

Course record information

Name and level of final award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Arts - Communication <p>The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible</p>
Name and level of intermediate awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate Diploma (Pg Dip) - Communication • Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) - Communication
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Primary: Harrow
Language of delivery and assessment	English
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	<p>There are no Subject benchmark statements for Master's degrees in Media and Communication.</p> <p>The following benchmarks have been consulted; Honours Degree Benchmark Statements:</p> <p>Communication, media, film and cultural studies 2016 (QAA 251 06/16); and 'Securing and maintaining academic standards: benchmarking M level programmes' (2006)</p>
Professional statutory or regulatory body	N/A
Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA Communication FT, Full-time, September start - 1 year standard length • MA Communication PT, Part-time day, September start - 2 years standard length
Valid for cohorts	From 2024/5

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all postgraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information. For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements. More information can be found here: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply>.

Aims of the programme

The MA in Communication has been designed to provide you with the opportunity to study at graduate level:

- The main ways in which social scientists have analysed the role of the mass media in communication and how to develop, evaluate and apply research to evaluate these theories.
- An analytical approach to the structure and performance of the communication industries which takes account of their broader historical, economic, political and social contexts.
- The factors which shape mass communication policies in modern society.
- The range of cultural responses and the changing character of human subjectivity which have emerged as societies are modernised.
- The debates about the nature of modern societies and the roles which the media play in politics and everyday life.
- The major debates about the regulation and censorship of media.

And to:

- Research and write your own thesis on an area of communication.

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, which will inform the service delivered to students.

Graduates of the MA Communication are able to work in a wide range of sectors and professions. The degree will benefit those seeking a competitive edge in a careers market that values high-level skills in communication, research and critical thinking. This degree will be of particular interest to those who plan to work in the creative industries, as well as those already working in this field. The MA Communication will also be of interest to students working in non-profit sectors, including NGOs and advocacy groups. It also provides an excellent preparation for those planning to continue their studies to PhD level. The MA places particular emphasis on those transferable skills that have always been central to an education in the humanities or social sciences: these are core skills in research and analysis, in critical thinking, and in communication; our graduates develop these to advanced levels, along with their knowledge and understanding of networked digital media and their social and cultural contexts. Graduates of this degree are informed, critical, adaptable, resourceful and creative. They are able to work both independently and collaboratively in roles that require advanced skills in finding, generating, analysing and communicating ideas and information, such as research, consultancy, administration and management.

Graduates have found jobs in middle and upper management in media industries, as well as the broader private (e.g. consulting and advertising firms) and public sector (e.g. government ministries, regulatory authorities), international organisations and NGOs. Some graduates also continue to do PhD research. Success in their Masters degree has allowed many who have been in media jobs before joining the course to move into more senior roles within their companies or organisations, and to transfer to new sectors of the media.

Learning Outcomes

The skills strategy for the MA in Communication reflects the University's policy of "Educating for Professional Life" and is designed to provide a broad range of transferable skills that equip students to develop or enhance careers in the media and communication fields.

Knowledge and Understanding (KU)

The core course specific modules address these course learning outcomes as follows:

- 7COMM013W Theories of Communication (KNU1, KNU2)

- 7COMM002W Researching Media & Communication (KNU3, KNU5)
- 7MEST001W Advanced Independent Study (KNU1, KNU2, KNU3, KNU4, KNU5)

Specific Skills (SS)

- 7COMM013W Theories of Communication (SS1, SS2)
- 7COMM002W Researching Media & Communication (SS2, SS3)
- 7MEST001W Advanced Independent Study (SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4)

Key Transferable Skills (KTS)

Upon completion of the course students will have developed a number of general rather than discipline-specific skills which any practitioner must have if s/he is to be successful.

