Creative Documentary by Practice MFA

The MFA provides extended practical training in creative documentary film and aims to provide the technical and intellectual resources required to make outstanding non-fiction moving image. It draws on broad based anthropological and critical thinking about the social and cultural world but above all will leave you with a deep practical understanding of the craft of factual film making, culminating in the production of a medium-length feature documentary film.

Degree summary

You will acquire advanced camera and editing skills in a context of critical enquiry about the social world. You will learn and explore diverse forms of factual storytelling including how to work with an ‘external commissioner’. You will learn how to take risks in pushing the boundaries of film form. You'll deepen your knowledge of documentary film history and learn how to tell long-form stories through images.

We live in an increasingly audio-visual world. In the 19th century the novel was the form. Today it is moving image. If you want to show people new ways of looking at the world, if you want to use cameras, microphones, the possibilities of montage, narrative structure to find new ways of storytelling this degree is for you. We have no ideology and promote no house-style. We want to help you find your own voice in an artistic form that is in its earliest days - where 'anything goes'. If that sounds like your home then this degree is for you.

Over two years you will learn to: i) handle different cameras, lenses and different sound recording equipment to produce cinematic image and sound as well as mastering the technical skills to use professional editing programme/s and post production processes; ii) you will be able to experiment with different sorts of story telling in films of different lengths for varied audiences you will learn to take risks; iii) Under the highest quality supervision, you'll manage a long form (40+ minute) film project carried out by yourself; iv) you'll devise a collaborative ('commissioned') visual research project with persons not trained in film narrative techniques.

We see a film school as an integral part of the creative environment of the 21st century in which the university provides a privileged space for creative work that can only rarely take place outside of its walls. Our school is therefore a site of creative and collaborative creation linking the creative industries and university life. Since 2008, at what is now UCL’s Future Media Studio, and together with Open City Documentary Festival and School we have explored how the teaching of creative non-fiction story telling can best be taught. We have pioneered practice based teaching by practising (part-time) professional film makers.

All practice based courses are delivered in lectures, masterclasses and tutorials followed by supervised project work. Across the MFA you will spend significant time each week completing camera and editing exercises, building up a portfolio of work as well as watching numerous films. All work is assessed, either formatively or formally, by the MFA teaching team.

Degree structure

Mode: Full-time: 2 years
Location: London, Bloomsbury

The programme lasts 21 months from October of entry year. In July-early September of year two, concluding with the film festival, we offer non-assessed industry induction courses.

Students undertake modules to the value of 300 credits. In the first full calendar year the programme consists of four core modules (total 135 credits) and three optional /elective modules (45 credits) - a total 180 credits. In the second (academic length) year you complete a graduation project (120 credits). Overall total 300 credits

Please note that the list of modules given here is indicative. This information is published a long time in advance of enrolment and module content and availability is subject to change.

YEAR ONE COMPULSORY MODULES

There are four compulsory core modules in the first year

- Introduction to the practice of Documentary and Ethnographic Film (30 credits)
- Advanced practice of Documentary and Ethnographic Film (60 credits)
- Short 'commissioned' Practical Film Project and sustained reflection (15 credits)
- Research Work and Book (30 credits)

The research work and accompanying book refers to preparatory work for your final graduation project.

OPTIONAL MODULES

Students choose three modules from the following to achieve a total of 45 credits

- An Introduction to Social Theory (15 credits)
- The Story and I – Finding the Form (15 credits)
- Time and the Staged Index – The evolving narrative of Photography and Film (15 credits)
- Experimental and Interactive Storytelling – Form and Narrative (15 credits)
- Documentary Radio – a practice based introduction (15 credits)
- Documentary Film and the Anthropological Eye (15 credits)
- The Idea of Documentary (15 credits)
- Russian Cinema: Epochs and genres (15 credits)
- Global Cinemas (15 credits)
- East and South Asian Cinemas (15 credits)
- Performance, visual media and popular culture in Africa (15 credits)
- The French New Wave (15 credits)
- Genre in Italian Cinema (15 credits)
- Nordic Cinema: Contextualising Dreyer, Bergman and Dogme (15 credits)

You may apply to take other courses at UCL by agreement with the host department and the tutor for the MFA.

RESEARCH PROJECT/DESIGN PROJECT

- In your graduation film (‘research project/design project’) you will independently make a medium length creative documentary film/moving image story on a subject of your choosing. Pre-production begins at the outset of the second year supervised by the course tutors and project mentors. You will also produce a project diary reflecting on the entire work process.

There is no formal fieldwork but almost all film projects will involve working off-site in fieldwork type conditions.
Your career

Employability
Graduates of the programme will develop a series of practical and transferable skills including:

- Solving complex problems - developing lateral thinking and creative questioning
- Managing time and production flows in complex projects and effectively integrating research into film practice
- Communicating effectively and succinctly
- To be able to pitch and sell stories/product to potential clients
- Be able to find the form best suited for a particular ‘narrative, be this in media or other contexts.
Entry requirements

You are required to have a 2:2 at BA or pass at a non practice based Masters. We require a portfolio of work to support all applications. We will accept applications from practitioners whose portfolio of work and CV demonstrates communicative and artistic achievement to the level of BA.

English language proficiency level

If your education has not been conducted in the English language, you will be expected to demonstrate evidence of an adequate level of English proficiency.

The level of English language proficiency for this programme is: Good.

Information about the evidence required, acceptable qualifications and test providers is provided at:
www.ucl.ac.uk/graduate/english-requirements

Your application

When we assess your application we would like to learn:

// why you want to study Creative Documentary by Practice at graduate level
// why you want to study Creative Documentary by Practice at UCL
// what particularly attracts you to this programme
// how your personal, academic and professional background meets the demands of a challenging programme
// where you would like to go professionally with your degree

Together with essential academic requirements, the personal statement is your opportunity to illustrate whether your reasons for applying to this programme match what the programme will deliver.

There is an application processing fee for this programme of £75 for online applications and £100 for paper applications. Further information can be found at:
www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/taught/application.

FEES AND FUNDING 2019/20 ENTRY

// UK: £16,040 (FT)
// EU: £16,040 (FT)
// Overseas: £26,110 (FT)

The tuition fees shown are for the year indicated above. Fees for subsequent years may increase or otherwise vary. Further information on fee status, fee increases and the fee schedule can be viewed on the UCL Students website.

This is a 2-year programme, comprising 300 credits in total. The full-time fee quoted is for Year 1 only; the fee in Year 2 will be subject to UCL's annual fee increase.

All full time students are required to pay a fee deposit of £2,000 for this programme. All part-time students are required to pay a fee deposit of £1,000.

Full details of funding opportunities can be found on the UCL Scholarships website: www.ucl.ac.uk/scholarships

APPLICATION DEADLINE

All applicants: 26 July 2019

Details on how to apply are available on the website at: www.ucl.ac.uk/graduate/apply

CONTACT

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EU referendum

For up-to-date information relating to specific key questions following the UK's decision to leave the EU, please refer to www.ucl.ac.uk/brexit