Programme specification
MA Mass Communications

School: Performance and Media Production
Entry in: September 2017
Awarding Institution: York St John University
Teaching Institution: York St John University
Delivery Location: York St John University
Programme/s Accredited by:
Exit Awards:
- Postgraduate Diploma Mass Communications
- Postgraduate Certificate Mass Communications

UCAS Code / GTTR / Other: Not applicable
Joint Honours Combinations: Not applicable
QAA Benchmark Group(s): Masters
Mode/s of Study:
- Full-time for 1 year
- Part-time for 2 years
Language of Study: English

Introduction and Special Features

MA Mass Communications allows you the opportunity to develop creative concepts and project ideas for mass communication and to put these into practice in a collaborative and/or individual context. Project ideas are developed by you, in negotiation with your tutor. Projects may be rooted in traditional practice in moving image, still image, audio and text but should embrace new developments and technologies in and for mass communication. The modules on the MA programme are focussed around your project idea and proposals for further research; modules will contribute to the conceptual and practical progress of your project and the intellectual interrogation of your ideas. All projects will address the issue of mass communications in changing global contexts.

In keeping with an existing and vibrant postgraduate ethos within the School and subject area the MA Mass Communications will challenge, enhance and develop your experiences and understandings which will then be applied to practice in semester 2. Your research skills and their application will be developed in a Research Project module to allow for individual and/or collaborative modes of research.

It is possible for you to work on an individual project basis or to collaborate with each other. Thus you will be able to develop work and knowledge in a single mode of mass communication (web, video, audio, etc) or to maintain a focus on multi/convergent/trans media practice.

The MA programme allows for collaboration with other students on the MA programmes in Documentary Production and Film Production. This allows for cross curricula project activity and knowledge sharing with a community of postgraduate students in Media and Communications. In practice this means you could integrate the project work of another student undertaking (for instance) Documentary Production within your own practice or produce your own independent project. Conversely you could collaborate with other MA students and consider their practice and/or critical engagement with a project as part of your Research Project; for instance, a student keen to extend their knowledge of concept and practice within Mass Communications could engage with a fiction project as a production designer undertaking...
practical activity and utilising the research project module to critically and intellectually engage with this process.

Special features of the programme:

- **Flexibility.** The MA can be taken part-time or full-time.
- **Flexible Projects and Research.** You get to pitch and negotiate your own project briefs and research projects.
- **Collaborative Practice.** The MA seeks to engender collaboration through working on a project and research basis with other Mass Communications students, undergraduate students and the wider community.
- **Staff.** You will work with a range of academic staff who will support you throughout your MA. You will also work with technical staff to develop your practice.
- **Visits and Field Trips.** Field trips are a distinctive feature of the programme with past students invited to attend trips/events such as the Sheffield Documentary Film Festival, the Berlin Film Festival, Aesthetica Short Film Festival and Media City. (International trips will be dependent on student visas).
- **Visiting Speakers.** The school benefits from considerable industry connections and a regular programme of visiting speakers from established feature film directors, festival organisers through to entrepreneurial SMEs.
- **Showcasing Work.** At the end of the programme students have the opportunity to showcase their work to clients, industry partners, friends, family, colleagues and the general public as part of the School’s ‘Create’ festival which is a celebration of all the work produced in the School. There will also be an on-going online presence of your work.

## Admissions Criteria

The postgraduate programmes are open to graduates and to those of you with equivalent professional experience. You will be interviewed and must produce and discuss the concept which you wish to execute as part of the MA programme.

In addition to the University’s general entry criteria for postgraduate study, you must have:

- an honours degree at 2ii or above in a related subject  
  OR  
- applications are welcomed from those of you working in a professional media environment or with extensive experience of aspects of Mass Communication practice.

