

# MA Black British Literature

## Programme Specification

**Awarding Institution:**

University of London (Interim Exit Awards made by Goldsmiths' College)

**Teaching Institution:** Goldsmiths, University of London**Name of Final Award and Programme Title:** MA Black British Literature**Name of Interim Exit Award(s):**

Postgraduate Certificate in Black British Literature

Postgraduate Diploma in Black British Literature

**Duration of Programme:** 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time**UCAS Code(s):** Not applicable**HECoS Code(s):** (100319) English Literature**QAA Benchmark Group:** Not applicable**FHEQ Level of Award:** Level 7**Programme accredited by:** Not applicable**Date Programme Specification last updated/approved:** October 2020**Home Department:** English and Creative Writing**Department(s) which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:**

Theatre and Performance

## Programme overview

Black British writing crystallised as a literary category, at the end of the twentieth century. It is generally understood to encompass the writing of black Britons (of African descent) whose work speaks from a sensibility and standpoint quite distinct from the migration or arriviste narratives of previous generations of people in the UK who termed themselves Black writers. Many established scholars of contemporary literature working in Britain, Europe, Africa, and Asia occasionally teach a course or two incorporating Black British writers, do research on Black British texts, and publish articles and books on these interests. However, this Goldsmiths MA Black British Literature means the University of London will break new ground in preparing and empowering scholar-specialists in this growing and exciting field of study.

If the humanities are to serve the multi-cultures of Britain, the building of a critical infrastructure that retrieves, assesses and articulates a fuller compass of inclusion is vital for intellectual and public awareness. In studying this MA, you will become part of this process.

The MA provides opportunities to experience events featuring many of the writers and practitioners studied. It also gives you contact with contemporary Black British writing, drama and performance from within Britain. You will have access to the Black Cultural Archive, the George Padmore Institute, Iniva, and the Black Theatre Archive at the Royal National Theatre as part of fieldwork tasks and further research. You will have the opportunity to apply for one of two annual one-month paid internships with global publisher Hachette over summer.

The degree is made up of: (I) two core modules, (II) two compulsory modules, which students take, and (III) a dissertation.

## **Programme entry requirements**

The standard requirement is an upper second class (or higher) BA or equivalent degree in English, Drama, History, Caribbean Studies, or a related humanities/arts subject (e.g. Language, Philosophy); but other qualifications of equivalent level may be considered; as are degree results below the upper second class where there are indications of academic strength in this specialisation.

A high level of competence in written and spoken English is also required. Students whose first language is not English need a minimum score of 7.0 in IELTS (including 7.0 in the written element) or equivalent.

Students without BA-equivalent qualifications who have substantial work experience (e.g. in literary journalism, creative writing, publishing etc.) which may be considered as equivalent to formal qualifications, may be admitted provided they demonstrate analytical and academic writing skills to the necessary level. Criteria for entry to the programme emphasises the self-motivation and research interests of the candidate. Unconditional places might be offered in particular to overseas students on the strength of a written application alone where this fulfils all the basic admissions criteria. Applicants able to travel will be invited for an interview before being offered a place in one of several interview days offered by the Convenor.

## **Aims of the programme**

The programme specification is informed by: Goldsmiths' declared focus on 'the study of creative, cultural and social processes'; the QAA Code of Practice; the National Qualifications Framework; and the GUL Learning and Teaching Strategy.

The main purpose of the programme is to offer a challenging, flexible and advanced scheme of study invigorated by current research, which extends students' specialist knowledge and critical and contextual understandings of Black British Literature, Drama and Performance. The programme aspires to:

1. enhance independent critical and evaluative skills
2. expand students' knowledge and understanding of the cultural, historical and intellectual foundations of Black British Literature, Drama and Performance.
3. develop an understanding of diverse literary trends, movements and schools informing the literature and its performativity
4. promote students' analytical engagement with the complexities of Black British and diasporic literary and performance discourses
5. deepen students' understanding of theorising and readings of the aesthetics of literary genres represented within the body of work
6. encourage students' self-development into professionally organised and interactive individuals by practising skills of selection, assimilation and communication in both written and oral domains.
7. facilitate a learning environment that offers an appropriate foundation for further scholarly research in Black British literary studies

Taking all 4 modules of the degree equips students with a broad range of literature to support selection of a dissertation topic. Alongside subject-specific competencies and knowledge, the training provided by the programme will help to develop a range of transferable intellectual, creative, communicative and theoretical skills which are applicable to a broad spectrum of employment contexts.

