

MA by Research/Postgraduate Diploma in Television Studies For students entering in 2009

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Programme length:	12 months f/t (24 months p/t)
Programme Director:	Professor Jonathan Bignell
Date of specification:	July 2009
Board of Studies:	Film, Theatre and Television
Accreditation:	not applicable

Summary of programme aims

The MA by Research in Television Studies aims to enable students

- to build on their undergraduate studies, deepening their knowledge and theoretical understanding of a selected topic area in Television Studies;
- to enhance existing skills in the analysis of television and broaden their knowledge and understanding of their chosen subject area and its methods;
- to develop their abilities in critically evaluating primary and secondary source material;
- to work closely with a specialist supervisor or supervisory team who will direct and support their research activities;
- to develop their research skills, including IT skills, and prepare them, where appropriate, for research degrees.

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to research, communication of complex material (both written and oral), information handling, time management, problem-solving, self-directed learning and use of information technology. The MA by Research in Television Studies will in addition help students develop skills such as: synthesising information from a range of sources, providing a coherent overview of and analysing and critically evaluating competing theories and interpretations; planning and producing a substantial piece of research (and in some cases critical practice) under supervision; presentational skills; a range of research skills.

Programme content

The MA by Research in Television Studies combines three taught modules with independent research (either in the form of a written dissertation or, for suitably qualified students, research through practice in the discipline which involves the combination of a practical project with documentation). In the Autumn term, students follow the core module on Critical Debates in Film, Theatre & Television along with a disciplinary specific module on Television Analysis. In both Autumn and Spring terms, students also

follow the core taught module in Research Methods. Students will develop their independent research throughout the year, supported by regular meetings with their supervisor(s) and in the Summer Term, dissertation seminars attended by staff and students.

MA by Research in Television Studies (180 credits):

Mod Code	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory Core modules</i>			
FTMCD	Critical Debates in Film, Theatre & Television	30	7
FTMTT	Television Analysis	30	7
FTMRM	Research Methods	30	7
FTMDS	Dissertation <i>or</i>		7
FTMDP	Dissertation with Critical Practice	90	7

Postgraduate Diploma in Television Studies (120 credits):

Students who complete FTMCD, FTMTT and FTMRM (30 credits each) and submit a dissertation of half the length normally required or an equivalent in research by practice (90 credits) are eligible for the Postgraduate Diploma.

Part-time/Modular arrangements

Students taking the MA over 24 months take the core taught modules in the Autumn and Spring terms of their first year. They will begin to plan their Dissertation/Dissertation with Critical Practice during Summer Year One and will continue to work under supervision on their Dissertation/ Dissertation with Critical Practice until it is submitted at the end of their second year.

Part-time arrangements for Diplomas will be made as and when necessary.

Progression requirements

N/A

Summary of teaching and assessment

The programme is taught by a mixture of individual tutorials, research training and research seminars with student presentations and structured discussion.

Assessment for MA by Research in Television Studies

The Critical Debates in Film, Theatre & Television module is assessed by one 5,000 word essay as is the module in Television Analysis. The Research Methods module is assessed through three written assignments (weighted at 20%, 40% and 40% respectively). The pass mark for all modules is 50%. Failed essays must be resubmitted by 1 September. A failed dissertation must be resubmitted within one year.

MA By Research in Television Studies

- 2 x 5,000 word essays at 30 credits each

- 1 x written proposal for the dissertation; 1 x literature survey and bibliography on a topic chosen by the student; 1 x short essay on an aspect of research methodology at 30 credits in total
- 1 x 20,000 word dissertation (or equivalent dissertation with critical practice) at 90 credits

Postgraduate Diploma in Television Studies

- 2 x 5,000 words essays at 30 credits each
- 1 x written proposal for the dissertation; 1 x literature survey and bibliography on a topic chosen by the student; 1 x short essay on an aspect of research methodology at 30 credits in total
- 1 x 10,000 word dissertation (or equivalent dissertation with critical practice) at 90 credits

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 MA by Research in Television Studies students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the Dissertation/ Dissertation with Critical Practice. 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 not exceed 55 credits.*

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

For Postgraduate Diplomas

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma in Television Studies 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 not exceed 55 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 awarded eligible for a Merit.

*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.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained at least a 2:1 degree in a discipline related to their chosen research topic, or equivalent.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Alastair Phillips

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 Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and includes the Careers Advisory Service, the Disability Advisory Service, Accommodation Advisory Team, Student Financial Support, Counselling and Study Advisors. Student Services has a Helpdesk available for enquiries made in person or online (www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk), or by calling the central enquiry number on (0118) 378 5555. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions on everything from accommodation to finance. The Carrington Building is open between 8:30 and 17:30 Monday to Thursday (17:00 Friday and during vacation periods). Further information can be found in the Student Diary (given to students at enrolment) or on the Student website (www.reading.ac.uk/student).

