

Programme Specification

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| 1 | Awarding body | University of London | | | | |
| 2 | Teaching Institution | Birkbeck College | | | | |
| 3 | Programme Title(s) | MA History of Photography MA History of Photography with Curating PG Dip History of Photography PG Cert History of Photography | | | | |
| 4 | Programme Code(s) | TMAHISPH_C - MA History of Photography TMAHIPHC_C – MA History of Photography with Curating TPDHISPH_C – PG Dip History of Photography TPCHISPH_C – PG Cert History of Photography | | | | |
| 5 | UCAS code | N/A | | | | |
| 6 | Home Department | History of Art | | | | |
| 7 | Exit Award(s) | PG Dip History of Photography PG Cert History of Photography PG Dip History of Photography with Curating | | | | |
| 8 | Duration of Study (number of years) | 1 FT, 2 PT | | | | |
| 9 | Mode of Study | FT | x | PT | x | DL |
| 10 | Level of Award (FHEQ) | 7 | | | | |
| 11 | Other teaching depts or institution | N/A | | | | |
| 12 | Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body(PSRB) details | N/A | | | | |
| 13 | QAA Benchmark Statement | N/A | | | | |

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| 14 | Programme Rationale & Aims |
| | <p>The MA History of Photography replaced the pathway MA History of Art with Photography. The rationale for creating a stand-alone program in History of Photography is to enhance its internal coherence and recruitment, while maintaining strong pedagogical and administrative links with the MA History of Art and with the new MA History of Architecture (sharing a compulsory introductory course, Sub Board of Examiners, mitigating circumstances board and induction meeting). In addition a new MA History of Photography with Curating pathway has been added: this offers students with curatorial ambitions a more vocational route.</p> <p>The programme seeks to develop historical and critical skills in the study of selected aspects of the history of photography, with an emphasis on historiographical awareness and critical debate rather than on comprehensive survey. The programme responds to and exploits the appointment of a new professor of history of photography that has expanded staffing in this and closely related areas. The department now has Steve Edwards and Patrizia Di Bello who teach history of photography, plus Lynda Nead, Suzannah Biernoff and Mark Crinson for whom the subject is central to their wider interests. The programme also responds to the growing public profile of history of photography, demonstrated by, for example, the success</p> |

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| | <p>of Photo London, and plans at the Victoria and Albert Museum for an International Photography Centre.</p> <p>The programme contributes to fulfilling the College’s mission and emphasis on diversity by opening up new opportunities to study part time the history of photography, a topic that has traditionally been seen as ‘mechanical’ and therefore of lower status, but also less associated with the exclusivity of art history.</p> <p>The main aims of the programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide students with a postgraduate-level introduction to current theoretical and historiographic issues in the study of history of photography, especially in its relation to art history. • To enable students to study selected areas of the subject in some depth, foregrounding the most productive thematic issues and developing powers of critical reflection. • To develop in students the confidence for direct study of photographs, primary source texts concerning them, and other documentary material. • To develop students’ ability to reflect on the process of research and to demonstrate how research questions and projects relate to the state of knowledge in the field. <p>In addition, the MA History of Photography with Curating pathway aims to provide students with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A solid grasp of key issues in curating practice • Foundational skills in curating practice • Insight into the different working practices of various museums and galleries • An opportunity to research and test ideas for exhibitions • Skills in research, writing, and documentation that are specifically geared to a museums or galleries context • A basis for professional work |
| 15 | <p>Entry Criteria</p> |
| | <p>Good honours degree in a relevant subject or equivalent (for example, professional experience). In addition to the online application, students need to complete and submit a written exercise, or submit a sample recent undergraduate essay. Interviews December - September.</p> <p>For students with a degree in a subject other than history of art, the one-year part-time Graduate Certificate in History of Art and Architecture can be used as a conversion course. Students who successfully complete the graduate certificate with merit will normally be guaranteed a place on this programme, and do not need to provide an admissions exercise.</p> |
| 16 | <p>Learning Outcomes</p> |
| | <p>On successful completion of the MA History of Photography, students will be expected to have:</p> <p><i>Subject Specific</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed at postgraduate level acuity in analysing photography |

- An enhanced understanding of photography within the social and cultural context of its production
- Acquired knowledge of methodologies concerned with the discipline
- Engaged constructively in current debates concerning the discipline and its changing nature.

