Course Specification

# MA
# FILM PRACTICE (ONLINE)



Arts University Bournemouth

## About the Course Handbook

This Handbook provides you with basic information about your course. Through the approved course specification, it provides you with the aims and outcomes of your course and outlines the content and how this will be delivered.

The course is subject to a rigorous process of quality assurance and enhancement. This may result in changes to individual units as the course develops, to ensure that the relevance and quality of the course is upheld. You will be consulted by a member of the course team before any changes are made.

Information in this Handbook should be used in conjunction with the HE Assessment Regulations. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of the regulations that apply to your course and you should refer to the regulations throughout your studies. If you have any questions, you should speak to your Course Leader, or member of the course team. The Assessment Regulations can be located on the Induction section of Canvas, or https://aub.ac.uk/regulations

Important information about key policies which apply to your academic studies is available on the Induction section of Canvas. Please view this material on the Induction section of Canvas.

**If you would like a copy of this Handbook in an alternative format, please contact equalities@aub.ac.uk.**

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

## COURSE SPECIFICATION

The Course Specification provides a summary of the main features of the **MA Film Practice** course and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they pass the course.

Further detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching and learning methods of each module may be found on Canvas, within each module that you undertake.

| **Key Course Information** | |
|---|---|
| Final Award | Master of Arts |
| Course Title | Film Practice |
| Award Title | MA Film Practice |
| Teaching institution | AUB Online |
| Awarding Institution | Arts University Bournemouth |
| Professional accreditation | N/A |
| Length of course / mode of study | 2 years part-time |
| Level of final award (in FHEQ) | Level 7 |
| Subject benchmark statement | QAA Master's degree characteristics |
| Language of study | English |
| Date of Validation | May 2022 |
| Date of most recent review | N/A |
| Date course specification written/revised | May 2022 |

## Postgraduate Taught Degree Ethos

The Master's course recognises individuals and their aspirations, and celebrates ideas, making, and creative risk-taking. Our guiding principle is to offer distinctive, exciting and challenging opportunities for you to engage in your respective subject disciplines in order to critically engage with, and redefine, your particular approaches to your practices and position them within your chosen external, creative, economic, and cultural environment.

We support this principle through our passionate engagement with interdisciplinary and collaborative practices, with the integration of theory and practice, with our understanding of the particularities of individual practitioners and the broader world, global view, and with an attitude to career development that creates a dialogue between professionalism and risk taking.

Such a context affords possibilities to engage with fresh, often unpredictable and certainly challenging methodologies and techniques with which you can research, test, develop, interrogate and challenge, through forms of making that enable you to reflect on your own practice and subject discipline. Whilst you will be encouraged to develop your own themes, relationships between the aesthetic, the political, the ethical and 'value' are ever-present and the courses support your engagement with what are often difficult contemporary issues.

Crucial to this endeavour, is that you demonstrate a committed passion for your practice and the particular media within your chosen subject discipline or field of study. Each course devises specific discipline-focused project work to enable you to be suitably informed in

taking the right path towards your chosen career in a diverse range of professions /industries or progress to further study at doctorate level. This discipline focus is, however, enhanced by your experience of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches and activities which enrich your journey. Different levels of teaching delivery structure your learning experience in such a way as to enable you to take broad, overarching transdisciplinary issues or questions, and ground them within the specificities of your discipline and individual practice. Our focus on the relationships between personal professional development and the development of communities of practice through sharing and collaboration is underpinned by the unique AUB reputation for truly collaborative working across disciplines. Through involvement in cross-course groups, shared lectures and other MA activities you will have opportunities to work together with other MA students to form a 'postgraduate network' that will facilitate a wider dialogue around art and design, sustainability, ethics, the political and the often-global reach of creative industries and professions. Our ethos focuses on not only developing your systematic and critical understanding of knowledge and of the application of that knowledge in an appropriate, professional context but also in having the resolve, the skills and the acumen to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in a world which is asking many questions of all of us with respect to our abilities and desires in coexisting with a global community.

In other words, our ethos focuses on the ability for our graduates not only to develop their careers and be employable but also to be engaged in the redefinition of what employment might look like in what are times of tremendous social, political, economic, and ecological change, and indeed upheaval.