Department of Film, Theatre & Television MA students receive a Handbook, which gives details of the Programme, guidance on study skills such as note-taking and essay writing, and information about staff, facilities, and sources of specialised help within the University, such as the Study Skills Advisor and the Counselling Service. Academic feedback and guidance is given through detailed written comments, and academic and personal support is provided through the personal tutor system. The Department has a range of film/video viewing rooms and specialist studio and theatre spaces for practical theatre and multi-media performance, together with extensive technical facilities for small scale production in theatre and film/video, including digital video equipment. It also houses an extensive collection of films and television programmes. The Library, which has buildings on both the Whiteknights and Bulmershe campuses, has an extensive

collection of printed materials as well as electronic databases. The Bulmershe Library holds one of the country's leading academic collections of film and modern theatre material. Specialist subject librarians are available to give students advice and guidance to library resources.

Career prospects

Over the years, students who have followed MA programmes in the Department of Film, Theatre & Television have taken up a wide range of careers. Graduates have found that the specific as well as the transferable skills developed by the programme enable them to enter many fields of work including theatre, education, publishing, journalism, the media, management, administration, public relations and advertising, as well as many jobs with no subject-specific relationship. Some go on to further study at PhD level and obtain academic and academic-related jobs. A Reading MA provides graduates with a range of communication, analytical, practical and social skills that will serve them in excellent stead in the world of work.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

N/A

Educational aims of the programme

The central aim of the programme is to build on students' undergraduate studies, deepening their knowledge and theoretical understanding of some central issues in their chosen field of study in film, theatre or television. It aims to enhance existing skills in critical and theoretical analysis of film, theatre or television and broaden knowledge and understanding of the subject(s) and their methods. It aims to develop students' abilities in critically evaluating primary and secondary source material, and to develop research skills and prepare students, where appropriate, for research degrees. It aims to produce students who can express this understanding in speech and writing (and in some instances also through practical work).

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A range of critical and theoretical approaches appropriate to the student's chosen topic in Television Studies.2. Current debates in the discipline.3. Methods of textual analysis appropriate to the discipline.4. Selected special areas in the discipline.5. Ways in which social, cultural and historical contexts inform texts and productions in the discipline.6. In certain cases, how critical and theoretical perspectives can inform practical work in the discipline.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of 1-5 are gained through supervision and feedback on coursework essays and dissertation and associated reading and research, and also seminars and student presentations. 6 is based on group and/or individual practical work with accompanying documentation, under staff supervision (for those with prior experience of production in the discipline). Both supervision and the taught modules offer support for student learning in critical and theoretical perspectives on the discipline (1-3), textual analysis and the context for such work (3-5).</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding are tested through a combination of coursework essays and dissertation or, for those with prior experience of practice, individual practical work with accompanying documentation.</p>
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Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Capacity for independent, sophisticated and theoretically-aware textual analysis and research.2. Ability to synthesise information from a range of sources and provide a coherent overview of competing theories, positions and interpretations.3. Ability to reflect on one's own ideas and those of others4. Apply conceptual frameworks and methods of analysis to new contexts and material.5. Ability to plan and produce a substantial piece of research under supervision.6. In some cases, ability to integrate critical thinking with creative work.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Intellectual skills are acquired through independent reading and viewing (1, 2), preparation for and discussion in tutorials, research seminars and in essay writing (1, 2, 3, 4), essay feedback (2, 3, 4), supervised dissertation or practical work and documentation (5 and 6).</p> <p><i>Assessment</i> 1 – 3 are assessed both formatively and summatively in essays. 1- 4 are assessed formatively through tutorial and seminar discussion and essay feedback. 5 and 6 are assessed formatively and summatively through supervised work on the dissertation or practical work with documentation.</p>
<p>C. Practical skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The ability to criticise and formulate interpretations of texts in the discipline.2. An ability to engage in critical argument using relevant theoretical approaches3. Research skills4. A knowledge of appropriate conventions in the presentation of written work5. An ability to relate studies in the discipline to cultural and social issues6. In some cases, an ability to express critical understanding through exploratory practice in the discipline and to critically evaluate work produced	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>1 – 5 are developed in tutorials, seminars, coursework essays and essay feedback. 6 is developed through practical work and feedback on practice and associated documentation.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i> 1 - 5 are assessed through formative and summative essays. 6 is assessed both formatively and summatively through practical work and accompanying documentation.</p>

D. Transferable skills

1. Effective communication in speech and writing
2. Critical analysis and coherent arguments
3. Critical evaluation of evidence and argument
4. The ability to find and use relevant information resources
5. Time-management skills and the ability to manage personal workloads.
6. A creative approach to problem-solving
7. Giving oral presentations.
8. Undertaking self-directed, independent work.
9. Using IT and other scholarly resources.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Transferable skills are developed through tutorial and seminar discussions, seminar presentations, the preparation and writing of essay assignments, feedback on written work, research for and writing the dissertation. 5, 6 and 8 are also developed in those cases where students with prior experience undertake a practical project with documentation rather than a dissertation.

Assessment

1 – 5 and 10 are formatively and summatively assessed through written coursework essays, seminar presentations and dissertation (or practical project with documentation).

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.