

**MA in Book Design (full-time)**  
**For students entering in 2017/8**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Programme length:	1 year
Date of specification:	11/Sep/2017
Programme Director:	Mr Gerry Leonidas
Board of Studies:	Typography and Graphic Communication Board of
Taught Postgraduate Studies	

**Summary of programme aims**

The aim of this programme is to provide a thorough grounding in principles and methods of book design, incorporating study of historical and theoretical issues, as well as practical learning. Book design allows students to explore how authorial and editorial needs can be effectively mediated for the reader through an understanding of design principles and technical production issues. The programme also aims to give an understanding of the constraints and potential of current technology, and equip graduates with skills relevant to the practice of book design. The practical aspects of the course are provided by a number of projects that range from explorations of typographic detail to the design of complete books and series, and the opportunity to handle professional assignments for real clients. In all of these, relevance to a real-life environment is provided by the close links our teaching staff have with leading UK publishers, and by the proximity of the Design & Print Unit's facilities for pre-press and printing.

**Transferable skills**

The programme encourages development of transferable skills including:

- effective communication in speech and writing
- critical analysis and coherent argument
- researching and evaluating evidence
- undertaking self-directed independent work
- managing substantial projects
- using IT for research
- using IT for complex design tasks

**Programme content**

Code	Module	Credits	Level
TYMPBP	Book design: practice	90	7
TYMPDS	Dissertation	60	7
TYMPBC	Book design: core module	30	7

**Part-time or modular arrangements**

Part-time study lasts two years, with the practical module, TYMPBP, divided into two tracks. Full-time students undertake work on track A and track B simultaneously; part-time students undertake one track in each year. Assignments on the core module, TYMPBC, are undertaken in the first year. The dissertation module TYMPDS is normally undertaken during the second year.

**Progression requirements**

**Summary of Teaching and Assessment**

Teaching will be by means of lectures and seminars, oral presentations and writing assignments, studio sessions, demonstrations and critiques. Lectures and seminars run throughout the Autumn and Spring terms with some seminars in the Summer term; practical projects run in all three terms. (Small deviations from this schedule may be made to accommodate visiting members of staff.)

**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

To pass the MA students must gain an average mark of 50 overall. 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 60 or more for practice (TYMPBP) and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction.

Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for 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 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 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.

### **Admission requirements**

The programme is appropriate for qualified or experienced typographers and graphic designers, or those from related fields who can demonstrate a keen sensitivity to book design. Applicants should hold a Bachelor's degree in design or a related field. The Department reserves the right to request evidence of relevant experience of skills, particularly in the case of candidates with a first degree from non-design-related fields. In the case of applicants without a first degree, evidence of relevant professional experience should be provided. We may ask for material evidence (e.g. of writing or design work) from any candidate.

**Admissions Tutor:** Dr Ruth Blacksell

### **Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support teams and IT Services. 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 Support Centres. If a student has a general enquiry and is unsure where to seek help, they should visit their Support Centre. There are five Support Centres across the University, including one based at the London Road Campus. The Support Centre will be able to advise on matters such as extenuating circumstances, module selection, suspensions, withdrawals, timetable queries and transferring programme. The Support Centre will also be able to signpost students to Carrington building where other University services related to disability, financial support, counselling and wellbeing, accommodation and careers can be found. More information on what student services are available can be found here: <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials>.