The programme is taught by researchers and writers with international profiles in the field and will draw upon a network of professional authors, performers, arts programmers, directors, archivists and publishers as well as scholars.

## What you will be expected to achieve

For the Postgraduate Certificate to be awarded, modules to the value of at least 60CATS of one compulsory module and one option will have been passed and the following learning outcomes will have been achieved:

### Knowledge and understanding

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
A1	a range of major literary works from the Black British corpus	All modules
A2	significant intellectual and historical contexts of Black British literary texts, poetics and performance	All modules
A3	a range of major critical definitions of the special characteristics of Black British literary and dramatic work	All modules

### Cognitive and thinking skills

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
B1	conduct detailed textual analysis informed by appropriate contextual knowledge	All modules
B2	synthesise multiple, diverse, but relevant contexts and perspectives	All modules
B3	formulate coherent and persuasive interpretations and arguments informed by standards of scholarly accuracy	All modules

### Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes

Code	Learning outcome	Taught by the following module(s)
C1	perceive and account for interactions between cultural contexts and literary/performance forms in the creation and reception of textual meanings	All modules
C2	use close reading and performance analysis to produce critically informed independent interpretations of	All modules

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
	challengingly innovative literary texts and performances	
C3	produce own written work to scholarly standards in organisation, relevance, expression, referencing, and bibliography	All modules
C4	prepare, contribute to, and on occasion lead seminar discussion on complex texts and contextual issues.	All modules

## **Transferable skills**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
D1	enhanced communication and discussion skills, in written and oral contexts	All modules
D2	facility in accessing verbal data using hard copy / electronic resources	All modules
D3	capacity to handle ideas in rational, critical and evaluative ways	All modules
D4	open-mindedness and capacity for independent judgement	All modules
D5	management of own learning, including working effectively to deadlines	All modules
D6	application of skills of close analysis to a variety of texts and contexts	All modules
D7	ability to make positive contributions to groups, and perception of group dynamics	All modules

For the Postgraduate Diploma to be awarded, modules to the value of at least 120CATS including the compulsory modules, will have been passed and the following learning outcomes will have been achieved:

## **Knowledge and understanding**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
A1	a range of major literary works from the Black British corpus	All modules
A2	significant bodies of literary work representative of major tendencies and problems in Black British writing and performance	All modules

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
A3	significant intellectual and historical contexts of Black British literary texts, poetics and performance	All modules
A4	selected critical and theoretical debates about the characteristics of literary and dramatic innovation in the Black British writing and performance	All modules
A5	a range of major critical definitions of the special characteristics of Black British literary and dramatic work	All modules

### **Cognitive and thinking skills**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
B1	conduct detailed textual analysis informed by appropriate contextual knowledge	All modules
B2	synthesise multiple, diverse, but relevant contexts and perspectives	All modules
B3	Formulate coherent and persuasive interpretations and arguments informed by standards of scholarly accuracy	All modules

### **Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
C1	perceive and account for interactions between cultural contexts and literary/performance forms in the creation and reception of textual meanings	All modules
C2	use close reading and performance analysis to produce critically informed independent interpretations of challengingly innovative literary texts and performances	All modules
C3	analyse processes of change in the generic conventions of Black British literary and performance texts	All modules
C4	use a range of critical commentary and theoretical perspectives discriminatingly	All modules

