

Programme Specification

1	Awarding body	University of London				
2	Teaching Institution	Birkbeck College				
3	Programme Title(s)	MA Creative and Critical Writing				
4	Programme Code(s)	TMACCRIT_C				
5	UCAS code	N/A				
6	Home Department	English, Theatre and Creative Writing				
7	Exit Award(s)	PG Dip, PG Cert				
8	Duration of Study (number of years)	1 to 2 years				
9	Mode of Study	FT	✓	PT	✓	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				

14	Programme Rationale & Aims
	<p>Aims:</p> <p>The MA in Creative and Critical Writing aims to provide students with experience blended learning in the interconnected fields of creative writing and critical thinking by combining both practice-based learning and specialism in contemporary literature, culture, and criticism, as well as the development of their own creative writing projects. This interdisciplinary Master's degree explores critical methods and debates on experimental literature, media, popular culture, technology, and cultural development and aims to give students the opportunity to develop both their critical thinking skills as well as fiction and non-fiction writing skills. With Creative Writing modules in Creative Non-Fiction, and option modules in fiction, non-fiction, and hybrid genres (Writing The Self, and); with the Writing Workshop in which students can develop their own fiction, non-fiction or hybrid projects; and the Dissertation which allows students to combine creative and critical elements they have encountered in the degree, the programme offers a well-rounded and stimulating set of encounters that mutually shape one another.</p> <p>College mission: The aims of the programme are in line with Birkbeck's mission statement. Chiefly, the MA offers greater flexibility for students wishing to study both critical and creative content. The sector, as well as our applicants, demonstrate an increasing need for a hybrid MA and the implementation of the MA in Creative and Critical Writing will 'meet the changing education, cultural, personal and career needs of students' and as provision is low in London this MA will absolutely impact 'those who live or work in London'. Combining the strengths of three MAs ensures that research excellence is maintained and developed through strong cross curricular relationships. Importantly, this MA will 'develop the College's capacity to respond rapidly to new and changing opportunities in higher and further education'.</p>

	<p>Career potential: The programme aims to provide students with relevant experience suitable for a variety of career opportunities. For example, this MA will be relevant for those also interested in pursuing a career in writing and publishing. Opportunities to engage in editing on The Mechanics’ Institute Review and MIR Online provide live internship experiences for students. The MACW produces writers who publish widely both nationally and internationally, this MA will aim to do the same.</p> <p>Further study: The programme aims to provide students with a firm and competitive educational foundation that will support MPhil and PhD study. The hybrid nature of the MA aims to allow students to pursue MPhil/PhD in practise-based areas such as creative writing, or in critical subjects within English or Humanities</p>
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15	<p>Entry Criteria</p> <p>A second-class honours degree (2:2 or above), though this requirement may be waived if students can demonstrate exceptional talent.</p> <p>Prospective students should apply first through online application with two academic/professional references and a sample of 1,500 words of creative writing, one of 1,500 words of critical writing (about a literary text), as well as a personal statement which outlines why they would like to study for this course. Those successful at this stage will be directed to attend an interview.</p>
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16	<p>Learning Outcomes</p> <p>The programme has the following outcomes and objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain a comprehensive grounding in some of the key trends and texts in the field of contemporary literature and culture, with a special focus on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. • To establish a multidisciplinary approach to the study of contemporary literature, theory, and culture. • To demonstrate an understanding of various cultures and societies in the context of prevailing theoretical debates • To analyse and debate fiction and non-fiction texts in close co-ordination with practice and experience. • To place their own writing in the context of developments in contemporary fiction. • To develop to a professional level the craft of writing in fiction, non-fiction, or hybrid genres. • To show awareness of the styles, forms and elements of writerly craft, including the processes of research and exposition. • To think critically and explore practically the conventions sustaining different genres of creative writing • To interrogate the division between the creative and the critical • To evidence the critical and creative skills needed to realise a critical and creative writing project, taking it from initial idea, through research to writing and editing. <p>The objectives and outcomes for the modules are as follows:</p> <p>Reading the Contemporary AREN095S7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a comprehensive grounding in some of the key trends and texts in the field of contemporary literature and culture, with a special focus on the post-2000 period.
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- To engage students in debates about the conceptualization of the contemporary, and to equip them with the appropriate vocabulary and critical paradigms.
- To identify and engage with the key features and characteristics of new forms of writing that have emerged as a result of new technologies.
- To develop a multidisciplinary approach to the study of contemporary literature and culture.

