

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	MA Psychosocial Studies (Level 7)
Name and title of interim exit qualification(s)	PG Dip Psychosocial Studies (exit award only, after successful completion of core module 1 and 2 and optional modules 1 and 2) PG Cert Psychosocial Studies (exit award only, after successful completion of two modules at least one of which is a core module)
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home school/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences
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, January (on-campus)-suspended
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	TMAPSYSL_C (October start) - TMAPSYIP_C on-campus studies - TMAPSYON_C online studies - TMAPSYM_X_C flexible studies TMAPSYSJ_C (January start)-suspended
HECoS Code	100498
Start date of programme	Autumn 2009
Date of programme approval	Spring 2009
Date of last programme amendment approval	June 2024
Valid for academic entry year	2024-25
Date of last revision to document	07/06/2024

Admissions requirements

This is a theoretically demanding Masters level course, and applicants are normally required to have achieved a first degree at second class honours level as a minimum requirement. In exceptional circumstances, the Admissions Tutor will consider applicants who have substantial professional experience (e.g. teaching, social work, counselling & psychotherapy, mediation, development work, etc) without a first degree, and who can demonstrate through interview and a written assignment that they have the required academic abilities to complete a Masters level course. Applications are reviewed on their individual merits and your professional qualifications and/or relevant work experience will be taken into consideration positively. We actively support and encourage applications from mature learners.

On your application form, please list all your relevant qualifications and experience, including those you expect to achieve.

Course aims

The School is a leading department in this interdisciplinary field that brings together social, cultural and psychosocial researchers. The Psychosocial Studies subject group within the school has developed a distinctive approach to research and teaching that draws on a range of critical frameworks including psychoanalytic theory, social theory, feminist and queer theory, cultural and post-colonial studies and qualitative psychosocial methodologies. In our research we aim to connect discussions of our precarious and increasingly interconnected collective fates with our most intimate personal and psychic life.

Some of the research strands in the department include: violence, state violence and conflict; intimacy, parenting, care and personal life; human rights, social responsibility and helping behaviour; public cultures, social movements, citizenship and social identities; postcolonial urban cultures and histories of 'race' and racism; gender and sexuality; emotional development, psychic change and aging.

The MA Psychosocial Studies is designed for graduates with a wide range of backgrounds, who are looking to develop an in depth understanding of the relation between individual subjectivities and identities, and historical and contemporary social and political formations.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status	Likely teaching term
Full-Time – 1 year, October start					
7	PSSL040S7	Theories and Sites of the Psychosocial	30	Core	T1
7	PSSL039S7	Texts and Interpretation	30	Core	T2
7		Option 1	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7		Option 2	30	Option	T1, 2 or 3
7	SSPA085D7	Independent Research Module	60	Core	T1-3 (Sept deadline)
Part-Time – 2 years, October start					
Year 1					
7	PSSL040S7	Theories and Sites of the Psychosocial	30	Core	T1
7	PSSL039S7	Texts and Interpretation	30	Core	T2

Year 2					
7		Option 1	30	Option	T1
7		Option 2	30	Option	T2
7	SSPA085D7	Independent Research Module	60	Core	T1-3 (Sept deadline)
Note: Both core modules are shown in Year 1 above as the department encourages students to take those first, but there is flexibility if students wish to take an option in year 1 instead on the October route..					
Full-Time – 1 year, January start					
7	PSSL040S7	Theories and Sites of the Psychosocial	30	Core	Spring
7	PSSL039S7	Texts and Interpretation	30	Core	Spring
7		Option 1	30	Option/	Summer/
7		Option 2	30	Option	Autumn
7	SSPA085D7	Independent Research Module	60	Core	All year, starting Jan (Jan deadline)
Part-Time – 2 years, January start					
Year 1					
7	PSSL039S7	Texts and Interpretation	30	Core/”	Spring/
7		Option 1	30	Option	Summer or Autumn
Year 2					
7	PSSL040S7	Theories and Sites of the Psychosocial	30	Core/””	Spring
7		Option 2	30	Option	Summer
7	SSPA085D 7	Independent Research Module	60	Core	All year, starting Jan (Jan deadline)

T1-Autumn term, T2 -Spring term, T3 Summer Term

Note: All the core modules shown in the above structure are expected to be offered using hyflex technology for delivery from 2024/5, enabling live synchronous in-person and online seminars.

