

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Communications and The Arts
Programme:	MA Communication for Social Change
FHEQ Level:	7
Course Title:	MA Dissertation
Course Code:	COM 7500
Total Hours:	400
Timetabled Hours:	0
Supervised Learning Hours:	0
Independent Learning Hours:	400
Credits:	40 UK CATS credits 20 ECTS credits 8 US credits

Course Description:

For students working independently on their Master's thesis. The dissertation encourages students to study intensively a topic agreed with a supervisor, and so develop skills and experience which can be applied in work placements or further graduate work. The course is comprised of independent research and writing, overseen by thesis supervisor, resulting in production of a 10-12,000 word thesis. Collaborative and supportive dialogue with the supervisor and fellow 'junior research colleagues' will involve advice on the research and writing process, suggestions for resources and research directions, and comments on draft chapters of the thesis.

Prerequisites:

MA Communication for Social Change students only

Aims and Objectives:

- For the student to work with the supervisor, as their mentor, through the research, writing and production of an MA level thesis of 10-12,000 words
- For the student to undertake independent/autonomous research on a topic which makes a valuable contribution to the field

- To develop skills and experience which can be applied in the work placements or further graduate work

Programme Outcomes:

Subject specific knowledge and understanding (A)

- A1. Demonstrate critical understanding of the role of communication in social change, and how it is impacted by different historical, social, political, and international contexts.
- A2. Demonstrate a comprehensive and systematic knowledge of theories and methods required for examining political and persuasive communication.
- A3. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the components used in persuasive political communication and campaigns, and up to date understanding of issues and debates within the field of practice.

Subject specific skills and attributes (B)

- B1. Demonstrate ability to assess and evaluate political communication and campaigns from various perspectives and approaches.
- B3. Conduct successful and original research, including the application of appropriate methodologies for locating, assessing, and interpreting primary and secondary sources.
- B4. Demonstrate professional written and presentation skills, communicated clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Transferable intellectual and personal attributes (C)

- C2. Critical thinking, being able to be an independent and self-critical learner.
- C5. Demonstrate thorough understanding of ethics as it applies to research contexts, public engagement and communication, and in working with others.

Practical and/or professional skills and attributes (D)

- D3. Recognise the limitations, contradictions, and gaps in a complex argument.
- D4. Retrieve, process, manipulate, and present information from a variety of valid sources.

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by Registry and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Deploy sophisticated analysis using relevant conceptual frameworks, demonstrating critical thinking
- Design and conduct successful and original research, including application of appropriate methodologies for locating, assessing and interpreting primary sources
- Show excellent writing skills including logical and structured narratives and arguments supported by relevant primary and secondary evidence
- Demonstrate critical self-reflection through a sustained research project

Indicative Content:

- production of a 10-12,000 word thesis, suitably illustrated, evidencing:
- intensive autonomous study of a topic agreed with a supervisor
- primary research making a valuable contribution to the field
- a coherent argument
- appropriate, critical use of secondary sources
- footnotes and a bibliography complying with the Chicago Manual Style
- satisfactory presentation and scholarly apparatus

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

Autonomous research and research supervision.

The course will require independent research overseen by a thesis supervisor, tutorial opportunities including working with specialist faculty for more specific academic guidance, including comments on draft materials, and faculty and peer review feedback.

Indicative Text(s):

- Joyner, R. L. *Writing the winning thesis or dissertation: a step-by-step guide*. (Corwin 2018).
- Nygaard, L.P. *Writing Your Master's Thesis: From A to Zen* (SAGE, 2017).
- Turabian, K.L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Ninth Edition) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).
- Wallace, M., Wray, A. *Critical reading and writing for postgraduates*. Fourth ed. (SAGE 2021).

Journals

Web Sites

See syllabus for complete reading list

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
First edition	January 2024	