

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course Record Information

Name and level of final award:	MA Creative Writing: Writing the City
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Postgraduate Diploma in Creative Writing: Writing the City Postgraduate Certificate in Creative Writing: Writing the City
Awarding Body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of Delivery:	University of Westminster, Regent site
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Dr Monica Germanà
Course URL:	http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/english/postgraduate-courses/full-time/p09fpcrw-ma-creative-writing-writing-the-city
Mode of Study:	Full time or Part time
UW Course Code:	PCRWWRI
JACS Code:	
UCAS code:	
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group:	Not applicable
Professional Body Accreditation:	Not applicable
Date of initial course approval/last review:	Initial validation 2010 Review: 2014
Date of Programme Specification:	2010

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are normally required to have a good first degree or equivalent in a humanities-based subject: successful applicants will be expected to have a proven interest in, and commitment to, language and its creative outlets. Candidates without formal qualifications will also be considered on the basis of their professional

achievements in relevant areas of the creative industry (theatre, performance, journalism, publishing, etc.). Students whose first language is not English must have an IELTS certificate with an overall score of 7.0, or be able to demonstrate an equivalent level. Applicants will also be required to give two academic references and to submit a portfolio of creative writing, which should not exclusively include poetry. Selected candidates will be invited for an interview.

AIMS OF THE COURSE

The MA Writing the City is one of three Creative Writing Masters programmes (Writing the City, English Language and Creative Writing, and TESOL and Creative Writing) and part of a suite of Masters programmes under the title of Cultural, Critical and Literary Studies that is based within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. This suite also includes the MAs in Critical and Cultural Studies, in Visual Culture, and in Museums, Galleries and Contemporary Culture. Like other postgraduate creative writing courses, this MA is aimed at students who already have some writing experience and a facility with language, but who are willing to develop their creative writing to a more advanced and professional level. The MA Writing the City provides a course that is wide-ranging in terms of genre, but also has a distinctive focus on a specific subject matter: the city of London. Students on the course are encouraged to respond to the urban environment through their writing. All the MA modules will invite students to discover their own way to map the city, both in their creative writing as well as in their research projects. Options are offered across the programmes, enabling students to construct a programme of study in which they can follow particular themes in the areas that most interest them, such as fiction writing, playwriting, and digital writing.

Specifically the MA Writing the City aims to:

- develop and scrutinise the ideas of reading and writing the city
- enable students to write in a variety of genres of their choice and to aim for a professional standard in their writing
- foster the use of focussed research as the basis for imaginative and original creative work
- enhance advanced skills of presentation specific to creative writing
- employ knowledge of urban writing, assimilated from a variety of existing texts, of various literary forms and strategies, in developing new creative work
- experiment within and beyond the conventions of established literary genres
- explore writing opportunities offered by a variety of media
- relate their own creativity to a relevant tradition of urban writing
- create a substantial and innovative body of work relating to and growing beyond that tradition
- allow students to develop advanced skills in argument, synthesis and critical expression
- provide a route to a professional writing career
- encourage students to document their own creative processes with a degree of sophistication appropriate to MA level work;

- to work as writers with other writers in an atmosphere of commitment and artistic ambition.

EMPLOYMENT AND FURTHER STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e, employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements that will inform the service delivered to students.

The MA Writing the City is intended to provide students with sophisticated writing skills and a widely applicable skill base. Throughout the programme, students will be encouraged to reflect on their professional development and take proactive steps in networking with other writers and identify useful opportunities for their career development. A wide range of extra-curricular activities – including writers' events and talks, contribution to *The London Postcard* student blog and the student magazine *The Wells Street Journal* – will support this process throughout the academic year. Depending on the student's inclinations, this degree will enable students to embrace a range of careers in the writing, creative and cultural industries. In particular, the critical and practical skills the graduates will have acquired by the end of their degrees, will make students desirable candidates in the following career areas: freelance writing, journalism, theatre and performance-based writing, media, education, arts management, copy-editing, publishing, research and academia. Additionally, the degree offers transferable skills, which will enable students pursuing careers outside the writing business to enhance their professional development through the application of creative thinking and writing in areas as diverse as business, marketing and human resources.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. They are threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

Knowledge and Understanding

Graduates of the MA will:

- be able to identify the key elements of urban writing
- be familiar with the interdisciplinary connections of writing the city

- develop a sophisticated knowledge of particular periods and movements in the representation of the city
- have a sophisticated knowledge of current writing on London in comparison to other urban traditions
- be able to deploy advanced reading approaches in relation to a variety of texts
- have developed advanced skills of argument, synthesis and critical expression
- have enhanced skills of research and presentation.
- be able to apply creative thinking to a variety of contexts.