There are a wide variety of **hyflex option modules** that students can take across the School. Some examples are included in the indicative list below:

Indicative level 7 options (hyflex delivery):				
7	LACN021S7	Contemporary Criminological Theory	30	T1
7	LACN019S7	Regulating Sex and Sexuality	30	T2
7	LALA087S7	Psychology of Law and Crime	30	T2
7	SSPA067S7	Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Practice	30	T3
7	LALA139S7	Drugs, Crime and Culture	30	T3
7	LADD058S7	Criminal Law, Theory and History	30	T2
7	SSPA103S7	Concepts in Psychoanalysis	30	T1
7	SSPA152S7	Sociology for New Worlds	30	T1 and 3
7	SSPA078S7	Psychoanalysis and Culture	30	T2

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

The MA in Psychosocial Studies is a fully flexible programme, that will allow students to register as online only, as flexible, or as attending in person. Teaching on this course is a combination of pre-recorded lectures and live seminars (online and in person). Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work, and often a class presentation around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

The programme is designed to develop psychosocial skills and knowledge in order to prepare students to work with a psychosocial lens in a range of future employment situations (e.g. psychological, psychotherapeutic and counselling settings; health and social care; education; social and psychological research; social policy; international development, human rights; the cultural industries; social research, including further study at MPhil/PhD levels). To this end the course utilizes a range of learning and teaching methods. Teaching and learning methods include:

- Formal teaching and lecturing by specialist staff in the school of Social Sciences
- Specialist workshops run by external or associate staff on specialist topics, including 'Masterclasses' with world-renowned scholars
- Seminars, tutorials, group and individual supervision provided by staff specialising in Psychosocial Studies
- A research training programme comprising 10 Psychosocial Research Methods sessions in the Autumn term.
- A Summer Programme comprising a range of teaching and learning modes, including masterclasses specialist workshops, research training and dissertation support sessions
- A range of small-group work carried out by students outside of teaching time in order to develop research and writing skills, document preparation, and oral presentation.
- A range of writing, documenting and recording projects fully integrated in the teaching and learning strategy for specific courses (core courses and option courses) that may include the production of reflections on weekly readings, field notes/observations, and visual and electronic media hybrid objects (in the option course on Visual Culture), using Moodle and other e-learning technologies.
- Student teaching experience in the form of small-group mini-lectures to fellow students on developing research topics, in the context of an ad hoc year-long programme of research training.
- The School has a formal link with the University of São Paulo, Brazil. This link enables students on this programme to undertake an optional module at the University of São Paulo as part of their programme of study at Birkbeck. Further information about this opportunities for studying abroad can be obtained from the Head of Department.

These learning and teaching methods are designed to take seriously the need for a wide variety of generic and specialist skills provision beyond the specialist focus of a student's academic and intellectual engagements with Psychosocial Studies, and are tailored to skill students with transferable skills for future employment.

How we will assess you

Assessment is structured mainly through written assignments for each module (4000 words) and a dissertation of 10,000-12,000 words.

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:

- Demonstrate a firm grasp of a range of interdisciplinary theoretical approaches to understanding the psychosocial constitution of the human subject and the relationship between the psychic and the social in the wider social formation.
- Demonstrate the capacity to apply a psychosocial understanding to key problematics and phenomena.
- Demonstrate a conceptual grasp and practical understanding of psychosocial epistemologies and methodologies for empirical and theoretical research
- Carry out a piece of independent research (either empirical or theoretical) on a psychosocial topic of their choice.
- Work effectively in a small-group so as to perform a number of small-group tasks including group oral presentations.
- Manage their own independent reading and learning outside staff contact-time so as to produce assignments of the required standard.

Careers and further study

Graduates can pursue career paths in mental health, education, social research, international development, conflict resolution, human rights, or the cultural industries. Possible professions include:

- counselling psychologist
- further education lecturer
- human resources officer
- social researcher
- psychotherapist.

Birkbeck's MA Psychosocial graduates will complete with a set of valuable attributes, for example:

- The ability to navigate academically and professionally beyond conventional distinctions found in many areas of sociology and psychology between the 'psychological' and the 'social'.
- The acquisition of in-depth understanding of the relationship between the individual and social and political formations.
- Psychosocial Research Skills
- The ability to work autonomously but also as part of a team
- Oral and written communication skills
- The ability to elaborate an argument

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 who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

All Birkbeck students have access to a range of [student support services](#). 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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