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
C5	produce own written work to scholarly standards in organisation, relevance, expression, referencing, and bibliography	All modules
C6	research literary topics using data resources and collecting and sifting primary and secondary evidence	All modules
C7	prepare, contribute to, and on occasion lead seminar discussion on complex texts and contextual issues	All modules

## **Transferable skills**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
D1	enhanced communication and discussion skills, in written and oral contexts	All modules
D2	facility in accessing verbal data using hard copy / electronic resources	All modules
D3	capacity to handle ideas in rational, critical and evaluative ways	All modules
D4	open-mindedness and capacity for independent judgement	All modules
D5	management of own learning, including working effectively to deadlines	All modules
D6	application of skills of close analysis to a variety of texts and contexts	All modules
D7	ability to make positive contributions to groups, and perception of group dynamics	All modules

Students who successfully complete the MA should have demonstrated achievement of the following outcomes:

## **Knowledge and understanding**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
A1	a range of major literary works from the Black British corpus	All modules
A2	significant bodies of literary work representative of major tendencies and problems in Black British writing and performance	All modules

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
A3	significant intellectual and historical contexts of Black British literary texts, poetics and performance	All modules
A4	selected critical and theoretical debates about the characteristics of literary and dramatic innovation in the Black British writing and performance	All modules
A5	methods, concepts and appropriate terminologies in advanced literary study	All modules, Dissertation
A6	a range of major critical definitions of the special characteristics of Black British literary and dramatic work	All modules
A7	a selected topic in this field, and the secondary scholarly literature devoted to it	All modules, Dissertation

### **Cognitive and thinking skills**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
B1	conduct detailed textual analysis informed by appropriate contextual knowledge	All modules
B2	synthesise multiple, diverse, but relevant contexts and perspectives	All modules
B3	assimilate and critically evaluate alternative accounts of complex cultural formations	All modules, Dissertation
B4	formulate coherent and persuasive interpretations and arguments informed by standards of scholarly accuracy	All modules
B5	Integrate diverse evidence into coherent comparative evaluations	All modules, Dissertation

### **Subject specific skills and professional behaviours and attitudes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
C1	perceive and account for interactions between cultural contexts and literary/performance forms in the creation and reception of textual meanings	All modules



<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
C2	use close reading and performance analysis to produce critically informed independent interpretations of challengingly innovative literary texts and performances	All modules
C3	analyse processes of change in the generic conventions of Black British literary and performance texts	All modules
C4	use a range of critical commentary and theoretical perspectives discriminatingly	All modules
C5	produce own written work to scholarly standards in organisation, relevance, expression, referencing, and bibliography	All modules
C6	research literary topics using data resources and collecting and sifting primary and secondary evidence	All modules
C7	understand and apply accurately the terminologies appropriate to advanced literary studies	Dissertation, All modules
C8	design and execute an independent project of literary, theoretical research prepare, contribute to, and on occasion lead seminar discussion on complex texts and contextual issues	Dissertation, All modules
C9	prepare, contribute to, and on occasion lead seminar discussion on complex texts and contextual issues	All modules

## **Transferable skills**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
D1	enhanced communication and discussion skills, in written and oral contexts	All modules
D2	facility in accessing verbal data using hard copy / electronic resources	All modules
D3	capacity to handle ideas in rational, critical and evaluative ways	All modules
D4	open-mindedness and capacity for independent judgement	All modules
D5	management of own learning, including working effectively to deadlines	All modules

<b>Code</b>	<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Taught by the following module(s)</b>
D6	application of skills of close analysis to a variety of texts and contexts	All modules
D7	power to organise information, and to assimilate and evaluate competing arguments	All modules
D8	ability to make positive contributions to groups, and perception of group dynamics	All modules
D9	evaluate and assess a range of research methods and develop a critical appreciation of internet applications as a resource and for bibliographic searches	Dissertation, All modules

## How you will learn

Knowledge and Understanding:

Teaching and learning methods and strategies linked to these outcomes: The acquisition of these outcomes will be achieved via the lecture-seminar pedagogical framework and oral presentation with its attendant group discussion and analytical and critical perspectives.