All optional modules contribute in some way to the acquisition of these transferable skills. The following shows how the key transferable skills are mapped to the core course modules:

- 7COMM013W Theories of Communication (KTS2, KTS3, KTS4, KTS5, KTS6, KTS7)
- 7COMM002W Researching Media & Communication (KTS1, KTS2, KTS3, KTS4, KTS5, KTS6, KTS7)
- 7MEST001W Advanced Independent Study (KTS2, KTS3, KTS4, KTS5, KTS6, KTS7)

What will you be expected to achieve?

Course learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning.

These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

The overall knowledge and understanding you will gain from your course (KU)

Graduate attributes are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA)

Professional and personal practice learning outcomes are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)

Key transferable skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

Level 7 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- 001 Have a deep and systematic understanding of the role the media play in diverse societies. KNU1 (KU)
- 002 Have a comprehensive understanding of the key theories by explain the role of the media in various societies may be explained. KNU2 (KU)
- 003 Have a comprehensive understanding of the key research methodologies and approaches relevant to the field of media and communication. KNU3 (KU)
- 004 Show critical awareness of current research issues, problems and/or insights relevant to the interdisciplinary field of media and communication. KNU4 (KU)
- 005 Have undertaken independent research related to the political, economic, cultural and/or sociological factors which shape the practices and outcomes of mass media, including media texts and audience reception of them. KNU5 (KU)
- 006 Group working: Students will be able to (a) work effectively within a group both as group leaders and/or group members; (b) clarify tasks and make appropriate use of group members abilities; (c) negotiate and handle conflict with confidence; and (d) participate effectively in the peer review process. KTS1 (KTS)
- 007 Accessing Learning resources: Students will be able to locate and use a full range of learning resources to carry out literature reviews and engage in research activity. KTS2 (KTS)
- 008 Self evaluation: Students will be able to reflect on their own and others' performance; participate effectively in the peer review process and analyse and identify ways to improve practice; know how to advance their knowledge

and understanding, how to recognise their development needs and develop new skills to a high level. KTS3 (KTS)

- 009 Management of information: Students will be able to competently undertake research tasks with minimum guidance; sieve through information clutter to identify relevance, to organise and present information effectively using different media. KTS4 (KTS)
- 010 Autonomy: Students will be independent and self-critical learners, who can act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks and who will be able to guide the learning of others. KTS5 (KTS)
- 011 Communication: Students will engage confidently in academic and professional communication both orally and in writing with others, reporting on action clearly, autonomously and competently. KTS6 (KTS)
- 012 Problem solving: Students' abilities in independent learning and self-evaluation will equip them to regard problems as challenges and adopt the problem-solving approach required for professional life and continuing professional study, including making professional and ethical use of others where appropriate. KTS7 (KTS)
- 013 Ability to interpret the role the media play in diverse societies. SS1 (SS)
- 014 Ability to analyse, in depth, key current issues facing the mass media and communication fields and critically assess relevant theories. SS2 (SS)
- 015 Ability to interpret the context in which communication takes place, using a variety of approaches, judging the appropriateness of the methodologies used, and recognising alternative approaches. SS3 (SS)
- 016 Ability to design and undertake a substantial independent piece of research in the field of media and communication to address significant areas of conceptual and/or empirical knowledge which will require the extensive use of a variety of information resources. In doing so, they will select and apply appropriate methodological approaches and critically evaluate their effectiveness. SS4 (SS)

How will you learn?

Teaching methods

Teaching and learning on the course is defined to be appropriate to the needs of each module. The teaching and learning methods on the course include the following:

Lectures: These are designed to give you a general overview of the topic and are usually concise, topical and interactive. If you do not understand a point, or disagree with it, feel free to ask questions or argue your case.

Seminars: These are designed to encourage students to discuss a topic, based on the lecture and their reading. Sometimes individual students will be asked to introduce a specific topic in a seminar

Individual Reading: A written list of recommended reading for each topic will be given out at the beginning of each module. This reading list represents a basis for exploration of the subject and students are expected to go beyond the reading list and seek out other material.