Intellectual

- Ability to select and acquire relevant visual, spatial and textual material and evidence and to analyse, present and interpret this as appropriate within the context of the course
- Developed appropriate historical and theoretical methodological frameworks and approaches
- Developed communication skills (oral and written)
- Ability to handle theoretical arguments and to research focused topics
- Ability to understand advanced abstract material
- Developed critical awareness/distance.

Practical

- Ability to work with and interpret photographs, images and documents
- Ability to debate in an atmosphere of open discussion
- Report writing
- Short and extended-length academic writing
- Ability to take responsibility for dissertation preparation
- The skillful operation of a range of audio-visual and multimedia equipment, for class presentation.

Personal and Social

- Experience of working in groups
- Experience of co-ordinating preparation and execution of presentations
- Self-motivation and time management skills

On successful completion of the MA History of Photography with Curating pathway, students will also be expected to be able to:

Subject Specific

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of the role and responsibilities of the curator within the modern museum and gallery context;
- Select objects and create coherent narratives with them;
- Understand the fundamental principles of object interpretation;
- Engage constructively in current debates concerning curatorship and its changing nature;
- Identify some of the challenges faced by the museum and gallery curator today;

Intellectual

- Develop critical awareness of curatorial techniques and strategies;
- Apply theoretical arguments and research focused topics;

Practical

- Have developed their communication skills (oral and written);
- Work constructively with a group;
- Debate in an atmosphere of open discussion;

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in a variety of different styles (for an exhibition catalogue essay, online blog, object label); • Operate a range of audio-visual and multimedia equipment, for class presentation; • Demonstrate project management skills; <p><i>Personal and Social</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate preparation and execution of presentations; • Demonstrate self-motivation and time management skills. |
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| 17 | Learning, teaching and assessment methods |
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| | <p>The standard format for teaching is a combination of lectures and seminars and one-to-one tutorials.</p> <p>Lecturers present an overview of the main issues attached to the week’s subject area, pointing students in the direction of required reading as well as further reading and research.</p> <p>The seminar component of each session enables students to explore ideas and methods, to discuss both the required reading and the results of personal research and study, and to refine their own skills of argument, communication and presentation. Seminars may include structured or open debate, a close analysis of textual or visual material, small group discussions and task based work. Participation in seminar discussion is very important in all parts of the course. Classroom based work is supported and enhanced by visits to archives, museums and galleries.</p> <p>As the MA progresses students are expected to become increasingly independent researchers. This is reflected in the fact that both the research exercise and dissertation are largely self-defined rubrics (with guidance from academic members of staff). Students can choose to do a work placement module in place of the research exercise.</p> <p>Further support and expansion of students’ areas of interest comes in the form of tutorials, arranged by mutual agreement with the lecturer, allowing students to discuss issues on a one-to-one basis, especially in relation to essays, research exercise and dissertation.</p> <p>Work on the dissertation is further enhanced by work-in-progress seminars in the summer term.</p> <p>Additional handouts and moodle resources will direct students towards supplementary information and reading.</p> <p>Research seminars, symposia and lectures delivered by relevant guest speakers provide students with an opportunity to engage with current developments and debates in the field. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the events organised by the History and Theory of Photography Research Centre.</p> |
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| 18 | Programme Description |
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| | <p>Students take the compulsory module 'Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography', two option modules, a research exercise or work placement, and a dissertation.</p> <p>Full-time students take 'Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography' and the first option module in the autumn term and the second option module</p> |
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| <p>in the spring term. Then they either take the research exercise in the spring term and work on their dissertation from the summer term OR they take a work placement in the summer term and begin work on their dissertation from the spring term.</p> <p>In Year 1, part-time students take 'Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography' in the autumn term, the first option module in the spring term, and the research exercise OR the work placement in the summer term. In Year 2 they take the second option module in the autumn term, and work on their dissertation from the spring term.</p> <p>'Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography' is designed to explore key concepts, methodologies and issues involved in the current study of the art historical discipline, as well as research skills and methods. About half the elements taken by students on this programme address history of art generally, while half address history of photography specifically. 'Frameworks' serves as the compulsory core course for the MA History of Art and MA History of Photography as well as for the MA History of Architecture.</p> <p>Option modules allow students to pursue specific interests and areas of research in selected topics.</p> <p>The research exercise offers students the chance to undertake independent research and to reflect on the process of research.</p> <p>Students on the MA History of Photography with Curating pathway take the 5-day intensive vocational module 'Curating', Morning sessions are held in the classroom, followed by tutor-led museum and gallery visits each afternoon</p> <p>Students complete the programme with a 15,000-word dissertation.</p> |
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| 19 | Programme Structure | | | |
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| Full Time programme: MA – 1 year | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | |
| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | ARVC247S7 | Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography | 30 | Compulsory |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module 1 | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module 2 | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | ARVC282S7 | Research Exercise OR | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | ARVC054S7 | Work Placement | | |
| 7 | AHVM019D7 | Dissertation | 60 | Core |
| Part Time programme: MA – 2 years | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | |
| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | ARVC247S7 | Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography | 30 | Compulsory |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module 1 | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | ARVC282S7 | Research Exercise OR | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | ARVC054S7 | Work Placement | | |

