

MA in Printing and Book Design History

For students entering in 2006

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading
Teaching Institution: The University of Reading
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Date of specification: October 2006
Programme Director: Paul Luna
Board of Studies: Typography & Graphic Communication, Board of Taught Postgraduate Studies
Accreditation: not applicable

Summary of programme aims

The programme focuses on the wide range of artefacts produced by methods of printing, from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, and investigates the nature, structure, design, manufacturing, distribution, use and cultural contexts of these artefacts: including books, printed ephemera, prints, newspapers, journals, jobbing printing and advertising. Printing processes, tools and machines and their history, letterform design history, typographic design history, the history of prints and book illustration, general book and publishing history, and the history of literacy are explored, based largely on the study of actual examples of the historic artefacts, tools and machines.

Transferable skills

The programme encourages the development of the following transferable skills:

- research
- critical analysis and coherent argument
- writing
- oral presentation
- handling of rare and precious artefacts.

Programme content

		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
TYMRM	<i>Research methods</i>	30	M
TYMBDC	<i>History of graphic communication</i>	30	M
TYMPBC	<i>20th century book design</i>	30	M
TYMBDD	<i>Dissertation</i>	90	M

Part-time/Modular arrangements

This programme can be followed part-time, over 24 months. All coursework apart from the dissertation is completed in Year 1; Year 2 is devoted to the dissertation. Other arrangements might be possible, by agreement with the Programme Director.

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 40 or above in module TYMBDD (dissertation). 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. 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. 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

Teaching is by means of lectures, seminars and workshops, artefact-based sessions in libraries or museums, demonstrations and tutorials. Assessment is based on the dissertation (weight 50%) and, depending on options selected, essays (typically three of 3,000-5,000 words) and other assignments.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a good undergraduate degree. In some cases, professional experience will be taken into consideration.

Admissions Tutor: Paul Luna

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 Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Departmental support includes an induction programme, a copy of the *Handbook for taught postgraduate programmes*, access to computers, working space, photocopiers and printers, and special collections of tools and equipment, research materials in the Department and in the University Library. The University is within easy access to libraries in London, Oxford and the M25 Consortium.

Career prospects

The programme is excellent preparation for further study at PhD level. It is also of use for teachers of higher education in the field, and for practising designers who want to broaden their historical understanding.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

Students may have the opportunity to take part in a field trip to Rome and Florence.* This will be for a student's interest and will not be credit-bearing. Students will have to bear the cost of travel, accommodation, food and entry to museums during the trip.

*Except in year 2003–04, when the trip will be to Amsterdam, Antwerp and the Hague.

Educational aims of the programme

The programme aims to offer a broad knowledge and understanding of the range of artefacts produced by various historical methods of printing, from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, and more specific knowledge of the early period of printing and of 19th-century developments in England and the Continent. A focus on the processes of design and construction addresses the methods of manufacturing, the economics of materials and production, and the uses of a wide range of artefacts: books, printed ephemera, prints, newspapers, journals, jobbing printing and advertising, along with printing tools and machines. The development of an understanding of the history of these includes: work in letterform design history (type and scripts), typographic design history, the history of prints and book illustration, general book trade and publishing history, and the history of literacy. As often as practical, study is based on actual examples of the historic artefacts, tools and machines. Current areas of research in the field are introduced by research-active staff.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

The history of relief, intaglio, planographic and stencil printing from their respective surfaces, and the advantages and disadvantages of these methods in the manufacture of printed artefacts. This includes the histories of printing presses, of the different printing processes, tools (including type) and materials, and the histories of the artefacts—books, ephemera, prints, journals, packaging and advertising. It also includes knowledge of the most important practitioners and artists, the treatises of practice, the most important individual artefacts.

Knowledge and understanding of methods and principles of the design of printed artefacts, including the purposes of design (communication by graphic means, education, persuasion) and the relationship of design to the uses of the artefacts.

Knowledge and understanding of the cultural contexts of printed artefacts, and of the limitations of working with fragile, incomplete and possibly unrepresentative materials from particular periods.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Lectures, seminars, artefact-based sessions, demonstrations and independent reading

Assessment: dissertation, written essays and other assignments

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:

- Formulate research topics that are original and of sufficiently limited scope to be investigated and completed in the time allotted
- Locate, assess and evaluate by demonstration of critical judgement both primary and secondary sources, as part of the response to specific research questions
- Develop methods of systematic visual observation of primary sources, informed by knowledge of printing processes, availability and costs of materials and processes, and the cultural contexts and uses of the finished artefacts
- Produce logical, structured and analytical written explanations of research questions, the evidence used, the methods employed, and how the evidence supports the arguments formulated in response to a research topic.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Research methods module of lectures, workshops and case studies, together with independent study directed by tutorial advice and oral and written feedback.

Assessment dissertation, written essays and other assignments

C. Practical skills – able to:

- Use basic word-processing software for the presentation of written work
- Identify the methods by which printed artefacts have been manufactured, and the materials used
- Handle rare and valuable tools and materials, including some understanding of their conservation needs

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Lectures, seminars, artefact-based sessions, demonstrations and independent reading

Assessment dissertation, written essays and other assignments

D. Transferable skills – able to:

- Take personal initiative and undertake independent study with limited tutorial guidance
- Solve problems by the formulation and application of appropriate methods
- Seek out evidence systematically and construct logical arguments
- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Manage time and meet deadlines
- Make constructive use of feedback

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Lectures, seminars, artefact-based sessions, demonstrations and independent reading

Assessment dissertation, written essays and other assignments

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.