

# Communication and Media with Game Design Studies

BA (Hons)

## COURSE DETAILS

- A level requirements: [ABB](#)
- UCAS code: I611
- Study mode: Full-time
- Length: 3 years

## KEY DATES

- Apply by: [25 January 2023](#)
- Starts: 25 September 2023

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## Course overview

This programme enables you to combine our popular BA Communication and Media with a Minor pathway in Game Design Studies – a new and distinctive provision in the study of interactive audiovisual media.

## INTRODUCTION

The world we live in is dominated by media in many forms: from entertainment and culture through news and social media to politics and promotion, the media shapes our understanding of what we know and what we consume. Whether you want to work in one of these areas, to research their impact or simply to understand more about our relationship with media, this programme provides a thorough introduction with plenty of opportunities to develop specialist skills.

A wide range of optional modules allow students to pursue their own interests and focus on particular media and communication forms, analysing how they are organised as text, how they represent the world to us and ourselves to the world

(from global power politics to constructions of individual identity), and how the media industries are organised to produce and profit from them. But we teach all of our students to acquire strong research skills and they are given the opportunity to practice them through independent or collaborative research.

The Minor pathway in Game Design Studies provides a more specialist element to your studies. You will follow modules from other areas of the School of the Arts, as well as a suite of bespoke interdisciplinary modules concerning the design and interpretation of games. Topics include the history and development of gaming cultures, the complex nature of interactive media, and

the critical issues that accompany engagement with virtual worlds.

Digital games represent one of the fastest growing forms of entertainment media: consequently, there is a growing need for many jobs that are not only in the games industry, but in surrounding industries as well. This programme develops a wide range of skills that prepare students for employment at various entry points in the job market, including content creation, publishing, journalism, and marketing.

### **Year in Industry**

This programme is available with a [Year in Industry](#). Year Three is spent on a paid placement within an organisation in industry, broadly defined. You will be supported by the School of the Arts and the Department throughout, and your reflexive written account of the experience will contribute towards your final degree result. If you wish to study this programme with a Year in Industry, please put the option code 'YI' in the 'Further Choices' section of your UCAS application form.

## **WHAT YOU'LL LEARN**

- Practical skills, including media writing, blogging, analysis of social media data, and video-making
  - Research skills
  - Commercial and cultural understanding
  - Critical analysis
  - Problem solving
  - The ability to construct arguments and convey ideas effectively
  - Effective communication and presentation skills
  - Creative principles
  - Techniques of critical thinking and analysis
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# Course content

Discover what you'll learn, what you'll study, and how you'll be taught and assessed.

## YEAR ONE

Your first year will consist entirely of compulsory studies. Besides introducing you to Communication & Media and Game Design Studies as subjects, the first year is designed to support you as you acquire

and practice the academic and analytical skills you will need to succeed as a student and in your chosen career.

## COMPULSORY MODULES

### INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES A (COMM101)

**Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 1**

This module will introduce students to foundational knowledge in the field of communication and media studies. Students will learn how communication practices and media technologies have developed historically and their relevance for social, political and economic changes, as well as learning about the development of Communication and Media as a broad and diverse academic field. The module familiarises students with different theoretical perspectives both historical and contemporary.

### MEDIA INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS B (COMM110)

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This is an introduction to issues and concepts surrounding media and communication industries and institutions. The module gives students exposure to core and current debates and issues such as the political economy of media, relations with power and regulation, and processes of globalisation, digitalisation and conglomeration. Students will learn about creative roles and the practices and lived experiences of professional media workers, including the process of conceiving and developing media texts. Successful students will be able to critically consider media and communication studies with an emphasis on its industries and institutions.

### COMMUNICATION, CULTURE, AND MEDIA ANALYSIS A (COMM111)

**Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 2**

This module will give students foundational knowledge about ways that communication, media, and culture can be systematically and critically analysed: students will learn about key concepts and theories from the field of media and communication studies and about how these are applied as tools for analysis. The module offers examples of the craft of social scientific and anthropological research, as well as cultural studies. These will be analytical approaches that students can subsequently use in the course of their studies.

## **DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA (COMM114)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module will provide a broad introduction to digital communication and social media as an object of study. It will facilitate students in thinking about the role of the internet, digital platforms and social media apps and their role in culture, society and democracy. It will firstly ask what is different about digital and social media compared to more traditional media, and pose the question of whether we need new tools and ways of thinking in relation to these newer media. It will then introduce several topics and case studies to allow students to think about the role and potential influence the rise of these tools may or may not have had on society.

## **INTRODUCTION TO GAME DESIGN STUDIES (SOTA101)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

The module Introduction to Game Design Studies explores the phenomenon of video game studies from a variety of Arts and Humanities perspectives. Therefore, the module will focus on three key interrelated contexts for the analysis and theorisation of video games as digital media culture: the text of the game itself as an aesthetic and formal virtual object, genre and system of representation; the video game player as a type of audience or user who is immersed, interactive, and embodied; the video game industry as a global media business, one with a strong Japanese presence and with a profound effect on the wider media context.