Internet Use: Modules may require students to undertake web searches on particular topics. The intention is that they should gain expertise in the use of on-line data and the integration of this material into presentations and essays.

Presentations: The intention of asking students to give individual presentations is to give them experience in presenting ideas and arguments concisely, to familiarise them with the preparation and use of visual aids, and to teach them how to interact with an audience. In some modules individual presentations will be formally assessed for clarity of argument, evidence of reading and presentational style. Even where the individual presentation is not formally assessed, students will normally be given feedback on their performance. Group presentations are designed to give experience of working on a particular topic as a member of a team, so that students learn how to divide up topics, work to a schedule and co-ordinate presentation.

Workshops and Classes: These are designed so that students work in a group in class on a particular topic, often using a real scenario or current example. Led by specialist staff, they enable everyone in the group to work intensively, pool ideas and solve problems together.

Independent Research: Student led project work involving interviews and other external contact and research activity, leading to the assessed dissertation.

Assessment methods

There are no formal exams in this course. This course focuses on imparting knowledge and skills. The assessment strategy is designed to facilitate and test this process. Your progress will be assessed by a variety of methods which we have carefully developed in order to equip you with the course skills identified above as well as the transferable critical thinking and problem solving skills that you would expect to learn on any postgraduate course.

The assessment criteria for oral presentations and written assignments are clearly set out in the course handbook. In addition, you will be provided with a full brief for each assessment in the relevant module handbook, and the brief will be discussed in class with an opportunity to ask questions. All Semester One modules have the same type of assessment. They require students to submit quite early on in the academic year a short diagnostic essay (20% weighting). This assignment enables the student and module leader to identify potential problems that can be addressed through Study Skills and as such students have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve. In addition, students have to submit a second substantial written essay towards the end of the semester. There is more variety in assessment techniques in second semester modules. These include business proposals, group work and assessed presentations in addition to essays.

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 per year. Additional free text information on the choices may also be included, for example where students must choose one of two modules.. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Modules

Level 7

The MA in Communication is taught in two different modes: full-time and part-time. This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study seven modules (totalling 180 credits) per year.

Core modules to the value of 100 credits:

7COMM013W Theories of Communication
7COMM002W Researching Media and Communication
7MEST001W Advanced Independent Study

Two further modules worth 40 credits from:

7MEDS005W Political Economy of Communication
7MEST002W Global Media
7COMM011W Political Analysis of Communications Policy
7COMM012W Technology and Communication Policy

Two optional modules to the value of 40 credits from

7MEDS015W Media, Activism and Politics
7COMM006W Media Audiences in the Digital Age
7MEST004W The Chinese Media
7COMM003W Communications Policy and Development
7COMM007W Digital Media Business: Strategy and Entrepreneurship
7COMM010W Policies for Digital Convergence
7JRNL016W The Sociology of News

Or another Level 7 module as agreed with the Course Leader

Full-time students will complete the course in one year, part-time students in two years. Over this one year (full-time students) or two years (part-time students) students will take the equivalent of six (20 credit) taught modules. In addition they will complete a (60 credit) Advanced Independent Study dissertation module based on a taught component and independent research leading to a dissertation which is submitted at the end of August of the first year (for full-time students) or at the end of August of the second year (for part-time students).

The Advanced Independent Study dissertation should include primary research on a subject chosen by the student but which is relevant to the MA in Communication and is agreed with the supervisor, for instance related to the political, economic, cultural and/or sociological factors which shape the practices and outcomes of mass media, including media

texts and audience reception of them

In semester one, **full time students** take three taught modules (of 20 credits each). Of these one is *compulsory* (*Theories of Communication*). In the second semester students take three 20-credit taught modules. Of these one is *compulsory* (*Researching Media & Communication*). In addition, students take the compulsory Advanced Independent Study (*Dissertation*) module *over the whole year*. This module will consist of a taught element during the first semester. In the second semester students undertake independent study under the guidance of a dissertation supervisor personally assigned to them from the beginning of the semester. The final dissertation, to be delivered by the end of August, will be worth 60 credits.