Cognitive and Thinking Skills:

These skills are cultivated across the programme's syllabi. Through seminars and lectures students are continuously exposed to - and encouraged to evolve - fresh perceptions and evaluations of Black British oral and literary forms, techniques and performativity; and through self-managed learning they further assimilate a range of contextual approaches to, and analyses of them. Students are encouraged to support their learning through attendance at live performances, readings, and literary events for which London offers a unique international context in theatre, performance and writing fora. The development of critical engagement is reinforced by the degree of archival and live access to Black British culture.

Subject-Specific skills:

These skills are cultivated across the curriculum, though with varying emphases according to course. In addition, the Programme Handbook provides initial advice on aspects of (5), and Information Services on aspects of (6). Suitable bibliographical information is normative for each module and its efficacy tested in student evaluation. The foundation modules provide a grounding in (1-4) and (7), and the option modules build further on that grounding, particularly in relation to (2). (8) is particularly addressed in the programme of individual

supervision offered in the summer period, devoted to the dissertation and facilitated by guidance in the Programme Handbook. Tutor. Seminars are the forum for (9).

Transferable skills:

The combination of working in groups (workshops with guest tutors, lecture-seminars) and self-directed project work with individual tutorial support will produce outcomes (1-8) Computer applications will be supported by the College's existing student service.

## How you will be assessed

Summative assessment takes the following forms, allowing students to demonstrate a range of appropriate skills:

(i) by a 5,000 to 6,000- word essay for the compulsory module and the options (some option modules are assessed differently, please check option information).

(ii) by a 15,000 word dissertation.

Subject specific skills (1-7) are tested through the assessment methods of essays and dissertation. (8) is tested mainly but not exclusively in the dissertation. Outcomes (1, 2 and 5) are assessed. Transferable skills 1, 6, 7 and 8 will be assessed in the students' seminar participation and responsiveness to guided reading. 2-5 and 7 will be assessed through the students' essays and dissertation.

## Marking criteria

Mark	Descriptor	Specific Marking Criteria
80-100%	Distinction (Outstanding/ Exceptional)	In order to achieve 80% or over, the piece of work being assessed would need to demonstrate that the majority of the learning outcomes have been achieved to an Outstanding level. Marks in this category will be awarded for work which demonstrates a conceptual mastery of the material, is highly original and potentially shows new insights into both business and the application of creative process.
70-79%	Distinction	In order to achieve 70% or over, the piece of work being assessed would need to demonstrate that the majority of the learning outcomes have been achieved to an Excellent level (distinction threshold). Marks in this category will be awarded to work which shows conceptual and stylistic distinction; which

<b>Mark</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Specific Marking Criteria</b>
		features a secure and discriminating acquaintance with the field of study; which engages with the subject in a notably intelligent way; and which is clearly and accurately presented. The work will be of outstanding achievement in all or a consistent combination of the above areas
60-69%	Merit	In order to achieve 60-69%, the piece or work being assessed would need to demonstrate that the majority of the learning outcomes have been achieved to a good extent. Some of the qualities of first-class work may be found in this category but the difference will be either of degree or realisation. The work will be characterised by soundness of argument or analysis, acquaintance with the field of study, coherence and relevance. The work should be of high merit in all these areas or considerable merit in some areas and a good standard in others.
50-59%	Pass	In order to achieve 50-59%, the piece of work being assessed would need to demonstrate that the majority of the appropriate learning outcomes have been achieved to a satisfactory extent. Marks in this range will reflect solid competence and achievement, although the work might be partial rather than consistent in clarity, precision and effectiveness. It might, for example, rely too heavily on secondary sources at the expense of personal critical activity; be insufficiently detailed; or tend towards description rather than analysis. The work should be of good standard in the areas listed in the classification above or good in some areas and of a satisfactory standard in others.
30-49%	Fail	Fail standard - the mark indicates that the work is below the standard of a Masters degree. The piece of work being assessed demonstrates that the majority of the outcomes have been achieved to a less than satisfactory extent. Marks in this range will reflect work that is significantly inconsistent or flawed in relation to all or some of the areas listed above.
10-29%	Bad fail	Represents a significant overall failure to achieve the appropriate learning outcomes at Masters standard.
1-9%	Very bad fail	A submission that does not even attempt to address the specified learning outcomes.
0%	Non submission or plagiarised	A categorical mark representing either the failure to submit an assessment or a mark assigned for a plagiarised assessment.