**Course Description**

The MA Film Practice degree at Arts University Bournemouth is a part-time flexible course that integrates filmmaking and theory through intensive online study. The degree offers students an opportunity to develop and realise their creative ambitions while exploring new filmmaking approaches in the context of an international learning community that foregrounds peer feedback and research driven experimentation.

Throughout the course, students are encouraged to apply their thinking through images and sounds in ways that respond to the contemporary world and challenge established mainstream modes of filmmaking. The experiences and knowledge that each student brings is central to the course as they dynamically expand their body of work during a series of structured creative projects, critical interrogation of practice and bespoke mentorship leading to the conceptualisation and manifestation of a final thesis project. Emerging from the course as reflective and committed practitioners, students will innovate in the evolving fields of film creation and exhibition.

The course recognizes and celebrates an expansive understanding of film, its audience and the sites and contexts in which it can be presented. Students may concentrate on the creation of short fiction, documentary, experimental, artist films or other works that emphasize innovation and a commitment to examining form and content. In conjunction with this, the course is designed to be highly flexible, utilising an online delivery mode that brings practitioners together with distinct interests and cultural perspectives. Students can maintain continuity in their professional and personal lives while refining a creative methodology and enhancing career prospects in their chosen specialism over the two-year period of study.

At the outset of the course, students explore and develop their creative point of view by reviewing earlier practice, positioning their work by understanding relevant fields or references, and establishing a reflective journal. Students then join a carousel of modules which each foster distinct processes of making, thinking and reflecting through short practice-research projects. In the second year, students begin work toward a final thesis project, conceptualising and communicating their intentions in a detailed proposal before carrying out the resolution during an extended period of individual tutoring and support. In each year,

students will have an opportunity to join an in-person residency that brings the cohort together such as a production masterclass, film festival screening, or research conference.

Students may join the course as an active professional and/or film graduate seeking to expand their practice through flexible part-time study. Or they may arrive as a graduate from adjacent subject areas including animation, photography, fine art, or media amongst others. Regardless of their background, students should already be using film within their creative practice and be able to demonstrate a clear rationale for doing so.

Across a variety of filmmaking disciplines, the course encourages students to further their ideas and realize their aspirations of future employment and/or freelance careers in the creative industries. Students will be part of an international network encouraging them to develop skills in a supportive, diverse environment and critically examine the emergence of approaches that challenge orthodox practices.

## Course Aims

The course aims to:

1. Provide a creative and intellectual environment that allows students to develop their practice through critical debate and inter-disciplinary exchange.

2. Enable students to identify and develop the artistic, research, technical and entrepreneurial skills needed to accomplish project work with a high level of professionalism.

3. Encourage students to critically reflect on achievements and evaluate them in ways that meaningfully extend their practice, or progress toward PhD study.

4. Enable students to develop professional maturity and to understand and discuss their work in the context of their discipline as well as the social, political and cultural spheres in which the work will be situated.

5. Develop a rich cultural community that actively engages creative practice in issues of ethics and sustainability.

## Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Produce a high level of individual and collaborative work that acknowledges and potentially challenges current orthodoxies within film practice and the disciplines and communities associated with it.

2. Demonstrate advanced ability through making and thinking to research, investigate, describe and critique issues and situations thereby providing original insights into contemporary practice.

3. Demonstrate and apply highly developed and advanced practical and conceptual understanding of film techniques and processes and to raise questions for further study or professional development.

4. Show acquisition of appropriate skills and acumen in communication, presentation and autonomous learning in relation to career aspirations.

**5.** Develop your work with respect to relevant issues of sustainability, ethics and the cultural and political environment in which your practice situated.

## Reference Points

UK Quality Code for higher education, including:
- Subject Benchmark Statement: Master's degree characteristics
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

AUB Regulatory Framework and Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations
AUB Graduate Attributes

## Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

A range of teaching and learning methods are used, based around a repeating cycle of acquisition, inquiry, practice, production, discussion, and collaboration. Both synchronous and asynchronous delivery are co-ordinated through Canvas; the VLE utilised by the University. Key methods are outlined below:

**Lectures**
Lectures are pre-recorded videos integrated with the module content providing acquisition of knowledge around key issues, ideas, and contexts. In addition, each module may have up to two guest lectures provided by a relevant non-AUB speaker from industry or academia to provide additional insights into the module topics.

