MA in Theory and History of Typography & Graphic Communication
For students entering in 2006

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading
Teaching Institution: The University of Reading
Faculty of Arts and Humanities   Programme length: 12 months (FT)
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

This programme aims to provide students who are considering undertaking a higher degree by research in typography and graphic communication (and who may have graduated from related or other disciplines) with a broad historical and theoretical perspective, and specialist knowledge in particular areas. The programme combines elements from MA Information Design and MA in Printing and Book Design History. Its research module aims to introduce methods relevant to historical or theoretical approaches to the subject.

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

		Credits	Level
TYMRM	*Research methods*	30	M
TYMBDC	*History of graphic communication*	30	M
TYMIDC	*Information design: core module*	30	M
TYMTHD	*Dissertation*	90	M

Part-time/Modular arrangements

This programme can be followed part-time, over 24 months.

Progression requirements

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

Mark	Interpretation
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
Failing categories	
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 and a mark of 40 or above in module TYMTHD (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 will be by means of lectures, seminars and workshops, artefact-based sessions in libraries or museums, and self-directed study. Assessment will be based on the dissertation (weight 50%), essays, student presentations, 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: Margaret M. Smith

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, and easy access to libraries in London, Oxford and within 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 theoretical and 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:

- Information design as a complementary cluster of theoretical interests, and as a distinctive stance within design practice. The push from ergonomics, the behavioural sciences, 'consumerism', and notions of user-centredness in other design domains. Survey and review of the methods of enquiry associated with information design: from 'legibility' to 'usability'. Practical heuristics: the transformer and editing; criticism, alternatives, and tests; critical reviews. Texts and readers, designing for reading and action. Current arguments within information design. The contribution of language studies, including applied linguistics. Professional judgement and decision-making. Graphic support for decision-making. Designing as advocacy.

- Historical artefacts produced by various methods of printing, from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries. The theory of design, the methods of manufacturing (including printing tools and machines), the economics of materials and production, and the uses of a wide range of printed artefacts: books, printed ephemera, prints, newspapers, journals, jobbing printing and advertising. The history of these artefacts, including: 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 possible, study is based on actual examples of the historic artefacts, tools and machines.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
• The emergence of information design as a distinctive stance towards the cluster of issues linking theorists with practitioners. Practical problem-solving in communication design and the push from ergonomics, the behavioural sciences, 'consumerism', and notions of user-centredness in other design domains. Survey and review of the methods of enquiry associated with information design: from 'legibility' to 'usability'. Practical heuristics: the transformer and editing; criticism, alternatives, and tests; critical reviews. Texts and readers, designing for reading and action. Current arguments within information design. The contribution of language studies, including applied linguistics. Professional judgement and decision-making. Graphic support for decision-making. Designing as advocacy. • The history of printing methods, 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. 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 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.	Lectures, seminars, artefact-based sessions, demonstrations and independent reading *Assessment:* written essays, oral presentations, assignments in information design core module, and dissertation

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
• Formulate research topics that are original and of sufficiently limited scope to be investigated and completed in the time allotted	Research methods module of lectures/seminars, workshops and case studies, together with independent study directed by tutorial advice and oral and written feedback.
• 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.	*Assessment* written essays, oral presentations, assignments in information design core module, and dissertation

C. Practical skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
• Use basic word-processing software for the presentation of written work	Lectures, seminars, artefact-based sessions, demonstrations and independent reading
• 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	*Assessment* written essays, oral presentations, assignments in information design core module, and dissertation

D. Transferable skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
• Take personal initiative and undertake independent study with limited tutorial guidance	Lectures, seminars, student presentations, artefact-based sessions, demonstrations and independent reading
• 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	*Assessment* written essays, oral presentations, assignments in information design core module, and dissertation
• Manage time and meet deadlines	
• Make constructive use of feedback	