Specific Skills

Graduates of the MA will acquire a range of advanced scholarly and writing skills such as:

- imaginative ways to use language creatively in relation to city writing
- critical skills in the close reading and analysis of texts
- advanced writing skills in a variety of genres
- sophisticated use of the key elements of writing (voice, plot, character)
- developed awareness of a range of generic conventions in relation to the urban environment and of the shaping effects upon communication of context, textual production, and intended audience
- advanced skills in effective communication and argument, oral and written
- rigorous self-discipline (including time-management, motivation and emotional balance)
- professional redrafting, editing and proof-reading skills
- the scholarly skills appropriate to the discipline, including accurate citation of sources and use of bibliographical conventions
- negotiating opportunities and networking within a competitive and challenging writing market.

Key Transferable skills

- Professional editing and redrafting of own and other people's works
- advanced script development
- professional workshop delivery
- advanced presentation of creative and critical work
- a sophisticated sense of audience and the appropriate methods to reach diverse groups of readers, spectators and listeners
- effective communication with a range of audiences
- self-motivation to produce a significant piece of writing
- realistic devising and planning of projects within specified time and/or budgetary constraints
- mature ability to give and receive constructive criticism of their own and others' work
- proficiency in group dynamics, feedback and workshop methods
- confidence in approach to own career development
- capacity for independent thought and aesthetic judgement
- knowledge of relevant technology to textual and performance production
- creative thinking in diverse intellectual situations.

LEARNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

Learning

The workshop-based structure of the programme will allow students to learn through interactive practice. Further to this each student will be assigned an academic tutor from among the academic staff with whom they will have at least one timetabled session in the first semester.

Teaching

Modules are taught by one two-hour or three-hour seminar and workshops per week, depending on the subject. Sessions are focussed on student-centred learning, with use of non-assessed writing exercises and in-class projects to encourage student participation. Teaching will also involve the use of London institutions as a resource, including the directed use of various archives, theatres and galleries.

Assessment

Assessment methods deployed on the course include coursework in the form of portfolios allowing students to experiment in a variety of genres, reflective logs, workshop leadership, as well as the final 10,000-12,000 word writing project. There are no formal examinations.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits or 7 modules per year, following the diagram below:

Credit Level 7				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
SCRW700	Tales of the City	Core (for Sept starters)	20	10
SCRW701	Conflict and the City	Core (for Sept starters)	20	10
SCRW703	Creative Practice	Core	20	10
SCRW705	The Writing Business	Core	20	10
SCRW708	Portfolio: How to Write Creatively	Core (for Jan starters)	40	20
SCRW706	The Writing Project	Core	60	30
SCRW702	Language and The Imagination	Option	20	10
SCRW709	Digital London	Option	20	10
1ENL7A6	Reading the Nation (<i>not running 2014-15</i>)	Option	20	10
1ENL7A9	Reading Contemporary Culture	Option	20	10
1ENL7B2	London Vortex: the City and Modernism	Option	20	10
1CUS7A1	Urban Cultures	Option	20	10
1LIN7A8	Analysing Spoken and Written Discourse	Option	20	10
1LIN7B1	Sociolinguistics	Option	20	10
SLIN704	History of the English Language (<i>not running 2014-15</i>)	Option	20	10
1VIS7A8	Work Placement	Option	20	10

NB: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year.

Academic regulations

The MA Writing the City and its intermediate awards operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called Essential Westminster, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster. The following regulations should be read in conjunction with Section 18: Modular Framework for Postgraduate Courses and relevant sections of the current Handbook of Academic Regulations, which is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

Please note that the Writing Project module may be assessed only twice: a student who accepts reassessment therefore has no right to a re-attempt at the project module; neither may a student who has re-attempted a project module be offered reassessment.