For all candidates there will be an interview and consideration of a portfolio and a pitch. The portfolio should include evidence of a specialism in Mass Communication practice. The pitch should be for an original idea demonstrating conceptual challenge and an awareness of logistics. Students may develop alternative proposals for development and production during their MA programme. Arrangements for interview by telephone or via the internet for overseas students are possible where appropriate although all candidates are encouraged to attend for interview in person wherever possible.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see [https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/](https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements)).
If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning (APL/APEL). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

**Progression Routes**

Students who have completed the BA Mass Communications will have direct entry onto the MA programme subject to successful completion of their undergraduate studies, normally at 2:2 or above.

Students from the School will be guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum criteria noted above.

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**Programme Aims**

The MA Mass Communications programme aims to:

- deepen your knowledge of the production and reception of mass communication artefacts;
- extend your critical and analytical skills in their approach to the practice of mass communication and journalistic contexts for a mass audience;
- engage your critical and creative skills in creating project briefs;
- encourage collaboration with others in the creative and practical realisation of mass communication projects;
- produce graduates contributing to the arts and creative industries on a regional, national and international level;
- engender your research skills and research practice.

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**Programme Learning Outcomes**

**Level M / FHEQ L7**

On successful completion of the Postgraduate Diploma you will have demonstrated the following:

**A: Knowledge and Understanding**

1. An ability to critically evaluate current practice in Mass Communication.
2. Critical awareness of current issues, agendas and methodologies in global Mass Communication practice and research.
3. Systematic understanding of advanced knowledge relating to creative and reflective strategies in current forms of Mass Communication.
4. Synthesise knowledge to fully articulate the relationship between theory and practice.

**B: Cognitive/Thinking Skills**

1. Critical and creative reflection both in and on current Mass Communications Ability to apply and critically evaluate new knowledge and skills in developing new and revised directions relative and appropriate to existing practice.
2. Critical and creative development of current practice and analysis.

**C: Practical/Professional Skills**

1. Critically evaluate, select and apply professional production processes to individual practice. Identify modes of professional practice and apply them to collaboration in Mass Communication practice.
2. Selection and critical evaluation of strategies to communicate effectively and clearly in appropriate contexts about own practices and knowledge.
3. Debate ethical issues as they relate to practice. Use and evaluate appropriate Health and Safety protocols.

D: Key Transferable Skills
1. Ability to critically evaluate your own creative and critical achievements and that of others.
2. Self-direction and effective decision making in constructing creative situations in production contexts.
3. Independent learning and the ability to work in a way that ensures continuing professional development.
4. Reflect on approaches to professional relationships.

E: On successful completion of the MA, you will, in addition to the above, be able to:
1. Design, conduct, analyse and disseminate an extended project from inception to completion either individually or as a member of a team.
2. Individually communicate effectively and clearly the processes and outcomes of an extended project.

Programme Structure

MMZ001 Mass Communication Project Development: Provides you with skills and knowledge to successfully plan for and develop your practice led projects in semester 2.

MMZ002 Contemporary Mass Communication Contexts: Considers the contemporary theoretical terrain as it relates to the contexts of production and reception. A core element of this module is the development of MA level research skills.

MMZ003 Project Realisation: Allows you to produce your own work or to work in collaboration with each other. You may engage assistance from other MA students, Undergraduate students or the wider York St John University community.

MMZ004 Mass Communications Research Project: You will have the opportunity to choose to undertake a research project taking a theoretical and/or contextual approach to concepts developed in earlier and concurrent modules. The research project could be used to collaborate with other students on departmental MA programmes. For example a Mass Communications student with an interest in fiction production could seek to work with an MA Film Production student on their production design and conduct a research project into this field, analysing their own practice.

The programme runs from September to September (either 1 (FT) or 2 (PT) years). All practice based work will have to be underway by the end of semester 2 of the year in which this module runs. Academic staff will be fully available until the end of June with named supervisory tutors available throughout the summer period and scheduled reviews of practical material by the specific tutors at pre-arranged times. The technical team will also be available at pre-arranged times.

