

Media Culture & Practice

Level 1

Compulsory modules:

Module Code	Module Name	Pre-requisites	Excluded Combinations
UACAKG-60-1	Contemporary Digital Practice	None	None
UACAL5-30-1	Experience & Identity	None	None
UACAL6-30-1	The City, Modernity & Network Culture	None	None

Level 2

You MUST take the following **compulsory modules**:

Module Code	Module Name	Pre-requisites	Excluded Combinations
UACAFE-30-2	Media Culture 1	UACPRW-30-1	None
UACAFF-30-2	Media Culture 2	UACPRW-30-1	None

You must also choose TWO from the following list.

Module Code	Module Name	Pre-requisites	Excluded Combinations
UACAFJ-30-2	Video Media	UACAKG-60-1	None
UACPAR-30-2	Web Media	UACAKG-60-1	None
UACPAU-30-2	Photomedia	UACAKG-60-1	None
UACA9B-30-2	Screen Media	UACAKG-60-1	None

Level 3

Option Modules:

You must take 120 credits in total from the modules listed below.

Note: *Intensive Production* is a 60 credit module for students who wish to specialise in production. You cannot take both *Intensive Production* and *Independent Production*. Places on both production modules are limited and will be allocated on the basis of your achievement in core production modules at Level 2.

Module Code	Module Name
UACPCU-30-3	MCS Dissertation
UACPMN-30-3	Work Placement & Experience*
UACPCS-30-3	Independent Production*
UACAFC-60-3	Intensive Production*
UACAGW-30-3	Games, Simulation and Media
UACPBB-30-3	Photography and Visual Culture
UACAGV-30-3	Urban Culture and Modernity

Media Culture & Practice Module Outlines

LEVEL 1

UACAKG-60-1 Contemporary Digital Practice

Module Leader: Rod Dickinson

Pre-requisites: *None*

This 60 credit module makes up half of your level 1 studies. It introduces you to the creative practices, technical skills and conceptual frameworks required to produce critical media projects in a range of media (for example, video, photography, web) in a digital environment. It will explore the ways in which contemporary media production, participation and consumption are shaped by their historical, technological and everyday contexts. Through their production work, and by exposure to key examples from alternative and experimental media and media arts, students will be encouraged to produce work that is analytical and critical of established media conventions, and which demonstrates an awareness of their contemporary social and cultural context.

The emphasis throughout will be on making connections between theory and practice, and on the development of students' confidence in critical and creative production and writing. Group work will enable students to begin to develop the teamwork skills and flexibility necessary for professional media production.

The module is taught through a day-long workshop each week and a weekly series of lectures or screenings that offer a grounding in both media and cultural history and in contemporary creative media practices. Local field trips and gallery visits are a feature of this module.

Recommended reading:

Highmore, Ben 2009, *A Passion for Cultural Studies*, London: Palgrave Macmillan
Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant & Kelly 2009, *New Media: a critical introduction* (second edition), London: Routledge

UACAL5-30-1 Experience & Identity

Module Leader: Sherryl Wilson / Seth Giddings

Pre-requisites: *None*

This module is taught through whole day workshops for the first semester of level 1. Taking concepts of individual experience, identity and subjectivity as its starting point, it asks students to describe and reflect on their own everyday and media experiences, tastes and preferences, and to begin to situate these in relation to their historical, cultural, and technological contexts. The module will focus on experiential and evidential approaches to cultural enquiry, training students in autoethnographic research, fieldwork, textual and visual analysis, and students will build their own reflexive online blog and profile. The module will take students through the process of researching, structuring, and drafting an evidence-based academic essay.