## **GAMES AND MEANING (SOTA102)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module introduces students to the semantics of video game design and the techniques of close reading. It examines how mechanics, environment and audio design, genre conventions and iconography can be used to create meaning, both in support and subversion of explicit narrative. Students will learn to make connections between the disparate artforms involved in game design and develop the ability to form their own readings of games. The module is taught in 2-hour workshops which involve a mixture of theory lectures and in-depth discussion of specific games, including student-led choices. Assessment consists of a 2000-word coursework essay (85%), of which there is a formative, peer-reviewed 'pitching' exercise in week 6, and a 5-10 minute in-class presentation or video essay (15%), delivered during the second half of the module.

*Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.*

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## **YEAR TWO**

In year two the optional modules offer plenty of choice, so you can begin to specialise in the areas which interest you most or which might prove valuable for your

chosen career. For example, you can delve more deeply into film and the entertainment industry, the representation of self and society, or the interplay between

global media and war. Or you can explore some of the practices associated with media writing and promotional media.

- All students take two compulsory modules – **COMM207** and **COMM208** – which will introduce you to academic research and support you to practice and develop your research skills.
  - **SOTA260** is compulsory for students taking the Year in Industry pathway.
  - The following modules are available in both 15 and 30 credit versions. You may only take one of these versions: **Feminist Media Studies; Understanding Documentary; Public Relations Culture & Writing Practices; Media, Self & Society; Global Hollywood; Children, Culture & Cinema, Immersive Media & Virtual Worlds; Global News, Media & War.**
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## **COMPULSORY MODULES**

### **COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RESEARCH I (COMM207)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This module will enhance students' understanding of academic research in the field of communication and media studies. It is the first of a series of two modules that will equip students with the skills and techniques needed to analyse, execute, interpret, and present academic research. The module will also prepare them for advanced academic projects such as their final-year projects/academic dissertations. This module will introduce students to the basics of academic research – from the key elements in a research study to the difference between primary and secondary, and quantitative and qualitative research. Students will be taught how to write literature reviews and what ethical considerations to bear in mind when designing a research study.

### **COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RESEARCH II (COMM208)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module will enhance students' understanding of academic research in the field of communication and media studies. It is the second of a series of two modules that will equip students with the skills and techniques needed to analyse, execute, interpret, and present academic research. The module will also prepare them for advanced academic projects such as their final-year projects/academic dissertations. This module will introduce students to specific research methods such as quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of media audiences and producers such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, ethnography as well as archival research and digital research. Students will also be taught how to formulate research questions, what makes a good student dissertation/final year project and how to communicate their research. They will then be required to prepare research proposals for their final year projects/dissertations, which they will be asked to present at an end-of-year conference.

## **OPTIONAL MODULES**

### **CHILDREN, CULTURE AND CINEMA (COMM214)**

**Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 1**

In this module, students will be invited to think critically about the relationship between children, culture and cinema. This module will explore how norms and expectations of children and childhood are explored cinematically. It will consider films that are specifically targeted at children and family audiences as well as films that more exclusively engage adult audiences. It will seek to investigate how children are depicted within children's films; how children's culture is depicted and implemented in cinema; how children's films address diverse audiences; how adulthood and childhood are negotiated on screen; and how the child is figured as both a consumer and subject in cinema more broadly.

**DIFFERENT PLAY (SOTA202)****Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module introduces students to academic work that challenges the conventions of mainstream gaming, or what has been called 'queer game studies'. It examines the relationship between queerness and play, and how the formalising of play into games, especially digital and technological games, has sustained and promoted societal norms. Themes covered include the representation of marginalised identities, queer reclamation of 'failure' and the ways that technology can reproduce or subvert social structures. Students will learn to reexamine the conventions of game design with a view to conceiving a wider range of possibility for games, as well as engaging with the fundamental concepts of academic queer theory. The module is taught in 2-hour design workshops, with an introductory lecture in the first week. Assessment consists of a 1000-word design sketch for a game (40%) and a 1500-word coursework essay (60%). The textbook for the module is Ruberg & Shaw eds 'Queer Game Studies' (2017), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

**DOCUMENTARY (COMM231)****Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 2**

Besides introducing you to a variety of remarkable and sometimes rare documentary texts, this module examines the key purposes, forms and approaches employed at different moments in the history of documentary, how documentary represents the "real world", and notions of "truth", ethics and audience engagement. The module also focuses on how documentary form and content can be analysed.

**FEMINIST MEDIA STUDIES: TEXTS AND AUDIENCES A (COMM204)****Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 1**

This module introduces students to feminist media studies: they will become familiar with key concepts and debates relating to gender, with reference to a range of media, as well as thinking about how we conceptualise and study media producers, texts and audiences. Students will consider the gendered nature of representations as well as various media cultures; the intersection of gender with, for instance, race, class, and sexuality; and sites of/for audience participation, 'prosumption' and the resistance of normative ideals.

**FEMINIST MEDIA STUDIES: TEXTS AND AUDIENCES B (COMM206)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This module introduces students to feminist media studies: they will become familiar with key concepts and debates relating to gender, with reference to a range of media, as well as thinking about how we conceptualise media audiences. Students will consider the gendered nature of representations as well as various media cultures; the intersection of gender with, for instance, race, class, and sexuality; and sites of/for audience participation, 'prosumption' and the resistance of normative ideals.