You will be provided with a named tutor as a point of consistent contact throughout the programme, this will be a member of the core MA staff team. You will have access to generic VLE material available to all MA and BA students; in addition to being a useful source of information this will further embed a sense of a broad community of learners and practitioners. During the induction process you will be introduced to School and University processes and
procedures. Those of you wishing to study on a part-time basis will engage in one induction at the start of your programme of study. There will be an additional session for the intake of full-time students at the start of a part-time students’ second year. This will involve a discussion led by part-time students on your projects. This is to ensure full integration of both part and full-time students throughout.

**Modules for the Programme**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>FHEQ</th>
<th>YSJ Level</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Status of Module*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MMZ001</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mass Communication Project Development</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMZ002</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Contemporary Mass Communication Contexts</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMZ003</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Project Realisation</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMZ004</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mass Communications Research Project</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>C</td>
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*C*: Compulsory, **CP**: Compulsory for progression to the next level, **CA**: Compulsory for award, **O**: option or **E**: elective.

**Full Time Route**

Commensurate with the nature of differing forms of mass communication practice, delivery will be responsive to patterns dictated by project activity. Formal face-to-face delivery will take place towards the start of the degree programme with the majority of this form of delivery concluded by the end of the first semester. This is to allow for individual tutorial support as the practical and theoretical strands develop. Regular project meetings will continue to support the development of the major project activity and to ensure unity amongst collaborative teams. You will engage in the process of project development in Mass Communications Project Development via the sharing of concepts. Contemporary Mass Communication Contexts will provide a theoretical core to shape ideas and potential practice methodologies and concepts. As the projects develop from idea to realisation Project Realisation will take a more reflexive form allowing you to consider the formal implications of the theoretical concepts interrogated. The process of putting the concept into practice will then begin with scheduling of activity being debated between yourself and supervising staff. Project meetings will be both individual and group to ensure the continued collaborative dimension of practice. The Mass Communications Research Project will be outlined at the start of the programme of study with a formal proposal being submitted at the start of the second semester; this early submission is to allow for your refinement of the idea prior to the commencement of your project.

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<tr>
<th>SEMESTER 1</th>
<th>SEMESTER 2</th>
<th>SEMESTER 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MMZ001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mass Communication Project Development (60 credits)</td>
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<td>MMZ002</td>
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<td>Contemporary Mass Communication Contexts (30 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMZ003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Realisation (60 credits CA)</td>
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<td>MMZ004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mass Communications Research Project (30 credits)</td>
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**Part-Time Route**

You would undertake your project activity during their second year of study, but with planning processes occurring during the first year. This is reflected in maintaining an early start for Mass Communication Project Development and the extended time available for Project Realisation. This approach recognises the time involved in concept development and the subsequent
practice of executing the project when you face pressures external to your study. Your initial taught activity will be the same as full-time students. The assessment deadlines for Mass Communication Project Development and Contemporary Mass Communication Contexts will be extended to accommodate the work that will take a significant amount of time, the planning of the project work and the commensurate reflexive work. This deadline will be in time for the end of year examination board. You will submit your research project proposal by May of their first year of study. This will allow for an equivalent amount of refinement as the full-time students. You can then begin your research project over the summer at the end of your first year of study and use the extended time to complete your work.

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<th>SEM 1</th>
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<th>SEM 4</th>
<th>SEM 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>MMZ001 Mass Communication Development Project (60 credits)</td>
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<td>MMZ002 Contemporary Mass Communication Contexts (30 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMZ003 Project Realisation (60 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMZ004 Mass Communications Research Project (30 credits)</td>
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**Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The programme has been designed to meet the needs of those of you who have just finished undergraduate programmes, those of you who wish to progress from BA Mass Communications and those of you returning to education. Programme delivery will utilise a blended approach incorporating tutor led sessions, group work and individual tutorials, SOL and learning supported by VLEs.

The programme is concerned with ensuring that you have the opportunity to experience a variety of teaching and learning strategies across the modules offered. These are structured to facilitate successful achievement of the learning outcomes of each module.