Recommended reading:

Gauntlett, David (2008) *Media, Gender and Identity: an introduction*, London and New York: Routledge
Highmore, Ben (2011) *Ordinary Lives: studies in the everyday*, London: Routledge
Lovink, Geert (2011) *Networks Without a Cause: a critique of social media*, Cambridge: Polity
Turkle, Sherry (2011) *Alone Together: why we expect more from technology and less from each other*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press

UACAL6-30-1 The City, Modernity, and Network Culture

Module Leader: Richard Hornsey / Gillian Swanson

Pre-requisites: *None*

Again taught through weekly day-long workshops (in the second semester), this module introduces students to further key concepts and methods in the study of contemporary media and culture. It will address collective cultural and media formations through the city of Bristol, situating these within broader historical, cultural, technological and global contexts. These collectivities might include local communities, social groups, international and global cultures, and virtual or networked cultures. Social processes such as migration and urbanization, and concepts such as modernity, consumer culture, and capitalism will be examined as they play out in everyday experiences of city life. Students will engage with a range of objects of study, which may include domestic and public spaces and technologies within the city, media representations of the city and city life, and written accounts of urban life both historical and contemporary.

The module will build on experiential and evidential approaches to cultural enquiry, including ethnographic methods, and will support students through the process of writing a critical essay.

Recommended reading:

Highmore, B (ed.) 2002 *The Everyday Life Reader*, London: Routledge

Giddings, S (ed.) 2011, *The New Media & Technocultures Reader*, London: Routledge

Stevenson, Deborah 2003, *Cities and Urban Cultures*, Maidenhead: Open University Press

LEVEL 2

UACAFE-30-2 Media Culture 1

Module Leader: Rehan Hyder

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

Media Culture 1 engages with the theories and lived experiences of contemporary media culture. Taking a central theme, for example 'consumption' or 'simulation', you will be asked to study the everyday cultures and experiences of popular media and other cultural forms from art and museums to shopping, cinema-going, and new technologies. The module will introduce you to a range of research approaches from the well-established to the experimental. You will be asked to document, analyse and articulate your own media cultures (and those of others) through ethnography, description, and historical and theoretical research.

Some assignments will concentrate on the writing of research, others on image-making. We will undertake regular group work and field trips. Work for assessment will be generated throughout the semester, with short pieces of written or visual work produced most weeks and with rapid staff and peer feedback.

You will be encouraged to develop your own projects and interests from the start.

It is a 'short fat' module, i.e. it runs for one semester only, but your contact time and independent study time each week will be double that of a yearlong 30 credit module.

Recommended reading:

Highmore, Ben 2009, *A Passion for Cultural Studies*, London: Palgrave Macmillan

Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant & Kelly 2009, *New Media: a critical introduction* (second edition), London: Routledge

UACAFF-30-2 Media Culture 2

Module Leader: Richard Hornsey

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

This module runs in the second semester and further develops the concerns and approaches of Media Culture 1. Again it will be taught and run on one day of the week and will feature workshops, tutorials, and weekly feedback on your work. The particular focus of Media Culture 2, however, is on the design, execution and writing up of an individual 3,000-word research project that extends your own particular interests and critical concerns. The data for this project is collected on a three-day residential field trip attended by the whole module cohort. This year, for instance, we went up to Leeds and Bradford.

Because of the broad topic range of the module (we critically focus on many aspects of everyday media culture), and because of the emphasis on designing and completing a major independent research project, this module is of particular relevance to those students who think they might want to do a dissertation at Level 3. However, it will also give you the study skills you need to cope more generally with extended independent work, a feature of most Level 3 modules across the board.

UACPFJ-30-2 Video Media

Module Leader: Seth Giddings

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

This module will develop your engagement with the theory and practice of moving image making begun at Level 1. It is taught through a weekly lecture / screening and a weekly workshop.

Lectures address the historical and theoretical study of moving image technologies and production, exploring contemporary contexts of video media including documentary, domestic or 'user-generated content', changing technologies including mobile phone camera, internet distribution and activist and art video.

In the workshops you will produce individual and group video media projects that critically and creatively explore and challenge the module's theoretical concerns.