Part-time students will take the compulsory taught module (*Theories of Communication*) plus another taught module in semester one of the 1st year. In semester two of the 1st year, they will take one compulsory module (*Researching Media & Communication*) and one optional module. In their second year of study, part timers will take one optional taught module in each semester. In addition, they have to take the compulsory Advanced Independent Study (*Dissertation*) module *over the whole year*. This module will consist of a taught element during the first semester. In the second semester students undertake independent study under the guidance of a dissertation supervisor personally assigned to them from the beginning of the semester. The final dissertation, to be delivered by the end of August of your second year, will be worth 60 credits.

For the award of the PG Diploma Global Media (120 credits) students must pass the Theories of Communication and Approaches to Media & Communication Research module.

For the award of the PG Certificate Global Media (60 credits) students must complete the Theories of Communication module.

Module Code	Module Title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
7MEST001W	Advanced Independent Study	Core	60	30
7COMM002W	Researching Media and Communication	Core	20	10
7COMM013W	Theories of Communication	Core	20	10
7BUIS031W	Artificial Intelligence and Society	Option	20	10
7COMM011W	Communication Policy and Power	Option	20	10
7COMM003W	Communications Policy and Development	Option	20	10
7COMM007W	Digital Media Business: Strategy and Entrepreneurship	Option	20	10
7COMM012W	Digital Technologies and Communication Policy	Option	20	10
7MEST002W	Global Media	Option	20	10
7COMM006W	Media Audiences in the Digital Age	Option	20	10
7MEDS015W	Media, Activism and Politics	Option	20	10
7INME008W	Podcast Production	Option	20	10
7COMM010W	Policies for Digital Convergence	Option	20	10
7MEDS005W	Political Economy of Communication	Option	20	10
7MEST004W	The Chinese Media	Option	20	10
7JRNL016W	The Sociology of News	Option	20	10

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot register for your first choice of option modules.

Professional body accreditation or other external references

N/A

Course management

The MA Communication is taught in the College of Design, Creative and Digital Industries. It is based in the Westminster School of Media and Communication. The management structure supporting the course is as follows:

Maria Michalis, Course Leader, is responsible for day to day running and overall management of the course and development of the curriculum. Maria can be contacted on extension (x68378) or by email: m.michalis@westminster.ac.uk

Head of School: Michaela O'Brien, holds academic responsibility for the course and for other courses run within the School.

Head of College: Professor Janet Jones, holds overall responsibility for the course and for the other courses run in the College.

The Course Leader, Maria Michalis will be responsible for:

- Admissions
- Approving students' programme of study
- Organisation of tutorial and supervisory support and pastoral care
- Co-ordination of Dissertation supervision
- Co-ordination of marks for assessment boards
- General management of the course

The **Course Team** reviews and develops the course and sets the framework for the above procedures, in which all members of course team participate. The Course Team of the MA in Communication consists, in addition to the course leader, of Dr. Dimitris Boucas, Professor Tarik Sabry, Dr Xin Xin, and all other module leaders of modules included in the course.

Module leaders oversee the delivery of all aspects of the module(s) they are responsible for. They consult students on matters relevant to their module.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Campus Registry. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. 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. Further information on Blackboard can be found at <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard>

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. 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 in their College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/student-advice>

The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/students-union>

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel. University Panels normally include internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university, a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

The course is also monitored each year by the College to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the evidence of student surveys, student progression and achievement and reports from external examiners, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make changes where necessary.

A Course revalidation takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.
- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College and University committees.;
- All students are invited to complete a 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.
- Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

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 they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification is supplemented by the Course Handbook, Module proforma and Module Handbooks provided to students. Copyright in this document belongs to the University of Westminster. All rights are reserved. This document is for personal use only and may not be reproduced or used for any other purpose, either in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the University of Westminster. All copies of this document must incorporate this Copyright Notice – 2022©