**GAMES PLAYING ROLES (ENGL397)****Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

Games are ubiquitous today; even if you don't think you play them, you do, via schemes like loyalty cards. This module examines the role of games in contemporary society, and the ways in which this has been reflected within contemporary literature. Throughout this module, we will consider the relationship between games and literature in relation to three key areas – "Ludic Literature", "Gaming Cultures", and "Games of the Future" – with each area involving the analysis of particular literary texts to consider what they reveal about contemporary society and its interests in games and gaming. Illustrative authors include: Raymond Queneau and members of the Oulipo, Orson Scott Card, William Gibson, Daniel Suarez, and Ernest Cline.

**GLOBAL HOLLYWOOD: FROM FILM ART TO MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT (COMM201)****Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 2**

This module examines the transformation of Hollywood cinema as a distinct mode of film practice with its own codes and conventions to a complex and multifaceted global media enterprise that now encompasses film, television, the internet and other screen-based media. With film being increasingly consumed away from the theatres, and with the talent that is involved in entertainment media circulating fluidly across different media and markets, Hollywood is not only about cinema but about a number of entertainment industries that are controlled by a handful of giant conglomerates. The module is organised in two blocks. The first block examines the key characteristics of Hollywood cinema as these were crystallised in the earlier decades of the 20th Century. Concepts such as the studio system, the classical narrative and style, modes of representation, film genres, stardom, technology and performance are discussed in detail. The second block deals with the transformations that started taking Hollywood by storm especially from the 1970s onwards, including: the emergence of the blockbuster film culture, the conglomeration of the film industry, the rise of franchise entertainment, the links to independent film production, Hollywood's relationship to television (cable and online/streaming) and others.

**GLOBAL HOLLYWOOD B: FROM FILM ART TO MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT (COMM203)****Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module examines the transformation of Hollywood cinema as a distinct mode of film practice with its own codes and conventions to a complex and multifaceted global media enterprise that now encompasses film, television, the internet and other screen-based media. With film being increasingly consumed away from the theatres, and with the talent that is involved in entertainment media circulating fluidly across different media and markets, Hollywood is not only about cinema but about a number of entertainment industries that are controlled by a handful of giant conglomerates. The module is organised in two blocks. The first block examines the key characteristics of Hollywood cinema as these were crystallised in the earlier decades of the 20th Century. Concepts such as the studio system, the classical narrative and style, modes of representation, film genres, stardom, technology and performance are discussed in detail. The second block deals with the transformations that started taking Hollywood by storm especially from the 1970s onwards, including: the emergence of the blockbuster film culture, the conglomeration of the film industry, the rise of franchise entertainment, the links to independent film production, Hollywood's relationship to television (cable and online/streaming) and others.

### **GLOBAL NEWS, MEDIA AND WAR (COMM212)**

**Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 2**

The media are now central to any discussion of contemporary war and conflict while global news reporting is supposedly in decline. How can we understand the interplay between global news, media and war in the context of rapidly evolving communication technologies and journalistic practices? This module explores the broader context of global news focusing on media in different parts of the world and the way they report on global issues. It considers the professional practice of foreign reporting and the challenges that notions of ethics, objectivity and attachment present for journalists. Then it engages with both the responses of states, including the use of media management and persuasion, and those of audiences who are often conflicted in reaction to distant conflict. The module concludes with an investigation of specific wars of recent years and a look at the future of reporting war and beyond.

### **GLOBAL NEWS, MEDIA AND WAR (COMM213)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

The media are now central to any discussion of contemporary war and conflict while global news reporting is supposedly in decline. How can we understand the interplay between global news, media and war in the context of rapidly evolving communication technologies and journalistic practices? This module explores the broader context of global news focusing on media in different parts of the world and the way they report on global issues. It considers the professional practice of foreign reporting and the challenges that notions of ethics, objectivity and attachment present for journalists. Then it engages with both the responses of states, including the use of media management and persuasion, and those of audiences who are often conflicted in reaction to distant conflict. The module concludes with an investigation of specific wars of recent years and a look at the future of reporting war and beyond.

## **IMMERSIVE MEDIA AND VIRTUAL WORLDS A (COMM210)**

**Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 2**

The second-year module Immersive Media and Virtual Worlds explores the histories, theories, and industries related to the production of immersive experiences, digital technologies and virtual realities and worlds. In particular, the module will focus on video games and cinema.

## **IMMERSIVE MEDIA AND VIRTUAL WORLDS B (COMM211)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

The second-year module Immersive Media and Virtual Worlds explores the histories, theories, and industries related to the production of immersive experiences, digital technologies and virtual realities and worlds. In particular, the module will focus on video games and cinema.

## **INTRODUCTION TO MUSIC PSYCHOLOGY (MUSI290)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

Music Psychology is a multi-disciplinary field that aims to understand and explain musical activities and experiences through the scientific study of mind and behaviour. This module introduces key contemporary topics and research in this area, including the origins of music, music and emotion, the brain on music, musical development, music and cognitive performance, and music and health. The module will follow a flipped classroom instructional strategy that includes a set of video lectures, hands-on seminars, and individual tutorials. In the lectures, students will be introduced to central concepts, perspectives, and research on a variety of core topics of Music Psychology. These topics will then be actively explored during the seminars through a set of practical activities and group discussions. Individual tutorials will support students to develop their knowledge of research in the field, refine their areas of interest within the topics discussed and coursework preparation. The assessment framework includes one coursework assignment and one multiple choice exam.