Recommended Reading:

Jenkins, Henry, *Convergence Culture: where new and old media collide* (New York & London: New York University Press 2008)

Renov, Michael (ed.), *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996)

Shaw, Jeffrey & Weibel, Peter (eds), *Future Cinema: the cinematic imaginary after film*, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press 2003)

UACPAR-30-2 Web Media

Module Leader: Rod Dickinson

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

This production module asks you to explore new media such as the Internet and computer games through the production of projects using web media software.

A weekly lecture series discusses the emergent theoretical fields of new media studies, presents examples of interactive and web-based projects, and addresses problems of the analysis of web texts, images and worlds. The module addresses the impact of interactivity and convergence on established media forms and conventions and, through production work, asks you to explore the critical and creative possibilities of web media.

In the weekly two-hour workshops you will be asked to produce individual and group projects. Your project will engage with some of the theories discussed in the lectures and will be an opportunity to create a piece of work that might use and explore a range of media; audio, text, photography, graphic images, animation and video.

We will use Dreamweaver, Photoshop and Flash software.

Assessment is through the presentation of an individual portfolio, group presentations and production and an individual evaluation essay.

Recommended reading:

Manovich, Lev (2001), *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge MA: MIT (see also <http://www.manovich.net>)

Lister et al (2009), *New Media: A Critical Introduction* (second edition), London: Routledge (see also <http://www.newmediaintro.com>)

UACPAU-30-2 Photomedia

Module Leader: Terryl Bacon

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

This module encourages you to develop a critical, theorised digital photography practice. You will explore debates and theories of photography, producing a portfolio of digital photographs, and associated written pieces. The module will familiarise you with the work of photographers and artists both contemporary and historical, and aims to improve your skills in photography and photo-manipulation and in reading photographs. Classes are taught in combined workshop/seminars.

Assessment is by submission of two portfolios, at the end of each semester, supported by a workbook which show your research and ongoing practice.

Recommended Reading:

Wells, Liz (ed.), *Photography : A Critical Introduction*, (Third Edition), (London: Routledge, 2004).

Cruel and Tender: The Real in the Twentieth Century Photograph, (London: Tate Publishing; 2003)

UACA9B-30-2 Screen Media

Module Leader: Sherryl Wilson

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

On this module you will engage with the rapidly changing nature of screen media in the contemporary world whilst also tracing back into history to study how they have developed up to the present day. Television has been one of the most important sites of cultural anxieties, pleasures, controversy and excitement since its invention in the 1920s and we will consider the centrality of the medium over this period. We will be looking at a rich range of television programmes and genres, structured through themes of sex, scandal, violence and laughter and their cultural significance. The other broad theme is digital convergence via the internet, mobile phones and games consoles and the effects this is having on media genres, their modes of distribution and interactions in everyday life. Case studies will range from the digital developments in 3D cinema to the bite size content accessed via iPhone applications, and the importance of branding in a multichannel environment. Students will be encouraged to develop their own research interests in this broad field of study.

Recommended Reading

Creeber, Glen (ed) (2006) *Tele-visions: an introduction to studying television*, London: BFI.
Jenkins, Henry (2008) *Convergence Culture: where new and old media collide*, New York University Press.
Klinger, Barbara (2006) *Beyond the Multiplex: cinema, new technologies and the home*, University of California Press.

LEVEL 3

UACPCU-30-3 Dissertation

Module Leader: Gillian Swanson

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

The dissertation gives you an opportunity to research a topic within Media and Cultural Studies that is of special interest to you, to demonstrate your familiarity with the relevant debates, to work on a piece of research independently, and to present an argument based on that research. The teaching of this module is through initial workshops and one-to-one tutorials with your dissertation supervisor, who will help you develop a research question, plan your project and write up your research. There will be an event towards the end of the Spring term where you will be given more information on potential topics and more detail on the workshop programme and provided with some initial recommended reading. The assessment entirely comprises the finished dissertation of 8,000 words, which is due towards the end of the second semester.

Recommended Reading:

Ideally, you should begin working on your Dissertation over the summer. What you may read will depend on your topic, but some recommended reading will be provided during the event towards the end of the Spring term.

