp	1
5		Option A	30	Option	1,2 or 3

5		Option B	30	Option	1,2 or 3
5		Option C	30	Option	1,2 or 3
Year 3					
6	SC04033S6	BA English and Liberal Arts Dissertation	30	Comp	1-3
6		Option A	30	Option	1,2 or 3
6		Option B	30	Option	1,2 or 3
6		Option C	30	Option	1,2 or 3
Part-time – 4 years					
Year 1					
4	AREN257S4	Production of the Human:	30	Comp	1
4	AREN256S4	Storytelling: Narrative Archetypes, Forms and Techniques	30	Comp	1-2
4	ENHU007S4	Writing London	30	Comp	2-3
Year 2					
5	AREN126S5	Connecting the Arts	30	Comp	1
4	SC04034S4	Rewriting our World	30	Comp	3
5		Option B	30	Option	2
Year 3					
5		Option A	30	Option	1,2 or 3
5		Option B	30	Option	1,2 or 3
6		Option C	30	Option	1,2 or 3
Year 4					
6	SC04033S6	BA English and Liberal Arts Dissertation	30	Comp	1+2
6		Option A	30	Option	1,2 or 3
6		Option B	30	Option	1,2 or 3
Part-time – 6 years decelerated					
Year 1					
4	AREN257S4	Production of the Human	30	Comp	1
4	AREN256S4	Storytelling: Narrative Archetypes, Forms and Techniques	30	Comp	1-2
Year 2					
4	ENHU007S4	Writing London	30	Comp	2-3
4	SC04034S4	Rewriting Our World	30	Comp	3
Year 3					
5	AREN126S5	Connecting the Arts	30	Comp	1
5		Option A	30	Option	2 or 3
Year 4					
5		Option A	30	Option	1,2 or 3
5		Option B	30	Option	1,2 or 3
Year 5					
6		Option A	30	Option	1,2 or 3
6		Option B	30	Option	1,2 or 3

Year 6					
6		BA English and Liberal Arts Dissertation	30	Comp	1-3
6		Option A	30	Option	1,2 or 3

Options BA Liberal Arts: Students following the BA Liberal Arts programme route can select their options at level 5 and 6 from English, Theatre and Creative Writing subjects, from the wider school of Creative, Arts and Communication including languages, culture, film and media, or from other schools in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, including subjects like art history, history, philosophy, geography, sociology, criminology, psychosocial studies and politics, as approved by the programme director.

Note: Options should be selected so that students on the 3 year full-time and 4-year part-time routes are taking credit-bearing modules in each term of their studies.

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

The degree is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Teaching on the programme is varied. Modules at Levels 4 and 5 are typically taught by lectures, seminars, and workshops. Modules at Level 6 are usually taught in seminar groups as well as through individual supervision sessions for the Dissertation. Some modules include one-to-one tutorials by arrangement (for example to discuss essay feedback). You may also encounter other forms of teaching -e.g. language work – depending on the options you choose.

Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare. Workshops based on more hands-on exercises that allow you practice skills such as close reading and critical analysis.

Other important modes of learning include: note-taking, visual and textual analysis; private study; group projects; library and archival research; use of internet sources; use of museums and galleries where applicable; as well completion of the assessed work.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. Assessment methods used include essays, examinations and an independent final year dissertation, as well as a wide range of exercises designed to evaluate different abilities and prepare students to the range of genres, lengths, and writing skills required in the twenty-first-century workplace.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Recognize, discuss, and write about cultural forms and genres of texts, objects and epistemological frameworks
- Demonstrate critical skills in the close reading and written analysis of visual, verbal and critical texts
- Evaluate and write analytically on the ways in which concepts have shaped culture and knowledge
- Reconstruct the circulation of ideas across cultures and historical periods
- Analyse and discuss the borders and divisions of knowledge through texts, objects, practices
- Contextualise an idea and generate alternative views that have been or could be argued around it
- Consider an object/artefact/document as evidence of historical activity and situate and locate an object/artefact/document within its socio-cultural context
- Understand and assess the role of experience and subjectivity in cultural analysis

By the end of the course, students will have gained:

- Knowledge and critical understanding from the various disciplinary frameworks they have encountered, as well as the ability to work across these disciplinary frameworks to produce interdisciplinary analyses
- Confidence in knowing and applying methods appropriate to texts and cultural phenomena
- The ability to choose appropriate subjects and topics and write about them, as well as the ability to edit, develop, and extend an analytical (and as appropriate creative) piece of work
- Research skills, including the ability to gather, sift and organise material independently and critically and to present it in the form of an essay, report, presentation or creative piece
- The capacity to consider and solve complex problems in various kinds of speech, writing, and practice
- Bibliographical skills including accurate citation of sources and consistent use of conventions in the presentation of scholarly work
- Skills of self-evaluation, which will enable students to reflect on their own practice

Careers and further study

Employers highly value the analytical, critical and communication skills of a Birkbeck Liberal Arts degree. You can find our graduates in a wide range of roles in the cultural sector as well as, for example, teaching and business roles. Graduates leave with valuable attributes such as

- An in-depth knowledge of cultural production
- A thorough understanding of different cultural forms and modes of representation
- The ability to analyse and process complex ideas
- Independent research skills as well as the ability to work as part of a team
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English
- Knowledge of different fields and subject areas

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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