| Year 2 | | | | |
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| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module 2 | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | AHVM019D7 | Dissertation | 60 | Core |
| Full-Time Programme: PG Dip – 1 year | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | |
| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | ARVC247S7 | Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography | 30 | Compulsory |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module 1 | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module 2 | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | ARVC282S7 | Research Exercise OR | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | ARVC054S7 | Work Placement | | |
| Part-Time Programme: PG Dip – 2 years | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | |
| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | ARVC247S7 | Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography | 30 | Compulsory |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module 1 | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | ARVC282S7 | Research Exercise OR | 30 | |
| 7 | ARVC054S7 | Work placement | 30 | Optional |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module 2 | 30 | Optional |
| Part-Time Programme: PG Cert – 1 year | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | |
| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | ARVC247S7 | Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography | 30 | Compulsory |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module 1 | 30 | Optional |
| Full Time programme: MA History of Photography with Curating - 1 year | | | | |
| Year 1 | | | | |
| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | ARVC247S7 | Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography | 30 | Compulsory |
| 7 | ARVC273S7 | Curating | 30 | Compulsory |
| 7 | From a range | Option Module | 30 | Optional |
| 7 | ARVC054S7 ARVC282S7 | Work Placement Or Research Exercise | 30 | Compulsory |
| 7 | AHVM019D7 | Dissertation | 60 | Core |

| Part Time programme: MA History of Photography with Curating – 2 years | | | | |
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| Year 1 | | | | |
| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | ARVC247S7 | Frameworks: Histories and Theories of Art, Architecture, Photography | 30 | Comp |
| 7 | From a range or ARVC273S7 | Option Module OR Curating | 30 | Optional or Compulsory |
| 7 | ARVC054S7 ARVC282S7 | Work Placement Or Research Exercise | 30 | compulsory |
| Year 2 | | | | |
| Level | Module Code | Module Title | Credits | Status* |
| 7 | From a range or ARVC273S7 | Option Module OR Curating | 30 | Optional or Compulsory |
| 7 | AHVM019D7 | Dissertation | 60 | Core |

Status*

CORE – Module must be taken and passed by student; COMPULSORY – Module must be taken, mark can be reviewed at sub-exam board; OPTIONAL – Student can choose to take this module

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| ²⁰ | Programme Director | Professor Steve Edwards/Dr Patrizia Di Bello |
| ²¹ | Start Date (<i>term/year</i>) | Autumn 2019 |
| ²² | Date approved by TQEC | May 2018 |
| ²³ | Date approved by Academic Board | June 2018 |
| ²⁴ | Date(s) updated/amended | 6 May 2021 |