

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MA Gender and Sexuality Studies (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	PG Dip, PG Cert,
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Historical Studies (Home); School of Creative Arts, Culture and Communication
Location of delivery	Central London/online
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (1 year) Part-time (2 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMAGDSIP_C (on-campus study) TMAGDSMX_C (flexible study) TMAGDSON_C (online study)
HECoS Code	100621
Start date of programme	Prior to 2009
Date of programme approval	Prior to 2009
Date of last programme amendment approval	November 2022
Valid for academic entry year	2024-25
Date of last revision to document	19/07/2024

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants with a wide range of previous experience and qualifications. A second class honours degree (2.2 or above) in a Humanities subject satisfies the standard requirement, but we do base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may request writing samples or further interview to gauge academic potential in instances where non-traditional education and experience may merit the waiving of formal entry requirements.

Course aims

The MA Gender and Sexuality Studies is built around the interdisciplinary study of gender and sexuality, an exciting and growing area of study. This course is ideal if you are interested in how gender and sexuality are constructed, understood and represented in different historical, cultural, geographic and social contexts. We bridge the divide between the social sciences and the arts and humanities by offering an MSc and MA. The MA course allows you to explore aspects of gender and sexuality in literature, history, media and film, visual art, philosophy and cultural theory.

The course explores current debates and incorporates the cutting-edge research of world-leading academics at Birkbeck, who are passionate and engaged in the real world, working towards social justice with activists, policy-makers, academics, and charities and NGOs. You will find yourself in seminar rooms with a diverse range of people, from many different backgrounds and careers, generating a lively, engaged and enthusiastic learning environment.

You will consider competing ideas and theories about gender and sexuality and explore the ways in which these intersect with concepts of race, ethnicity, age and class. The course will develop your ability to critically discuss these theories and to consider how the arts and humanities can help us understand gender and sexuality.

This firm grounding in theories of gender and sexuality, along with research skills preparation, will help you develop the confidence you need to undertake an independent research project in the area that most interests you.

Compulsory modules:

- Theorising Gender
- Gender and Sexuality Dissertation Research Training
- Dissertation

List of indicative Gender and Sexuality option modules (note: not all options are available in any year):

- SSHC543S7 Cultures of Hate and Oppression. Connecting the Conversations about Antisemitism, Holocaust, Gender, Colonialism
- ARVC076S7 Exhibiting the Body
- SSHC458S7 Me, Myself and You: Histories of Self and Belonging, 1500 to the 21st Century
- FDGD012S7 Queer Histories/Queer Cultures
- SSHC360S7 The Radical Sixties

Online options

Options for the students taking the programme fully online may be limited, and may vary by year. An example list of options that have been offered online recently includes:

- FDGD012S7 Queer Histories, Queer Cultures
- SSHC543S7 Antisemitism, Holocaust, Colonialism, Gender: Connecting the Conversation
- HICL195S7 The Science of Progress? Darwin, Evolution and the Making of Modernity
- SSHC458S7 Me, Myself and I: Identity and the Self in Europe

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 1 year					
7	FDGD009S7	Theorising Gender	30	Compulsory	T1
7		Option 1 (Gender and Sexuality)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 2 (Gender and Sexuality)	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 3	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	SSHC572Z7	Gender and Sexuality Dissertation Research Training	0	Compulsory	T1-2
7	FDGD008D7	Dissertation	60	Core	T1-3
Part-time - 2 years					
Year 1					
7	FDGD009S7	Theorising Gender	30	Compulsory	T1
7	SSHC572Z7	Gender and Sexuality Dissertation Research Training	0	Compulsory	T1-2
7		Option 1	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 2	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
Year 2					
7		Option 3	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	FDGD008D7	Dissertation	60	Core	T1-3

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, you are expected to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

Teaching on this course includes lectures but is predominantly structured as seminars, or discussion-focused group sessions. In the introductory module 'Theorising Gender', lectures from internationally-recognised staff working in feminism and gender studies, LGBTQ+ history and activism, queer theory, and histories of medicine, sexology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis

will introduce you to the relationship between theory and methodology in Gender and Sexuality Studies. Seminars in this and subsequent modules will train you in the construction of collaborative knowledge alongside the diverse community of your fellow students. You will also deepen your subject knowledge and sharpen your critical skills through extensive reading and other forms of independent learning. Modules across the programme include the analysis of primary and secondary text sources, as well as of images, material culture, music and film.

Most option modules are delivered in-person, some are delivered both in-person and online, and some online only. There is sufficient online provision to allow students to complete their degrees with no in-person modules. Those students taking the online route through the programme, or who select one or more of the online modules as part of their studies, will be taught through a mixture of online seminars, live and recorded lecture material, and a range of additional online resources.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

Humanities modules normally incorporate diverse forms of assessment, including shorter, mid-term written exercises such as source analyses or literature reviews; oral presentations; and end-of-module research essays. Assignments grow in complexity across the term, offering the reassurance of guided progression towards the research essay, and tailored writing support is available within the department and at college level for students who might benefit from additional advice. To complete the degree, you will design, research, and write a dissertation. The dissertation module is composed 15% coursework related to research skills and literature review and 85% for the dissertation itself.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand theoretical issues at stake in gender and sexuality scholarship in the arts and humanities.
- Understand methodologies used in the analysis and interpretation of gender and sexuality in the arts and humanities.
- Understand interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary debates in gender and sexuality studies
- Discuss texts, objects and diverse media with a group of your peers
- Present your own research and arguments orally
- Design your own research questions and programme of research
- Carry out research and writing at multiple scales: response essay, research essay, dissertation
- Gain skills suited to design and create disseminations of your research in multiple forms, from article to podcast to public lecture

Careers and further study

The MA Gender and Sexuality Studies prepares you for any role which benefits from skills in research, communication and engagement. Graduates of our programme are employed in

sectors directly connected to gender and sexuality issues, from social work to non-governmental and charitable organisations, from journalism to government and policy research, but some work across a wider range of professions and disciplines, from education to business to the arts. Graduates interested in further study have gone on to complete research degree (MPhil/PhD) programmes.

Birkbeck's MA Gender and Sexuality Studies graduates will complete with a set of valuable attributes, for example:

- The ability to work as part of a team
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English
- Research skills
- Skills in evaluating and assessing types of information
- The ability to present yourself and an argument to a range of audiences

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including whom to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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