Creative Non-Fiction ENHU002S7

- An awareness of the styles, forms and elements of the non-fiction writer's craft, including the processes of research and exposition.
- An understanding of recent and contemporary creative non-fiction across a range of forms and genres (travel, nature, life writing, reportage, creative documentary, verbatim theatre), and an understanding of its place within literary canons.
- The confidence to tackle craft-related problems in areas such as structure, setting, atmosphere, and the use of dialogue and telling detail.
- The confidence to recognise and understand sources of inspiration and creativity.
- The ability to use research-generated ideas more confidently, precisely, and imaginatively.
- Confidence in handling a variety of research methodologies (whether electronic, archival, interview-based or investigative), with insight and creativity.
- An awareness of the industry-standard expectations for the presentation of non-fiction writing, including its bibliographic and citation conventions.
- Enhanced skills of self-evaluation as well as constructive analysis of the work of others.

The critical and creative skills needed to realise a personal writing project, taking it from initial idea, through research to writing and editing.

Writing the Self 238S7 (OPTION MODULE)

- To promote students' awareness and enjoyment of the range of memoir and first person non-fictional forms
- Develop student understanding of the relationship between form and content, through encounters with critical and theoretical texts that prompt philosophical reflection on writing about the self
- Introduce students to a diverse range of texts, both historic and contemporary, that have interrogated the notion of a self from which to speak and write, including psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, queer theory, feminist theory, disability theory, critical race theory, affect theory
- To encourage students to use these texts in order to reformulate and reimagine the potential of memoir and life-writing, and the formal and narrative techniques required for it
- Introduce students to key writers of texts that not only tell compelling stories about individual experience but that also fulfill important literary, philosophical, and political aims
- Prepare students for a longer piece of first-person non-fiction writing

Writing Together: Creative-Critical Approaches to Collaboration AREN244S7 (OPTION MODULE)