You will be provided with a range of teaching and learning strategies across the modules, including:

- Reflective learning
- Independent learning
- Collaborative learning
- Facilitated learning

This process will be achieved through the use of a range of teaching and learning methods, including workshops, seminar discussions, supervised projects and supported VLE learning. It is anticipated that semesters will be divided between periods of intense activity (in practice based activity) and periods of independent reflection, supported by specific tasks, technician support SOL, reading and proactive use of VLE (including forums, discussion groups, web publishing of documents). This structure is informed by the inherent and varied nature of forms of Mass Communication.
This process will be achieved by the use of a wide and varied range of teaching methods, including:

- lectures
- demonstrations
- seminars
- individual and group tutorials
- group and individual presentations
- visiting speakers/lecturers
- use of audio-visual material
- use of e-learning
- use of appropriate IT
- workshops
- supported open learning

The programme recognises your status as a graduate student and, therefore places a significant emphasis on your independent learning. The programme thus aims to provide an environment in which you are encouraged to take responsibility for your role in managing your learning and outcomes.

The programme will be seeking application from individuals from a variety of media and communications backgrounds and will actively seek to foster modes of group/team learning, in which knowledge, skills, and practical and critical experience can be shared and exchanged. This will emerge from the existing requirement for collaboration as an inherent facet of the production of particular mass communication artefacts.

As noted above in relation to teaching and learning the collaborative nature of the projects undertaken means that you learn from each other. Collegiate learning provides opportunities to learn theories and practices from each other, and you will also learn about working together, which leads onto related professional strategies. You are encouraged to extend collaboration to work with other MA and BA students on additional project activity. This is most evident in Project Realisation and the potential lines of enquiry for the research project. Whilst group work is an essential part of the MA’s pedagogy, you are assessed individually on your research into and reflection on process. This focus allows for creative risk taking in concept, approach and group dynamic.

The programme is underpinned by a requirement to engage in self-reflective learning, as a means of locating your own creative practice within a broader professional context. It will also facilitate an understanding of your own learning processes and their relationship with and to other creative industries.

**Supported Open Learning (SOL)**

In this programme, 'supported open learning' will take a variety of forms, including:

- Project activity during technician supported production time.
- Project activity during directed supported production time.
- Research and reading, supported by module readers, recommended texts, bibliographies and other module information provided on-line.
- Maintaining a reflective journal/production log, supported by in-module explorations of methodologies of reflection.
- Documenting your own practice.
- Contributing to module VLE discussion groups.
- Analysing and evaluating personal work and that of others (students and professionals).
SOL activities on modules draw on a ‘blended learning’ model, combining face-to-face, peer-to-peer, independent and virtual activities as appropriate.

**VLE**

Full use will be made of VLEs as a central part of the programme’s Learning and Teaching strategy. VLEs are to be used not just as a means to access programme information and module handbooks but in terms of the full learning and teaching possibilities which they offer. For example:

- Discussion forums
- On-line archiving of student work and documentations
- Opportunity to host public journals
- Symposia

**Assessment Modes**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>MMZ001</td>
<td>Mass Communication Project Development</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMZ002</td>
<td>Contemporary Mass Communication Contexts</td>
<td>Essay and Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMZ003</td>
<td>Project Realisation</td>
<td>Negotiated Project and Viva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMZ004</td>
<td>Mass Communications Research Project</td>
<td>Negotiated Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will be provided with on-going formative feedback throughout modules, via seminar discussions, workshops and via on-going practice and project work. All modes of assessment will comply with the School guidelines to ensure parity of experience. This will include electronic submission of materials via the VLE.

**Progression and Graduation Requirements**

The University’s [general regulations for postgraduate awards](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-A1.pdf) apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section.

Marks from the module MMZ004 will be used in classification borderline cases.

**Internal and External Reference Points**

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- York St John University Key Objectives 2012-2015
- York St John M-Level descriptors, Registry 2012
- School Assessment Handbook 2011
- The HEA
Further Information

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (school)
- Module handbooks (school)

Date written: 17/06/2013
Amendments:
Progression and Graduation Requirement section amended for clarification purposes only see QSC PASP 17.3.14 - JR 3.3.14.

FoArts confirmed that recruitment to MA Mass Comms will be suspended for 2015/16 (no intake in 2015/16)

July 2017