## How the programme is structured

The programme consists of two compulsory modules, two optional modules and a dissertation. The compulsory module and the optional modules have a value 30 credits each, and the dissertation 60 credits.

### Core modules

1. Historicising the Field: From the Romans to the Present
2. Interculturality, Text, Poetics
3. Dissertation

### Compulsory

#### modules

1. Genre and Aesthetics of Contemporary Black British Writing
2. Literature of the Caribbean and Its Disaporas

Each core module is three hours per week of lecture-seminar over ten weeks. Each compulsory module is three hours of lecture-seminar over ten weeks in Autumn and Spring terms.

Part-time students in their first year will take:

Autumn term —Historicising the Field

Spring term –Interculturality, Text, Poetics.

In their second year, part-time students will take the remaining programme modules.

It is possible for part-time students who can only be released from employment on the same day per academic year to take 'Historicising the Field' and 'Genre and Aesthetics' in the first year and the remaining modules in their second year.

### Full-time mode

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Status	Term
Historicising the Field of Black British Writing: From the Romans to the Present	EN71148A	30	7	Core	1
Interculturality, Text, Poetics	EN71088A	30	7	Core	2

Literature of the Caribbean and Its Diasporas	EN71063A	30	7	Compulsory	1
Genre and Aesthetics of Contemporary Black British Writing	EN71147A	30	7	Compulsory	2
Dissertation	EN71149A	60	7	Compulsory	3

## Academic support

Support for learning and wellbeing is provided in a number of ways by departments and College support services who work collaboratively to ensure students get the right help to reach their best potential both academically and personally.

All students are also allocated a Senior Tutor to enable them to speak to an experienced academic member of staff about any issues which are negatively impacting their academic study and which are beyond the normal scope of issues handled by Programme Convenors.

Students are provided with information about learning resources, the [Library](#) and information available on [Learn.gold \(VLE\)](#) so that they have access to department/ programme handbooks, programme information and support related information and guidance.

Taught sessions and lectures provide overviews of themes, which students are encouraged to complement with intensive reading for presentation and discussion with peers at seminars. Assessments build on lectures and seminars so students are expected to attend all taught sessions to build knowledge and their own understanding of their chosen discipline.

All assessed work is accompanied by some form of feedback to ensure that students' work is on the right track. It may come in a variety of forms ranging from written comments on a marked essay to oral and written feedback on developing projects and practice as they attend workshops.

Students may be referred to specialist student services by department staff or they may access support services independently. Information about support services is provided on the [Goldsmiths website](#) and for new students through new starter information and induction/Welcome Week. Any support recommendations that are made are agreed with the student and communicated to the department so that adjustments to learning and teaching are able to be implemented at a department level and students can be reassured that arrangements are in place. Opportunities are provided for students to review their support arrangements should their circumstances change. The [Disability](#) and [Wellbeing](#) Services

maintain caseloads of students and provide on-going support.

The [Careers Service](#) provides central support for skills enhancement, running [The Gold Award](#) scheme and other co-curricular activities that are accredited via the Higher Education Achievement Report ([HEAR](#)).

The [Academic Skills Centre](#) works with academic departments offering bespoke academic literacy sessions. It also provides a programme of academic skills workshops and one-to-one provision for students throughout the year.

