MA in Book Design
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
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 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

		Credits	*Level*
TYMPBP	*Book design: practice*	90	M
TYMPBD	*Dissertation*	60	M
TYMPBC	*Book design: core module*	30	M

Part-time/Modular arrangements
Part-time study lasts two years, with module TYMPBC (taught seminars, essays) completed in the first year. Module TYMPBP (practical projects) should be commenced during the first year. Module TYMPBD (dissertation) can be undertaken during the second year.

Progression requirements
For full-time students, module TYMPBC is a co-requisite for modules TYMPBP and TYMPBD. For part-time students, module TYMPBC is a co-requisite for module TYMPBP, and a pre-requisite for module TYMPBD.

Summary of teaching and assessment
Teaching will be by means of lectures and seminars, oral presentations and writing assignments, demonstrations, and critiques. Both series run throughout the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. (Small deviations from this schedule may be made to accommodate visiting members of staff.)

The University of Reading's Masters qualifications are as follows:

70%–100%	Distinction
60%–69%	Merit
50%–59%	Pass
0%–49%	Fail

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 overall and have no mark below 40 in modules TYMPBD and TYMPBP. 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 practice 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 practice 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 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.

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; acceptance to the programme may be recommended by the Department, but rests with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

Applicants for whom English is not a mother tongue should provide evidence of fluency in English, in accordance with The University of Reading's published guidelines for students at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

Admissions Tutor: Professor 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.

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

Students may have the opportunity to take part in a field trip to study Roman and Renaissance letterforms in 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.

Educational aims of the programme

The Department aims to:

- provide an integrated education that develops a range of transferable skills (intellectual, visual, technical, and social) through the study of typography and graphic communication
- provide high quality teaching, informed by research, of historical, theoretical and practical aspects of typography and graphic communication;
- develop students' confidence in their ability to work and learn effectively both independently and in co-operation with others;
- provide students with the knowledge and experience necessary for further academic and professional study;
- provide a supportive learning environment where students will be stimulated to develop their own interests within the broad field of enquiry offered by typography and graphic communication.

Specifically, the MA in Book Design aims 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 and related editorial design.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
a broad historical and theoretical perspective on book design and production-related issues	lectures, seminars, and tutorials (modules TYMPBC & TYMPBP)
the influence of technical developments on book design and production	*Assessment*
the history of letterforms from classical Roman times to the 20th century	→ two 4,000-word essays or equivalent on historical, theoretical, or practical aspects of book design
specialist knowledge in particular areas of *either* the history of book design *or* of issues such as evaluation and user-centred design	10,000 word dissertation

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
communicate effectively in speech: in particular discussing concepts and procedures, and presenting coherent arguments communicate effectively in writing: in particular composing documents which investigate, analyse, and argue critically about relevant issues research and evaluate primary and secondary source material	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* two 4,000-word essays or equivalent on historical, theoretical, or practical aspects of book design 10,000 word dissertation

C. Practical skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
Handle the variety of tasks involved in book design (especially understanding user needs and production possibilities) Undertake design and research tasks in a self-motivated and self directed way use IT for complex design tasks (designing, typesetting, and proofing) use IT for research	seminars and tutorials (Module TYMPBP) including feedback sessions on practical design work sessions on research methods, electronic resources (Module TYMPBD) online resource lists , support sessions *Assessment* submission of a series of book design projects including the submission of workfiles

D. Transferable skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
communicate effectively in speech and writing undertake independent research use IT to conduct research undertake self-directed independent work use IT effectively for substantial design projects	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* two 4,000-word essays or equivalent on historical, theoretical, or practical aspects of book design 10,000 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 processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.