

MA The Body & Representation

For students entering in 2006

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
Faculty of Arts & Humanities	Programme length: 12 months FT (24 months PT; 60 months modular)
Date of specification:	October 2006
Programme Director:	Ms Carolyn Williams
Board of Studies:	The Body Board of Studies
Accreditation:	NA

Summary of programme aims

This MA is aimed at students from any academic background, introducing them to the rich field of critical theory focused on the body. It combines a consistent focus with a broad reach across a range of core theoretical areas (psychoanalysis, gender, feminism, foucauldian history, identity politics, film and media, lesbian/gay studies, performance) and disciplines (linguistics, literature, philosophy, social studies, cultural studies, the creative arts). Students also have a hands-on and comparative Research Methods Module. The MA is fully interdisciplinary, and specialisation increases during the year, culminating in a 20,000-word dissertation, which may include a practice element.

Transferable skills

Students on this MA will:

- learn to absorb and assess a large range of often complex arguments through independent reading;
- become adept at manipulating abstract issues at an advanced [postgraduate] level;
- engage in high-level peer-group debate and learn from students of diverse academic backgrounds;
- become both comparative and selective in the use of a wide range of material;
- understand a range of research methodologies and put them into practice;
- complete a dissertation (which may include a practice element) which can lead directly into doctoral research

Programme content

Compulsory modules

Mod Code	Module Title	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
ENMB11	Core Module in Critical Theory	40	M
ENMB12	Research Methods	20	M
ENMB3	Dissertation	60	M

Optional modules: TWO of the following:

Mod Code	Module Title	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
ENMB21	Module 1: Performance	30	M
ENMB22	Module 2: Visualising the body	30	M
ENMB23	Module 3: The body under science & technology	30	M
ENMB24	Module 4: Language and text	30	M

Part-time/Modular arrangements

Part-time students take the following modules:

- Year 1 Autumn Term: Core Module + Research Methods Module
- Year 1 Spring Term: one Optional Module
- Year 2 Spring Term: another Optional Module
- Year 2 Summer Term + summer vacation: supervised Dissertation

Modular students normally take up to 60 months:

- Year 1: Core Module
- Year 2: RM Module
- Year 3: one Optional Module
- Year 4: another Optional Module
- Year 5: Dissertation

Progression requirements

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories:</u>	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 in the Core Module or Spring Term modules. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

for Postgraduate Diplomas

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in the Core Module or Spring Term modules. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

for Postgraduate Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more and have no mark below 40 in the Core Module. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.*

*The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied himself or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

Summary of teaching and assessment

Module teaching is in small-group classes, taught by 25 tutors from 12 departments in the Faculty. The Research Methods Module is in practical task-led mode and the Dissertation is taught by one-to-one supervision, while Module classes are largely taught as seminars, with active participation in lively debate a requirement.

Assessment follows the University's classification:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories:</u>	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:
a BA Hons (or equivalent) in any subject

Admissions Tutor: Carolyn Williams

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Disability Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

A specific Induction to use of the University Library is provided; in addition, the Research Methods Module includes more detailed introduction to research facilities in its five fields. The two University Libraries have excellent holdings in the field of critical theory and also each hold an archive of 31 videos of the *Body & Representation* Guest Lectures 1996-2003. Photocopied material for Modules are available in Body Boxes in the departmental libraries of English, History of Art, etc.

Carolyn Williams is Personal Tutor to all students on the MA, providing advice and access via office hours and email; as Admissions Tutor she also jointly interviews all UK-based applicants. A Programme Handbook is provided to all enquirers and (updated) to all accepted students in the summer before entry.

Classes are taught at 6 pm, to ease participation by students with domestic or employment responsibilities.

Career prospects

Because of its stress on adaptability and autonomy, this MA provides both a fine preparation for further research and an excellent basis for employment in a wide range of fields. Among our graduates are seven PhD students, a schoolteacher, two nurses, two civil servants (one currently based in Brussels), two lecturers, one university administrator, several practising artists and performers, one person running her own business, one person teaching for the US

Army, one person working for UNESCO in Bangkok, and the newly appointed Director of the Jersey Arts Centre Association.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

There is no opportunity for study abroad.

Educational aims of the programme

The main pedagogic aim of the MA is to bring discipline and depth to already curious and mentally agile students. Students have to assess and absorb a large body of challenging material, and learn to balance and compare opposing theories, as well as to discriminate those areas that are most apt to their own research focus. They are encouraged to analyse critically their intuitions and experience – after all, the body is a universal element of experience as well as reflection. In assignments, students are expected to achieve a high level of presentational skill as well as, above all, a coherent and fully illustrated line of argument.