UACPMN-30-3 Work Placement and Experience

Module Leader: Helen Kennedy

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

For this module you will be expected to participate in the equivalent of 20 days work experience. You will then participate in a series of workshops that will help you to evaluate the placement, develop your presentation skills, CV, and build towards the production of a research report that takes your placement experience as a primary resource for engaging with subject specific theories/concepts and issues critically. The exact timing of the placement will be decided before allocation so you are fully aware of commitment requirements.

Where placements opportunities are identified by you they will be subject to prior approval by the module leader.

As there is no expectation that you will be paid for their work, placements will normally take place in the Bristol area. Placement organisations are aware that any additional travel should be covered at their own expense.

Eligible students will be identified in the third term of Level 2 – they should be single and joint honours students who can demonstrate their ability to work independently and are willing and able to comply with the requirements for access on to the module:

These are:

- mandatory attendance at half-day workshop in third term of Level 2
- ability to reflect critically on future ambitions, current skills in the process of researching potential placement hosts.
- Production of a satisfactory CV and a shortlist of potential placement hosts
- Securing an appropriate placement that will enable you to evaluate and develop skills relevant to your programme of study and your future ambitions.
- Ability to commit to 20 days approx of unpaid work experience.

Assessment is through the production of logbook (20%), a presentation (40%) and a report (40%).

Recommended reading:

Brockbank, A. & McGill, I. (1998) *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, Buckingham: SRHE & Open University Press
Morgan, G. (1997) *Images of Organization*, London: Sage

UACPBQ-30-3 Photography and Visual Culture

Module Leader: Michelle Henning

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

It is often said that since the middle of the 19th century photography has been responsible for saturating the world and our experience with images. With the recent digital reinvention of photography this is a process that continues unabated and takes new forms. Photography is practiced in many ways and hardly a corner of social and cultural activity has been untouched by it. It has also been much studied and debated yet in some ways it remains an enigma. This module offers an opportunity to study aspects of the history, theory and practice of photography in some depth.

The module will consider theories of photography and visual representation. We will ask how photographs are similar to and different from other kinds of images, what is the basis for our belief in their realism or truth, what is photographic seeing, what do cameras do, how is photography related to our practices of looking? What kinds of meaning do we find in photographs and why? The relationship of the photographic image to painting, video, television and film, will also be considered. This will open up questions about the different natures of the still and the moving image and the place of time and duration in the meaning of images. We will also explore current debates about the significance of digital technology for photography.

On this basis the module will proceed to explore the many uses of photography (or 'photographies') in modern culture. This will include photography and consumer culture; documentary photography and photo-journalism, popular and domestic photography, the photograph as evidence in social science and medicine, the use of photographic archives, and photography as art.

Wider issues that the module will address will include: identity, memory, the body, gender and sexuality, ethnicity, surveillance, spectacle, violence and the pornographic.

Assessment is through an exam (image analysis) and two essays.

Recommended Reading:

Liz Wells (2003), *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, Routledge
Susan Sontag (1977) *On Photography*, Penguin

UACPCS-30-3 Independent Production

Module Leader: Michelle Henning

Pre-requisites: *Video Media* or *Photomedia* or *Web Media*

NB Student numbers on this module are limited and will be allocated on the basis of your achievement at level 2.

On this module students work individually to produce a media project over the course of the year. They build on their experience and knowledge from their level 2 production module(s) and can specialise in Web Media, Photomedia or Video Media. The projects can be thought of as the equivalent of a dissertation by production, and should explore an area of relevance to Media and Cultural Studies and demonstrate a grasp of critical media practice. One of the main learning outcomes of the module is that each student will have gained some experience of being an individual and autonomous media producer.

The module is taught through supervision workshops and tutorials with a limited amount of instructor time. You therefore need to feel really confident that you have the technical and creative strengths to put 30 credits of your final year into a production process that will rely upon your self management and initiative. If you have relied heavily upon the work of other group members in your production process this year then this module may not be for you. You must work in a medium in which you are already proficient: it is not possible to undertake *Independent Production* in a new medium.