- Promote students' enjoyment of creative writing practices that incorporate others; words, whether found or solicited.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop student understanding of the relationship between the self and the collective in relation to creative writing practice. • Introduce students to a diverse range of texts and writing practices that challenge the self as the chief generative mode in creative writing. • To encourage students to use these texts in order to reformulate and reimagine the potential of fiction, and the formal and narrative techniques required for it. • Introduce students to key writers of texts that not only tell compelling stories about collective experience but that also fulfil important literary, philosophical, and political aims. <p>The Writing Workshop ENHU039S7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop to a professional level the craft of writing in fiction or non-fiction • Develop confidence, sensitivity and discernment in their analysis of their own and their fellow students' work • Develop a greater critical understanding of contemporary literary developments • Place their own writing in the context of developments in contemporary fiction and non-fiction • Develop to professional level skill in editing of both their own and fellow students' creative work • Gain a greater practical knowledge and understanding of the markets for contemporary writing <p>Dissertation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will, with the guidance of a supervisor, consolidate and develop the creative and critical writing skills they have acquired at level 7. • Students will plan, research, and structure the argument of a substantial piece of creative-critical writing. • Students will develop to a professional level the craft of writing a creative-critical piece, which can take either a split or a hybrid form • Students will demonstrate a persuasive connection between the creative and critical elements of the dissertation.
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17	<p>Learning, teaching and assessment methods</p> <p>The MA consists of four existing MA modules (four core modules and one option module (from a choice of two) from three existing MAs. The teaching will be delivered by experienced lecturers linked to the existing MAs. In keeping with the other MAs within the department, a PT student will expect 3hr contact teaching, and a total of 15 hours work per week, including private study, per year. The course consists of 4 core modules which includes the dissertation; and one option module (selected from two choices). Students will learn via lecture, seminar, and workshop. Appropriate to the level of study, each core course carries the same assessment format as existing MAs with 100% coursework for each module. By connecting this MA to existing provision, we can be assured that the learning and teaching is appropriate to Level 7.</p> <p>Learning and teaching methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the Contemporary (Module 1, Autumn) – lecture and seminar totalling three hours per class
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing The Self (Option Module, Autumn) – lecture/seminar and workshop totalling 2 hours per class • Writing Together: Creative-Critical Approaches to Collaboration (Option Module, Autumn) – lecture/seminar and workshop totalling 2 hours per class • The Writing Workshop (Module 3, Spring) – workshop totalling 2 hours per class • Creative Non-Fiction (Module 4, Spring) – workshop totalling 2 hours per class • Dissertation (Module 5, Spring/Summer) – supervision and summer programme workshops/lectures <p>Assessment methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 PT has two modules of 100% coursework. • Year 2 has three modules of 100% coursework including dissertation. The dissertation element of the assessment can take two forms; the first, two separate but interconnected pieces of creative and critical writing, of 7,500 words each; the second, a creative-critical hybrid text of 15,000 words in which the creative and the critical are blended. Both forms of the dissertation should demonstrate a dialogue between, or a blend of, practice and critical work. • FT students will complete five modules of 100% coursework; this includes the dissertation. • The strong coursework element of this MA ensures that students are developing the skills specified in the learning outcomes relating to the demonstration of critical and creative writing excellence.
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18	<p>Programme Description</p> <p>The MA has four core modules and one option module (with two choices). The new structure of the MA enables students to consider more explicitly the relationship between what is understood as the creative and the critical. Reading the Contemporary is primarily a critical module, introducing students to key critical concepts. Creative Non-Fiction is primarily a craft-focused module, in which students hone writing techniques. The two option modules (Writing The Self and Writing Together: Creative-Critical Approaches to Collaboration) ask students to interrogate the division between creative and critical, and have students engage with texts that themselves introduce critical challenges to assumptions about the self, and critical questions about community, identity, agency, self and other. Each of these option modules therefore encourages students to question conventions and genres that tend to dominate creative writing. The Writing Workshop gives students sustained workshop experience, in a space where they are encouraged to explore in their own writing these the boundaries of the creative and critical (which have been addressed in their option modules). (For both PT and FT students the Writing Workshop is a culmination of their explorations in other modules.) And the Dissertation pushes this potential further, enabling students to either treat the creative and the critical as separate forms (though ones that must be in dialogue), or to blend these in a hybrid piece.</p> <p>FULL TIME</p> <p>Brief structure overview:</p> <p>Year 1: Reading the Contemporary, and Option Module (Writing The Self or Writing Together: Creative-Critical Approaches to Collaboration) (Autumn); Creative Non-Fiction and The Writing Workshop (Spring) – with Dissertation and summer programme</p>
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	<p>PART TIME</p> <p>Brief structure overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Year 1: Reading the Contemporary (Autumn) and Creative Non Fiction (Spring) – with summer programme •Year 2: EITHER Writing The Self, OR Writing Together: Creative-Critical Approaches to Collaboration (Autumn), and Writing Workshop (Spring) – with Dissertation and summer programme
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19	Programme Structure			
Full Time programme – 1 year				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	AREN095S7	Reading the Contemporary	30	Core
7	EITHER AREN238S7	Writing The Self	30	Option
7	OR AREN244S7	OR Writing Together: Creative-Critical Approaches to Collaboration	30	Option
7	ENHU002S7	Creative Non-Fiction	30	Core
7	ENHU039S7	Writing Workshop	30	Core
7	AREN235D7	MA Project: Creative and Critical Writing	60	Core
Part Time programme – 2 years				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	AREN095S7	Reading the Contemporary	30	Core
7	ENHU002S7	Creative Non-Fiction	30	Core
Year 2				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	EITHER AREN238S7	Writing The Self	30	Option
7	OR AREN244S7	OR Writing Together: Creative-Critical Approaches to Collaboration	30	Option
7	ENHU039S7	Writing Workshop	30	Core
7	AREN235D7	MA Project: Creative and Critical Writing	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

20	Programme Director	Katherine Angel
21	Start Date (term/year)	Autumn 2018
22	Date approved by TQEC	March 2018 (Chair's action)
23	Date approved by Academic Board	Summer 2018
24	Date(s) updated/amended	July 2020