## **MEDIA, SELF AND SOCIETY (COMM235)**

**Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 1**

Understandings of the self and the individual are the product of the shifting social, cultural and technological spaces that both define and destabilize the worlds we inhabit and which make us 'who we are'. Taking, as its starting point, the interface between the individual and society in the media age, this module explores the way selfhood and identity is constructed, consumed and regulated, and considers the impacts of digital cultures and technologies on the 'mediatisation of the self' in a globalising world. The module is organised around four thematic blocks of lectures. Combining these interrelated approaches to media, self and society, the module offers a detailed survey of contemporary issues and debates on selfhood and identity in a global media age.

## **MUSIC IN GAMING (MUSI273)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This module examines the function and design of music in video games (including games-consoles, PCs, and smart-phone 'apps'). It considers the historical development of music in gaming, the relationship between game-music and technological advance, and the role and function of music in different types of game (and how this dictates compositional choice). This is achieved via a combination of case-study analyses and engagement with appropriate literature and research. Delivery incorporates lectures, workshop/seminars, and directed activity. Assessment incorporates a discursive essay and a portfolio of case-study analyses. The module assumes the study and discussion of case-study examples, but is delivered and assessed in a manner which does not require technical music skills (ie notational literacy or formal analytical method).

### **MUSIC IN WORLD CINEMA (MUSI270)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module will explore the musical practices of film traditions outside the Anglophone world and their cultural contexts, with particular emphasis on comparisons to classical Hollywood practice. Students will develop the ability to think and write about music in audiovisual contexts. Topics will variably include East Asian films, Bollywood, North African/Middle Eastern films as well as cinemas from Europe and Latin America.

### **PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT (SOTA260)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

The module aims to prepare students for a smooth transition into a work placement year and, more broadly, to develop lifelong skills, attitudes and behaviours and support students in their continuing professional development. This will help students lead flexible, fulfilling careers working as a professional in their field, and enable them to contribute meaningfully to society.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS CULTURES AND WRITING PRACTICES A (COMM232)**

**Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 1**

This module will explore theoretical perspectives on Public Relations cultures and the professional practice of writing for the media, a key skill within and beyond PR. Students will develop understanding of what it means to be a creative professional in the PR or media writing industries by learning to organise their time effectively, produce work to specific briefs, work effectively in teams, allocate work equitably and monitor their progress.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS CULTURES AND WRITING PRACTICES B (COMM240)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This module will explore theoretical perspectives on Public Relations cultures and the professional practice of writing for the media, a key skill within and beyond PR. Students will develop understanding of what it means to be a creative professional in the PR or media writing industries by learning to organise their time effectively, produce work to specific briefs, work effectively in teams, allocate work equitably and monitor their progress.

## **SELF, SOCIETY AND MEDIA (COMM236)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

Understandings of the self and the individual are the product of the shifting social, cultural and technological spaces that both define and destabilize the worlds we inhabit and which make us 'who we are'. Taking, as its starting point, the interface between the individual and society in the media age, this module explores the way selfhood and identity is constructed, consumed and regulated, and considers the impacts of digital cultures and technologies on the 'mediatisation of the self' in a globalising world. The module is organised around four thematic blocks of lectures. Combining these interrelated approaches to media, self and society, the module offers a detailed survey of contemporary issues and debates on selfhood and identity in a global media age.

## **SOUND, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY (MUSI241)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This course examines the ongoing relationship between technological development, popular music and the cultures which surround it. Students are introduced to major perspectives on popular music and technology in order to examine social, aesthetic and historical issues.

## **UNDERSTANDING DOCUMENTARY (COMM282)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

Besides introducing you to a variety of remarkable and sometimes rare documentary texts, this module examines the key purposes, forms and approaches employed at different moments in the history of documentary, how documentary represents the "real world", and notions of "truth", ethics and audience engagement. The module also focuses on how documentary form and content can be analysed.

## **WORKING IN MUSIC INDUSTRY (MUSI252)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This module introduces students to who does what in music industry. Essentially, music industry is a collaborative effort between musicians and various personnel from a range of music companies. Music companies 'add value' to musicians by providing them with services they find difficult or impossible to provide for themselves. These 'music companies' are spread across the music industries of recording, music publishing and live performance; increasingly companies from outside traditional music industry also offer services to musicians (for example, online and IT companies). The module will consider what key jobs and roles exist in the world of converting imaginative ideas into commodities for sale in music markets.

## **UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN, CULTURE AND CINEMA (COMM209)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

In this module, students will be invited to think critically about the relationship between children, culture and cinema. This module will explore how norms and expectations of children and childhood are explored cinematically. It will consider films that are specifically targeted at children and family audiences as well as films that more exclusively engage adult audiences. It will seek to investigate how children are depicted within children's films; how children's culture is depicted and implemented in cinema; how children's films address diverse audiences; how adulthood and childhood are negotiated on screen; and how the child is figured as both a consumer and subject in cinema more broadly.

*Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.*

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## **FINAL YEAR**

You will take two compulsory modules in Game Design Studies, and the rest of your credits will be made up of a free choice of modules. These options are designed to provide opportunities to specialise further in your chosen areas of the subject and to strengthen your employability and research skills. Some modules encourage you to

deepen your understanding of the topics studied in year two, but you can also learn to study magazines and design your own, explore how media represent human rights issues or the environment, or discover areas as diverse as photography, strategic communication or queer film, for example.

## **COMPULSORY MODULES**

### **GAMES AND ALGORITHMIC CULTURE (COMM309)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

Games and Algorithmic Culture investigates how videogames are responding and contributing to the current technological and cultural changes in the use of AI, data mining, procedurally generated content, metrics and automation. The module provides a fundamental knowledge of the videogame industry and its new markets and trends, such as eSports, live streaming, independent productions, casual and mobile gaming. It explores how these new social, cultural, and aesthetics trends of game culture are framed around a broader algorithmic culture that pervades our contemporary technics of digital production and distribution. The module will enable students to understand the specificity of games as new media, to critically analyse the technical, economic and social factors that frame contemporary digital culture, and identify areas of intervention within the global entertainment industry.

### **PHILOSOPHY OF PLAY AND THE VIRTUAL (PHIL343)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This module introduces students to the major philosophical issues associated with play, games especially digital games and virtual worlds. It examines both the philosophical literature around play and contemporary concerns expressed in relationship to the growth of the video games industry, including addiction, violence, 'gamification' and the use of play and software for education and therapy. Students will learn to challenge common assumptions, including their own, about the triviality of play in relation to modern constructions of labour and value, and develop an understanding of how these assumptions underpin both popular and academic discussion of games.

The module is taught by pre-recorded online mini-lectures (approximately 1 hour per week), and a guided online reading group comprising synchronous discussions via video chat and asynchronous discussions via online discussion board, based on a selection of key texts. Assessment consists of a 3-part project: a formative pitching meeting with the module leader in the first 5 weeks of the course, a short report on that meeting (500 words, 35%) including a research plan, and a final essay (2,500 words, 65%).

F FULL ON-CAMPUS TEACHING RESUMES: The module is taught by lecture (1 hour per week) and seminar (1 hour per week). Assessment consists of a 3-part project: a formative pitching meeting with the module leader in the first 5 weeks of the course, a short report on that meeting (500 words, 35%) including a research plan, and a final essay (2,500 words, 65%).

## **OPTIONAL MODULES**

### **AMERICAN INDEPENDENT CINEMA (COMM316)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module examines the "independent" sector of contemporary American cinema. With the global conglomerates that control Hollywood increasingly emphasising the production of blockbusters, remakes and other films based on pre-sold properties or established franchises, it has been left to the often loosely defined independent sector of American cinema to produce original films that often push the envelope in matters of politics, aesthetics, representation and cultural commentary. This Level 3 module examines what critics have labelled American Independent with particular emphasis on three main areas of critical interest that will be explored throughout the lectures and seminars: a) the films' industrial location; b) the formal/aesthetic strategies they adopt; and c) their relationship to the broader social, cultural, political and ideological landscape.

### **BRAZILIAN POPULAR CULTURE (HISP333)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module studies and analyses various aspects of Brazilian popular culture, such as popular music, television and cinema, in addition to specifically Afro-Brazilian cultural products, like the martial art/dance form 'capoeira' and the religions 'umbanda' and 'candomble'. By framing these cultural forms in their socio-historical and political contexts, this module examines how popular culture engages with issues of identity and representation based on 'race'/ethnicity, class, nation and/or gender.

## **CURATION AND HERITAGE (MUSI353)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

The module will consider how popular music is presented as heritage in different contexts such as museum exhibitions, library collections and DIY online archives. It will examine the different ways in which popular music heritage has been represented, mobilized and interpreted. Taking a case study approach it will explore who is invested in discussions of heritage, how heritage is defined, and what this can tell us about representations of the popular past. The module will have a particular focus on the context of gallery and museums and will examine curatorial approaches to popular music and its related cultures.

## **DIGITAL CULTURES IN THE AMERICAS (HISP348)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This module explores the archiving, appropriation and distribution of non-mainstream moving and still images in and about the Americas, with a particular focus on Latin America. It examines a range of interactive processes with online content creation from social, institutional and personal perspectives and considers issues of archival policy, the ethics of re-appropriation and the connection between the amateur and professional and the public and private spheres.

## **DISSERTATION (COMM401)**

**Credits: 30 / Semester: whole session**

A dissertation is a self-contained piece of original research. It is your chance to study a topic that interests you in depth, guided by a member of the Department's academic staff who will act as a supervisor for your research. While it is not expected that the dissertation will achieve the standard of a published article, a general idea of the length, format and style of presentation envisaged can be obtained by scanning academic articles in the area that the dissertation will deal with. In terms of presentation, dissertations must be word-processed, double spaced and bound.