Assessment is through the production of a pilot project and research report, then the production of the final project and workbook and an evaluation report. You are expected to exhibit your work in the end of year screening and exhibition, and to contribute to the planning and running of the show.

UACAGV-30-3 Urban Culture and Modernity

Module Leader: Richard Hornsey

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*.

More people on the planet now live in cities than in the countryside. Essential to the process of industrialisation, the city is not a neutral site in which life just happens, but something that fundamentally structures the basic contours of human experience. How we view ourselves, relate to others, behave, desire, and move about have all been transformed by living in cities. Meanwhile, the media remains dominated by images and stories about the perils and pleasures of urban life. In this module, we'll be thinking critically about urban experience – how it has been theorised, represented and lived in the era of modernity.

The module is taught in two blocks. Block One explores the history and theorisation of urban life in the West. We'll be exploring a wide range of themes such as alienation, community, gender and sexuality, race, commodification, uneven development and gentrification. This will be taught through weekly lectures and seminars. Block Two is much more student led. Together we'll be exploring a particular case study, which at the time of writing looks like being 'New York'. (Don't worry if you've never been there; if you've ever seen a Scorsese film or watched 'Sex in the City' you've already got something to go on!). As we examine New York in detail - its history, spaces, and the way it has been represented – you'll start to develop your own individual research project.

Assessment is by a 2-hour exam, a group presentation, and an individual research essay (3,000 words) [to be confirmed].

Recommended Reading:

Highmore Ben, *Cityscapes: Cultural Readings in the Material and Symbolic City* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005)

Ric Burns, James Sanders, and Lisa Ades, *New York: an Illustrated History* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2003).

UACAGW-30-3 Games, Simulation and Media

Module Leader: Patrick Crogan

Pre-requisites: *Contemporary Digital Practice*

Over the past three decades computer and video games have challenged cinema and television for the attention, and money, of screen audiences. They draw on cinema and TV for their dramas, characters and storyworlds, but they are also a significantly new form of popular screen media with other origins and influences. As computer software they generate virtual, interactive worlds, simulations central to the reshaping of the experience of time and space in digital culture. Whilst as games they transform screen media spectatorship into play. In turn they have influenced the structures and imagery of cinema, and resonate with new playful television genres such as reality TV.

This module is designed for both Film Studies and Media & Cultural Studies students. It will take videogames and videogame play as its focus, but will encourage you to make connections with other media forms and with other types of games and play. You will analyse games as texts and as lived playful experiences, exploring your own game cultures and those of others.

Games, Simulation and Media will be taught through lectures that will introduce you to the academic field of Game Studies and workshops in which we will undertake a range of practical research and other scholarly activities. It is assessed through a seminar workshop activity (to be completed either individually or in small groups) and an individual project.

Recommended reading:

Dovey, Jon & Kennedy, Helen 2006 *Game Cultures: computer games as new media*, Open University Press

Krzywinska, Tanya & King, Geoff (eds) 2002 *ScreenPlay: cinema/videogames/interfaces*, London: Wallflower Press

UACAFC-60-3 Intensive Production

Module Leader: Rod Dickinson

Prerequisites: *Video Media or Photomedia or Web Media*

You cannot take this module AND *Independent Production*

This is a 60 credit module and as such constitutes **half** of your final year's work. It is intended for those students who are ambitious and confident in media production and who will have usually have taken two production modules at Level 2.

Each student will complete TWO projects in a medium studied in an MCS core (production) module at level two. They will produce two group or self-initiated projects that will be informed by theoretical research and knowledge of contemporary media production. Students will produce one project each semester. The content and medium of projects will be developed in consultation with staff and from within the range of specialisms offered by the staff team: Photomedia, Video Media, Web Media. Students will be expected to work both independently and as a group as projects require.

For assessment students will present supporting material for each project that demonstrates their creative, critical and organisational process. Each semester they will also produce a written evaluation reflecting on that theoretical and creative process.