With particular regard to the programme, the Department of Typography runs introductory sessions covering both programme-related and health & safety issues. There are dedicated sessions on resources in the University Library; on Departmental collections and resources; and on research skills with regard to our field. New students are provided with a copy of the Department's Handbook for taught postgraduate programmes (also available online) which covers general issues, resources available to students, programme-specific matters, and examinations issues. In terms of support for learning, the University has a number of outstanding collections. These include a major collection of archives of British publishing houses including Bodley Head, Hogarth Press, Longman, Macmillan, Routledge, and Chatto & Windus; the Mycroft Type Collection; the Rickards and John Lewis collections of ephemera; the Otto & Marie Neurath Isotype Collection; the Hans Schmoller collection of twentieth-century type specimens; the Soulby collection of printed ephemera from the 1820s; and the Icograda poster collection. Lectures and seminars last either one or two hours, and are supported by a variety of aids

(electronic media, slides, handouts), depending on the subject and the speaker. Students are also offered a number of optional lecture series (from other Master's or final year undergraduate modules) which may enrich their understanding of the subject. We hold regular postgraduate seminars and staff research briefings, where research issues can be discussed in a more formal environment. We provide a small number of computers dedicated to postgraduates, and employ a part-time IT support person who may help with relevant issues. Building appropriate computer skills is an important aspect of the programme, and is supported by tutorials and hands-on sessions which focus on the applications relevant to book design (within Module TYMPBP). The Department enjoys particularly close links with the St Bride Printing Library and Oxford University Press. We maintain informal links with design institutions all over the world: in Europe, the US, South America, Australia and India. We have links with a number of professional and scholarly institutions including Pira International, the Rare Book School in Charlottesville, the Information Design Association, SHARP, the Printing Historical Society and the Communication Research Institute of Australia.

### **Career prospects**

Graduates of the MA in Book Design can be expected to find demand for their skills in print and electronic publishing, corporate identity, information design, and graphic design. Previous graduates from other MA programmes offered by the Department are working as employees of design consultants, digital type foundries, and as freelance designers.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

There are no formal arrangements in place.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

##### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

1. a broad historical and theoretical perspective on book design and production-related issues
2. the influence of technical developments on book design and production
3. the history of letterforms from classical Roman times to the 20th century
4. specialist knowledge in particular areas of either the history of book design or of issues such as evaluation and user-centred design

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- lectures, seminars, and tutorials
- (modules TYMPBC & TYMPBP)

##### *Assessment*

One 3,000-word essay or equivalent on historical, theoretical, or practical aspects of book design; one report  
10,000 - 13,000 word dissertation

#### **Skills and other attributes**

##### **B. Intellectual skills - *able to*:**

1. communicate effectively in speech: in particular discussing concepts and procedures, and presenting coherent arguments
2. communicate effectively in writing: in particular composing documents which investigate, analyse, and argue critically about relevant issues
3. research and evaluate primary and secondary source material

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- tutorials with critical discussion sessions
- presentations on specific subjects
- review sessions for written project and dissertation proposals
- support for structuring written arguments
- feedback sessions on written work
- sessions on research methods
- sessions on dissertation preparation
- resource lists

##### *Assessment*

One 3,000-word essay or equivalent on historical, theoretical, or practical aspects of book design; one report  
10,000 - 13,000 word dissertation

##### **C. Practical skills - *able to*:**

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

1. Handle the variety of tasks involved in book design (especially understanding user needs and production possibilities)
2. Undertake design and research tasks in a self-motivated and self directed way
3. use IT for complex design tasks (designing, typesetting, and proofing)
4. use IT for research

- seminars and tutorials (Module TYMPBP) including feedback sessions on practical design work
- sessions on research methods, electronic resources (Module TYMPDS)
- online resource lists , support sessions

#### *Assessment*

submission of a series of book design projects including the submission of workfiles

#### **D. Transferable skills - *able to:***

1. communicate effectively in speech and writing
2. undertake independent research
3. use IT to conduct research
4. undertake self-directed independent work
5. use IT effectively for substantial design projects

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

- sessions on research methods and dissertation preparation
- tutorials with critical discussion sessions
- presentations on specific subjects
- review sessions for written project and dissertation proposals
- support for structuring written arguments
- feedback sessions on written work

#### *Assessment*

One 3,000-word essay or equivalent on historical, theoretical, or practical aspects of book design; one report

10,000 - 13,000 word dissertation

submission of a series of book design projects including the submission of workfiles

**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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**