## **DISSERTATION SEMESTER 1 (COMM403)**

**Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 1**

A dissertation is a self-contained piece of original research. It is your chance to study a topic that interests you in depth, guided by a member of the Department's academic staff who will act as a supervisor for your research. While it is not expected that the dissertation will achieve the standard of a published article, a general idea of the length, format and style of presentation envisaged can be obtained by scanning academic articles in the area that the dissertation will deal with. In terms of presentation, dissertations must be typed, double-spaced and bound. This version of the dissertation module will be studied wholly in semester 1.

## **DISSERTATION SEMESTER 2 (COMM404)**

**Credits: 30 / Semester: semester 2**

A dissertation is a self-contained piece of original research. It is your chance to study a topic that interests you in depth, guided by a member of the Department's academic staff who will act as a supervisor for your research. While it is not expected that the dissertation will achieve the standard of a published article, a general idea of the length, format and style of presentation envisaged can be obtained by scanning academic articles in the area that the dissertation will deal with. In terms of presentation, dissertations must be typed, double-spaced and bound. This version of the dissertation module will be studied wholly in semester 2.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION: POLITICS, SCIENCE, ACTIVISM, AND THE MEDIA (COMM304)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

Global heating, deforestation, natural disasters, mass extinction of wildlife – the world is currently facing extraordinary environmental degradation that increasingly affects people's daily lives and our common future on this planet. At the same time, the veracity of these issues as well as questions of remedies are being heavily contested. It is the news media and social media platforms where viewpoints are promoted, exchanged, discussed and the battle for dominant issue interpretations is fought. In this module, students will learn about the most salient fault lines of mediated environmental discourse. Who are the stakeholders that engage in environmental debates and what are their arguments? What are the challenges for journalists and other content providers in communicating complex environmental issues to their respective audience? And what do we know about the short and long term effects of different forms of communication and sometimes widely differing arguments and narratives? Students will develop the knowledge and analytical skills to be able to tackle these issues via their own theory-driven and empirical work.

### **INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT (COMM319)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

The Independent Study Project is a module that provides you with an opportunity to use 15 credits of your studies in order to prepare for the world of employment by undertaking a research project that focuses on a wide range of topics in the area of communication and media studies. Whether you want to study a particular media company, a media text, a communication process, the relationship of media texts with audiences and many other topics in which you have an interest, the Independent Study Project has been designed to allow you to do that. A broad range of topics and areas for research will become available for you to choose from and, depending on the topic you choose, you will be assigned a supervisor from the Department of Communication and Media who will be an expert in this topic. He or she will provide you with guidance in terms of formulating your project concretely and choosing a relevant research method before you set off to do your research and develop important research, communication and writing skills.

### **INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION (COMM312)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module offers students an introduction to study of strategic communication, seen as an interdisciplinary field of research and professional practice. Students will familiarise themselves with key concepts for critical understanding and analysis of how organisations communicate strategically in social contexts. The teaching content combines theories and case studies which relate to strategic communication phenomena in different sectors (e.g. business, politics, non-profit). Assessment is based on an essay and a group project.

### **ISSUES IN 'CULT' TELEVISION (COMM300)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module focuses on debates about the nature, cultural television practices and significance of 'cult' television. Students will critique the idea of 'cult' from textual, industry and audience perspectives, as well as considering its relationships with the rise of 'quality' TV forms in the US and UK and with fan studies, including tracing shifts in representation and audience practices related to marginal groups and identities.

### **ISSUES IN PHOTOGRAPHY (COMM323)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

Investigating both early and contemporary photography, this module examines the role photography plays in remembering private and public events, particularly those that test the limits of visual representation. It will unpack contemporary debates among photographers, journalists and art historians on topics such as photographing suffering and the relationship between photography, affect and emotions. We will discuss the difference between analogic photography and digital photography; ID pictures and family photos; artistic photography and journalistic photography; and personal and public pictures. Students will also learn to read, discuss and critically write about how the different components of a photograph (such as framing, montage, lighting and materiality) serve as a tool of expression and means to interpret events.

### **MEDIA AND CAMPAIGNING (COMM302)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This module explores the role of the media during electoral and other campaigns. It explores the relationships between media, politics and the democratic process. We will study the evolution of the electoral campaign and changes to the form and content of campaigns might have impacted broader democratic concerns. We consider some of the key concepts and theories which seek to conceptualise the communication and mediatization of public and political mechanisms. We will assess whether campaigns matter, whether the system put in place to oversee campaigns is fit for purpose, and how well the media report on and scrutinise campaigns.

### **MEDIA AND HUMAN RIGHTS (COMM317)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

The module studies human rights through the lens of the media in order to critically understand the changing nature of human rights' representation and the role media play in representing and responding to critical human rights issues. It explores the interconnections between media and human rights focusing on media and human rights theory, policy and practice and exploring both historical developments and contemporary issues. In particular, the implications of the global media in the current information age for a range of key human rights' issues are analysed. Among the issues that will be reviewed are terrorism and war on terror, freedom of speech, human trafficking, asylum and immigration, torture and genocide, humanitarian intervention.