**Seminars**
These are optional, online, weekly events that provide more opportunities for live discussion and interaction with tutors or fellow students. They are led by the Module Tutor and provide an opportunity for you to share your perspective and seek guidance or clarity on course content and assessments. Seminars do not take place in the final module when they are replaced by individual tutorials.

**Supervisory Tutorials**
These are one to one tutorials that take place in the final module where you can discuss the development and progress of your project. They are used to air specific issues raised through the work, provide critical observation, and recommend new directions and research strategies.

**Discussion Fora**
These are asynchronous spaces where you can post messages, ask questions, and discuss ideas with tutors or fellow students. You will be encouraged to engage in critical debate, share ideas or progress on your work with the wider cohort.

**Online Learning Resources**
These include recorded videos, texts, diagrams, images as well as reading lists and links to other online material. Technical and making skills are demonstrated through a mixture of recorded sessions and explanatory texts.

**Screenings & Critiques**
These sessions involve watching, engaging with, and communicating ideas about films. They will primarily be used to introduce study material and can also give opportunities to show and receive feedback on your own films at key stages of development. They can be live or asynchronous depending on the module aims.
Throughout the course, you will undertake project-based learning across a variety of activities that challenge you to develop understanding and knowledge in response to creative parameters. Each project is linked to a module's learning outcomes and focus. Specific modules are designed to concentrate on the exploration of *process*, while others emphasise *research* methods or skills and some provide opportunities to develop your creative abilities through *practice*. Key project-based learning activities are outlined below:

**Film Exercises**
There are many opportunities to explore creative practice during the course. Within *practice*-oriented modules specifically, you will concentrate on the ideation, development and creation of a project following a set brief. (This might result in a short fiction, documentary, experimental, artist films or similar work depending on your area of specialization) These short practical exercises are designed to support your creative growth and skills acquisition, leading to the resolution of a distinctive thesis project within the final module of the course.

**Notebooks**
You will use notebooks to document and analyse work that builds throughout a module, developing your critical thinking skills and knowledge of relevant film techniques. During *process*-oriented modules, you will undertake a series of experiments that explore different creative approaches and connect your practice to wider theories or ideas as presented in a culminating portfolio. Similarly, you will collect documentation and evaluate work toward your thesis project in a larger notebook for the final module of the course.

**Presentations**
During the preparation and delivery of presentations, you will learn to synthesise research findings, communicate complex ideas, and connect with tutors or fellow students in a professional manor. Presentations will be submitted online and may be live or recorded in advance depending on the module aims.

**Audiovisual or Written Essays**
During your analysis and exploration of film practice, you will develop ideas and critical arguments communicated in essay form. In particular, the *research*-oriented modules will culminate in an essay exploring theoretical concepts in relation to your practice. Audiovisual and written approaches are seen as equivalent. You will be given an opportunity to identify whether your essay will be written or audiovisual in nature, and to receive feedback on your idea during a formative proposal stage part-way through the module.

**Reflective Writing**
At the outset of the course, you will begin an online reflective journal that allows you to discuss and critically evaluate your work and development as a film practitioner. You will be encouraged to contribute to this regularly and some modules will also require you to reflect on practical experiences as an element of assessment.

## Assessment

Each module of the course is assessed separately, and the assessment forms part of your module activities as highlighted in the project-based teaching and learning approaches described above. Throughout the course, assessment provides both a measure of your achievement, and gives regular feedback on how your learning is developing.

For every module of your course, we will inform you of what you are expected to learn; what you have to submit; how your work will be assessed; and the deadline for presenting your work for assessment. This is made available on Canvas, within each module that you undertake.

In addition to qualitative feedback, you will receive a final mark for each module in the form of a percentage, which will be recorded on your formal record of achievement (transcript). Each component of assessment is graded using a notched marking scale, whereby only certain marks are used within each grade. The only marks available within any ten-point band are *2, *5 and *8 (e.g. 62, 65, 68). These marks correspond to a low, mid, and high level of achievement within each grade band. A minimum mark of 50 is required to pass each assessment and all learning outcomes must be passed to successfully complete a module.