In addition to its more specifically intellectual aspects, the programme encourages the development of creative and practice skills, allowing students to produce a dissertation that is part reflective text and part practice (videoed performance, art installation, short film etc).

Programme Outcomes

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. Ten core areas of critical theory on the body, each focused on 4+ set texts;
2. Five fields of research methods, taught in two 1h sessions each;
3. Four areas of theory (Performance, Visualising the body, Science & technology, Language & text) of which each student takes two;
4. An extended dissertation, either fully textual or a combination of text and practice

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1. Ten 3-hour seminars, in which texts are presented and discussed in guided debate;
2. Classes are held across a 2-week period, with terms and practices introduced and then tested by assignments reported upon;
3. Each Module is taught in ten 2-hour classes during Spring Term; again, the format is mainly seminar discussion with some lecture elements; students use a variety of materials: text, video, performance, visual arts etc.
4. The dissertation is student led and one-to-one supervised during Summer Term and the summer vacation

Assessment

1. Core.Module: one 5,000-word essay submitted first Friday of Spring Term;
2. Research Methods Module: one assignment report (equivalent to a 5,000-word essay) submitted first Friday of Spring Term;
3. Each Optional Module: one 5,000-word essay submitted first Friday of Summer Term;
4. Dissertation either 20,000 words fully text or practice (specified according to medium) + 6000 word explanatory and self-analytical text, submitted 21 September

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:

1. learn to absorb and assess a large range of often complex arguments through independent reading;
2. become adept at manipulating abstract issues at an advanced [postgraduate] level;
3. engage in high-level peer-group debate and learn from students of diverse academic backgrounds;
4. become both comparative and selective in the use of a wide range of material;
5. understand a range of research methodologies and put them into practice;
6. complete a dissertation (which may include a practice element) which can lead directly into doctoral research

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1. preparation for every class requires advance reading & presentation of critical summary of texts;
2. students will be expected to summarise abstract ideas in a focused and critical way;
3. contribution to discussion is essential to seminars;
4. the interdisciplinary and comparative approach runs through the programme at macro + micro level;
5. research methodologies are inculcated both within the RMM and in assessed work more generally;
6. the dissertation requires a high level of disciplined independent research

Assessment

1. level and degree of critical reading informs all assessed work;
2. ability to argue clearly and coherently informs all assessed work;
3. tutors' reports (used for references etc) comment on participation in group debate;
4. all assessed work is expected to use comparative approaches;
5. Research Methods assignment and other assessed work;
6. dissertation (entirely textual or partially creative)

C. Practical skills – able to:

1. use research facilities (libraries, ICT) efficiently and effectively;
2. experience and manipulate non-text media: video, visual art work, theatre performance;
3. learn to understand and discriminate between humanities, creative arts and social science methodology, discourse and practice;
4. achieve a high level of presentation in assessed work + assignments (the Programme Handbook gives detailed guidance)

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1. Research Methods Module and Induction, plus use of the facilities in assignments and regular study;
2. Research Methods and Module study, as well as chosen assessed work topics (and possibly dissertation);
3. students tend to specialise for one Module and their dissertation in the field of their undergraduate background – but all students must study research methods of all five areas and must study/write assignment on at least one field outside their background (Module work);

Assessment

See above

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. skills of comparison and discrimination
2. adaptability, skills of rapid and critical development of new knowledge in allied or tangential fields to those already studied
3. development of oral articulacy
4. the ability to argue coherently (in writing and debate);
5. close and cooperative teamwork, especially in class discussions
6. consideration and encouragement of others' viewpoints;
7. clarity of purpose within a sometimes bewildering & exciting range of material;
8. independence of mind and self-development
9. the enjoyment of discovery
10. the ability to deploy personal experience-based knowledge and theoretical-text based knowledge to mutual benefit

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1. a large & varied diet of reading (etc) matter,
2. students begin from a base of some knowledge and much curiosity and have to adapt and 'grow' these rapidly;
3. seminar-based learning: students on this programme are self-selecting lively!
4. in group-work as well as assessed work, clarity is essential;
5. Core Module and Research Methods classes include the whole cohort (7-12 students): *esprit de corps* is quickly established;
6. because of 5 and 6 above, the ability to listen and encourage others is also essential;
7. many students have an idea from the start of where their specialism will go; others let this develop; the programme is designed to facilitate either mode;
8. by the time of the dissertation this is established (if not earlier);
9. inevitable in this interdisciplinary programme;
10. students (often mature) are encouraged to achieve a self-critical awareness of what intuition and experience has brought them

Assessment

All the above are assessed in assignment marking and reports, and those skills which appear most readily in class work are assessed in tutors' termly reports

Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.