### **POPULAR CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND POLITICS (COMM318)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

The module explores how popular culture can be political by examining a range of popular cultural commodities discursively. The module surveys a range of views on how to examine popular culture in order to contextualise discourse analysis. This is examined and then used to critically consider the political potential of popular culture. Successful students will be able to critically analyse a range of popular cultural commodities such as film, television programmes, digital popular culture, popular music and the tabloid press. The module is delivered in the forms of lectures and more hands on analysis during seminars. Students are assessed by an essay, which is an analysis of a popular culture commodity.

### **QUEER FILM, VIDEO AND DOCUMENTARY (COMM305)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

Queer Film, Video and Documentary explores the different ways in which 'queers', specifically lesbian, gay, and transgender people, have been represented in moving images, produced their own films, videos, and documentaries, and shaped reception practices, politics and moving image cultures specific to them. The module will introduce students to queer theory alongside advanced moving image analysis paying particular attention to key theoretical debates and texts in queer politics and film, video and documentary, that demarcate shifts in knowledge, representations, sexual identities, cultures, and practices related to 'queerness'. The module will be structured around three conceptual blocks. The first block is an overview of the foundational theories, debates and concepts in queer theory including their relationship to canonical films and documentaries. The second block on the AIDS crisis addresses the historical trauma's centrality to the development of queer theory and the politics of queer identity. The final block examines particular moments in queer moving image history from underground cinema to multiplex acceptance.

### **SOUND STUDIES (MUSI322)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

This module will introduce students to various theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of music and sound in their social and cultural contexts. The module considers sounds and music as experienced across diverse settings (private, public, individual and collective) and considers key issues relating to how the sonic is embedded in everyday life and impact upon our perception and understanding of the world. Using a wide variety of examples drawn from popular music, art music and other audiovisual media it will outline key issues relating to the sociology and philosophy of sound.

### **VIRAL VIDEO B (COMM344)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 1**

Viral Video offers students the opportunity to develop theoretical knowledge of viral media along with practical skills in the production of viral videos. An important and rapidly evolving cultural phenomenon, viral videos are audio-visual media texts that gain popularity through online and offline sharing and recommendations (France et al, 2016: 20). In this module, students develop their own creative practice, employing a highly active role in designing, presenting and producing their own viral videos, embedding key features designed to enhance sharing and encourage virality. The module is aimed at students considering a career in marketing, public relations or strategic communications, as well as those interested in how viral media can be constructed for social, cultural, educational and campaigning purposes.

### **MEDIA, POLITICS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (POLI345)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

The module will look at the manner in which a range of media engage with climate change and energy security, and the political and social implications that follow. Students should achieve an understanding the context of coverage (including the science, the surrounding political environment, and journalistic practice). They should also be able to understand the principal features of coverage (and their impact), and the political implications that follow. The module will be delivered via lectures, workshop-tutorials, and online tutorials. It will be assessed by exam, short essay and a student's performance in a presentation undertaken in a group alongside other students.

### **NEWS MEDIA AND SOCIETY (COMM301)**

**Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module examines the concept of news and how it is constructed. Students will be introduced to key debates related to the historical development of journalistic norms and ideals such as the rise of objectivity and impartiality. The module also considers key theories which help to explain how news is produced such as 'news values' and 'agenda-setting' and furthermore, the potential implications for audiences as citizens. The module will also consider the future of journalism in a digital age, examining the challenges of producing news in times of declining revenue and the rise of the Internet and social media platforms.

### **SCHOOL OF THE ARTS WORK PLACEMENTS MODULE (SOTA300)**

**Credits: 30 / Semester: whole session**

This module is an opportunity for you to undertake a placement in a setting which matches your academic and possible career/industry interests, develop materials and/or undertake tasks within a practical or vocational context, apply academic knowledge from your degree, and develop your personal and employability skills within a working environment. SOTA300 is not open to students who have taken SOTA600.

**SOCIAL MEDIA, POLITICS & SOCIETY (COMM313)****Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module will address the ways in which digital media are changing contemporary democracies, with emphasis on the use of social media by political actors, citizens, and the media. The module will enable students to understand how social media platforms are changing the ways in which politicians and journalists communicate with the general public, as well as how citizens leverage the affordances of social media to engage in public life.

The module will draw on state-of-the-art theory and research to raise awareness of, and promote debates, about the democratic implications of the increasing social media use by different segments of society. Students will learn about how platform affordances structure communication and action in social media, the role of algorithms and content moderation, and develop a critical view of the role of social media in contemporary societies from different angles – analysing political actors, the media, and the general public. Students will also develop important professional skills to work with social media in their future careers, such as understanding social media analytics, and critically analyse social media communication strategies.

**THE FILM MUSIC OF JOHN WILLIAMS (MUSI370)****Credits: 15 / Semester: semester 2**

This module examines the film-music output of the composer John Williams. It considers the historical development of John Williams' compositional style, in the context of Hollywood convention and the evolution of the 'block-buster'. It situates his style in relation to classical and other relevant influences (especially late romantic and early modernist techniques). It considers the relevance of his close relationship with particular directors (e.g. Lucas and Spielberg). It relates particular compositional techniques (such as leitmotif) to the filmic and narrative context. Delivery incorporates lectures, workshop, and directed activity. Assessment incorporates a discursive essay and a portfolio of case-study analyses. The module assumes the study and discussion of case-study examples, but is delivered and assessed in a manner which does not require technical music skills (i.e. notational literacy or formal analytical method).

*Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.*

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**HOW YOU'LL LEARN**

Weekly lectures and seminar discussions may be supplemented by screening sessions, presentations and opportunities for group work where appropriate. We regularly invite expert speakers and practitioners to speak to our students about their work. Some modules also make use of our specialist equipment or software.

Dissertation and work placement modules involve more independent study, but always under the careful individual supervision of a member of academic staff.

## **HOW YOU'RE ASSESSED**

We are committed to using a range of different forms of assessment, so types of assessment vary widely from module to module. Depending on your choice of modules, these may include coursework projects, essays, blogs, reports, literature reviews, writing exercises, presentations, online tests and unseen examinations.

## **LIVERPOOL HALLMARKS**

We have a distinctive approach to education, the Liverpool Curriculum Framework, which focuses on research-connected teaching, active learning, and authentic assessment to ensure our students graduate as digitally fluent and confident global citizens.

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# Careers and employability

Employability is incorporated throughout the programme, including within modules, through 'real world' assessment methods and at tailored events. Many of our modules seek to develop practical skills – such as media writing, blogging, analysis of social media data and video-making – alongside academic skills, and final year students have opportunities to undertake a relevant work placement or their own independent research.

**94.9% OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA STUDENTS WILL GO ON TO WORK AND/OR FURTHER STUDY 15 MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION.**

*Discover Uni, 2018-19.*

Our graduates have gone on to careers including broadcasting, journalism, social media, advertising and marketing, corporate communications and public relations, arts administration, political campaigning (including political parties, trade unions and charities), management, government, and the civil service, as well as

teaching in universities, colleges and schools.

Former graduates include a television documentary maker, a BBC Radio 1 DJ, senior journalists at local and national newspapers, a partner in a New York-based advertising company and the features editor of a music weekly.

## PREPARING YOU FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

At Liverpool, our goal is to support you to build your intellectual, social, and cultural capital so that you graduate as a socially-conscious global citizen who is prepared for future success. We achieve this by:

- Embedding employability within your curriculum, through the modules you take and the opportunities to gain real-world experience offered by many of our courses.
- Providing you with opportunities to gain experience and develop connections with people and organisations, including

student and graduate employers as well as our global alumni.

- Providing you with the latest tools and skills to thrive in a competitive world, including access to Handshake, a platform which allows you to create your personalised job shortlist and apply with ease.
  - Supporting you through our peer-to-peer led [Careers Studio](#), where our career coaches provide you with tailored advice and support.
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# Fees and funding

Your tuition fees, funding your studies, and other costs to consider.

## TUITION FEES

Tuition fees cover the cost of your teaching and assessment, operating facilities such as libraries, IT equipment, and access to academic and personal support. [Learn more about tuition fees, funding and student finance.](#)

UK fees	
Full-time place, per year	£9,250
Year in industry fee	£1,850
Year abroad fee	£1,385

International fees	
Full-time place, per year	£20,000

*Fees stated are for the 2022-23 academic year and may rise for 2023-24.*

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## ADDITIONAL COSTS

We understand that budgeting for your time at university is important, and we want to make sure you understand any course-related costs that are not covered by your tuition fee. This could include buying a laptop, books, or stationery.

Find out more about the [additional study costs](#) that may apply to this course.

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## SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

We offer a range of scholarships and bursaries to help cover tuition fees and help with living expenses while at university.

[Scholarships and bursaries you can apply for from the United Kingdom](#)

Select your country or region for more scholarships and bursaries.

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# Entry requirements

The qualifications and exam results you'll need to apply for this course.

Your qualification	Requirements <a href="#">About our typical entry requirements</a>
A levels	ABB Applicants with the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) are eligible for a reduction in grade requirements. For this course, the offer is <b>BBB</b> with <b>A</b> in the EPQ. You may automatically qualify for reduced entry requirements through our <a href="#">contextual offers scheme</a> .
GCSE	4/C in English and 4/C in Mathematics
BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma	BTEC applications are encouraged. We evaluate each BTEC application on its merits and may make offers at DDM.
International Baccalaureate	33 points, with no score less than 4
Irish Leaving Certificate	H1, H1, H2, H2
Scottish Higher/Advanced Higher	ABB in Advanced Highers, combinations of Advanced Highers and Scottish Highers are welcome
Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced	Grade A plus BB at A level

<b>Your qualification</b>	<b>Requirements</b> <a href="#">About our typical entry requirements</a>
Access	Applications considered. Pass Access with 30 Level 3 credits graded at Distinction and 15 Level 3 credits graded at Merit.
International qualifications	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">         Select your country or region to view specific entry requirements.       </div> <p>Many countries have a different education system to that of the UK, meaning your qualifications may not meet our entry requirements. Completing your Foundation Certificate, such as that offered by the <a href="#">University of Liverpool International College</a>, means you're</p> <p style="text-align: right;">guaranteed a place on your chosen course.</p>

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## ALTERNATIVE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- If your qualification isn't listed here, or you're taking a combination of qualifications, [contact us](#) for advice
  - [Applications from mature students](#) are welcome.
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**THE ORIGINAL**

**REDBRICK**