## **Links with employers, placement opportunities and career prospects**

The programme has an active and ongoing relationship with the theatre industry and literary organisations. In addition, members of the full-time teaching staff have ongoing active professional relationships with a number of venues, professionally funded companies, organisations, producers, programmers and festivals including for example: Words of Colour, Iniva, Black Theatre Archive (RNT), Apples and Snakes, National Black Arts Alliance, Peepal Tree Press, Royal society of Literature, The George Padmore Institute, the Mixed Museum, Museum Detox, the Black British Museum Project, London Metropolitan Archives, Spread the Word, The Darcus Howe Legacy Collective, The London Library, The British Library, The Stephen Lawrence Trust, Victoria and Albert Theatre Museum holdings, Society for Theatre Research, L.I.F.T, The Albany, The Young Vic, The Live Art Development Agency and a range of networks in the UK, across Europe, the US and internationally.

Two annual summer paid (pro-rata) internships of five weeks during summer are offered by global publisher, Hachette for which students can apply during or after their studies.

Students are actively encouraged to build relationships via direct contact with the professionals whom they will encounter during their studies on the programme. The English and Creative Writing department curricula is regularly nourished by a pool of visiting UK and international artists who are variously independent, company and/or venue-based.

It is expected that graduates would proceed to a wide range of roles especially within the creative and cultural industries, or education as well as in the local community-based arts and heritage sectors. Some students will go on to undertake further academic research in related fields.

## **The requirements of a Goldsmiths degree**

All taught postgraduate degrees have a minimum total value of 180 credits and involve one calendar year of full-time study. Some programmes may extend over more than one calendar year and, when this is the case, they have a higher total credit value. Programmes

are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the section “How the programme is structured” above. Normally, all modules are at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the [Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework](#).

## Modules

Modules are defined as:

- “Core” and “Compulsory” – which must be taken as part of the degree

## Progression

Some programmes may require students to pass specific modules prior to completion of the dissertation/major project (or equivalent). Additionally, where a programme of study extends beyond one calendar year, students may be required to pass specific modules in their first year of study before progressing to the second year. Where this is the case, these requirements will be set out in this Programme Specification.

## Award of the degree

In order to graduate, students must successfully complete all modules specified for the programme, as set out within the section “How the programme is structured” above.

## Classification

Final degree classification is calculated on the basis of a student’s mean average mark (based on credit value) across all modules on the programme.

Masters degrees are awarded with the following classifications:

Distinction – 70%+

Merit – 60-69%

Pass – 50-59%

More detail on the [calculation of the final classification](#) is on our website.

## Interim exit awards

Some programmes incorporate interim exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and/or



Postgraduate Diploma, which may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the minimum value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. The awards are made without classification.

When these awards are incorporated within the programme, the relevant learning outcomes and module requirements will be set out within the “What you will be expected to achieve” section above.

The above information is intended as a guide, with more detailed information available in the [Goldsmiths Academic Manual](#).

## **Programme-specific rules and facts**

### **General programme costs**

In addition to your tuition fees, you will be responsible for meeting standard costs associated with your study. Find out more information at [gold.ac.uk/programme-costs](http://gold.ac.uk/programme-costs).

### **Specific programme costs**

Not applicable.

## **How teaching quality will be monitored**

Goldsmiths employs a number of methods to ensure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching on its programmes.

Programmes and modules are formally approved against national standards and are monitored throughout the year, such as in departmental committees, a variety of student feedback mechanisms and through the completion of module evaluation questionnaires. Every programme has at least one External Examiner who reviews comments annually on the standards of awards and student achievement. External Examiner(s) attend Boards of Examiners meetings and submit an annual written report.

Modules, programmes and/or departments are also subject to annual and periodic review internally, as well as periodic external scrutiny.

Quality assurance processes aim to ensure Goldsmiths’ academic provision remains current, that the procedures to maintain the standards of the awards are working effectively and the quality of the learning opportunities and information provided to students and applicants is appropriate.

Detailed information on all these procedures are published on the [Quality Office web pages](#).