Award

To qualify for the award of MA Writing the City, a student must have:

- obtained a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 (this may include a maximum of 30 credits at Level 6 where validated as part of the award);
 - attempted modules worth no more than 240 credits; and
- Note: A first attempt of any module will count as an attempt, and a re-attempt of any module that a student has failed will count as a further, separate attempt. Re-assessment following referral at the first sit will not count as a further separate attempt.
- satisfied the requirements contained within any course specific regulations for the relevant Course Scheme.

The University may award:

- a Masters Degree with Merit to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at Level 7.
- a Masters Degree with Distinction to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at Level 7.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Upon arrival, an orientation programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the Faculty Registry. Students will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at their Faculty. Students can search the entire library

collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students.

[Student Affairs](#) provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The Student Affairs Hub is located at 101 New Cavendish Street, Cavendish House (1st Floor), with an additional office located at the Harrow Campus.

westminster.ac.uk/study/new-students/when-you-arrive

The [University of Westminster Students' Union](#) also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University. <http://www.uwsu.com/>

REFERENCE POINTS FOR THE COURSE

Internally

Primary internal reference points for teaching, learning and assessment policies on the MA are the University Handbook of Academic Regulations, the Quality Assurance Handbook, and the Guide to Higher Education and Career Management Skills produced by the Education Initiative Centre (EIC).

The course is designed to enhance and extend the resources offered by research in literary studies going on within the University, as well as by the kinds of transdisciplinary work across the areas of literary, visual and historical studies that are among the research and teaching strengths of the Faculty. The MA is situated within the suite of Cultural, Critical and Literary Studies MAs hosted by the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, and makes use of the wide range of cognate research interests and forms of expertise that exist across the various disciplines and staff members involved in the delivery of this programme.

The course structure meets the requirements of the modular frameworks and the academic regulations of the University, as well as of the Faculty Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy. At the same time, it is designed to take account of both the University Policies on skills development and employability and one of the key themes in the University strategic plan – creative and cultural industries – providing advanced theoretical and critical work relevant to these areas.

Externally

The primary external reference point for the academic infrastructure of the course is the Quality Assurance Agency (qaa.ac.uk); in particular, the Code of Practice for the assurance of quality and standards, the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and the details of programme specifications. For credit level descriptors (specifically 'M' level descriptors), the reference point is the South England consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (seec-office.org.uk). Reference may also be made to the materials provided by various subject centres of the Higher Education Academy (heacademy.ac.uk).

QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Course Management

The Course is hosted in the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, one of the departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. The Course is directly managed by a Course Leader within the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies. Each module on the course also has a designated Module Leader responsible for the administration and monitoring of its design and delivery.

The course teaching team consists of staff from Creative Writing team in the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural studies. Key members of the course team meet regularly each year to identify and address ways of improving the design and delivery of the course. Staff undergo annual appraisal and observation of their teaching by colleagues leading to staff development through course attendance and/or research and scholarly activity. Staff teaching on the course also attend events organised by the Faculty Academic Standards and the Faculty Teaching and Learning Groups around current teaching, learning and assessment issues. The programme also recruits professional writers to facilitate specific parts of the course.

The MA course intersects with, and draws upon, the institutional resources provided by the wider set of events and cultural initiatives co-ordinated by staff within the Faculty as well as both the writers' events series hosted by the Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, by the IMCC, and by the various events and collaborative ventures organised under the umbrella of the Westminster-Smithsonian Colloquium.

Course Approval, Monitoring and Review

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2010. The Panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from academia and industry to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other Universities and the relevance to employers. Periodic Course Review helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

The course is monitored each year by Faculty to ensure that it is running effectively and that issues that might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement

and the reports from External Examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee considers the Faculty action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal mechanism for feedback on the course is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group in various discussions. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee. All students are invited to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the Module Leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced. The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience.

Students meet with Review Panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from Course Committees are part of the Faculty's quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course:

Please contact Dr Monica Germanà, Course Leader,
m.germana@westminster.ac.uk

Webpage: westminster.ac.uk/courses/subjects/english/postgraduate-courses/full-time/p09fpcrw-ma-creative-writing-writing-the-city

Please note: This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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