Throughout the course, you are assessed, broadly speaking in two ways: formatively and summatively.

> **Formative Assessment** provides feedback that will help you to develop your learning. It should be seen as 'ongoing' assessment in the sense that it enables you to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses and address them appropriately. Formative assessment may take place in tutorials, seminars, critiques, and other discussions about your work.
>
> **Summative Assessment** generally takes place at the end of a module of study. It is an overall evaluation of your acquisition of the skills and knowledge developed in that part of the course.

Other assessment methods include *Criterion-Referenced Assessment* which occurs through use of learning outcomes in module assessments, and *Ipsative Assessment* where the iterative nature of some aspects of delivery provide opportunities for gauging your current level of performance with previous levels of performance. Ipsative assessment is fed-back in individual tutorials.

**Assessment of Collaborative Work**
In the event of collective work being produced and submitted for *collaborative* assessment it will generally follow the procedure outlined below.

1. The intention for assessed collaboration should be identified through the individual project proposal, or reflective journal, and must have the prior agreement in principle of the relevant Module Tutor or Programme Leader.

2. A parity meeting will devise and implement an academically rigorous assessment method/procedure that will be submitted for approval of, and ultimately confirmation by the relevant Module Tutor or Programme Leader. Such confirmation will be conveyed to each student involved in the collaborative activity and agreement made with each that the procedure is fully understood. Some modules will have specific structures and procedures in place to facilitate collaborative working and assessment, these will be communicated at the launch of the module.

3. An important component of this procedure will be a requirement for each student to provide a written (qualitative and quantitative) self-evaluation and evaluation of others' role within, and contribution to, the development and outcome of the 'submitted work'*. These evaluations will be used to *inform* the assessment process.

4. Following assessment and the subsequent parity meeting, *individual* marks will be agreed that will create the 'practice' component of the overall module mark.

**Submitted work* – understood here as a generic term to cover whatever the manner or form in which this may be offered – *presentation / short film / portfolio / et al.*

**Award of Merit or Distinction**

A Masters' Degree (MA) with Merit or Distinction may be awarded. Only modules at Level 7 contribute towards the determination of a Merit or Distinction.

You should refer to the Academic Regulations, which are available on the Student Hub, for further information on assessment and awards.

## Course Structure

All students are registered for the award of Master of Arts; however, exit awards are available if you leave the course early. If you successfully complete a level of the course, you will automatically be entitled to progress to the next level.

For the award of Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) you must have achieved a minimum of 60 credits at Level 7 including the first introduction module.

For the award of Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), you must have achieved a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7 including all taught modules.

For the award of Master of Arts (MA), you must have achieved 180 credits, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 7.

## Course Content

You progress through the course in three stages: an introduction, a carousel of seven short projects and a final thesis film.

All students begin with the **Positioning Practice** module which serves as the course introduction, encouraging you to explore and develop a creative point of view by reviewing earlier practice, positioning your work by understanding relevant fields or references, and establishing a reflective journal.

The second stage of the course is a series of carousel modules that foster distinct processes of making, thinking and reflecting. These carousel modules are self-contained and designed to be non-linear so they can be taken in any order as determined by your intake time of year.

Within the carousel, modules entitled **Modes of Making** and **Constructing Narrative** explore filmmaking processes, encouraging you to experiment with new creative approaches, materials and ideas through iteration as well as rigorous self and peer critique. Another two modules **Film Aesthetics** and **Film Industries** emphasise research methods while enhancing your contextual and critical understanding of filmmaking in relation to wider creative industries and visual culture. Two more practice-oriented modules **Encountering Performance** and **Cinematic Voices** challenge you to question filmmaking within the social, political and economic conditions of the contemporary world during the creation of short projects which also serve as a test site for your final thesis film. The remaining carousel module **Co-Lab** focuses on collaboration and transferable skills, supporting you to work with other students on a creative project outside your usual practice and in a multidisciplinary context.

The third and final stage of the course revolves around your individual thesis film project. In the **Thesis Film Proposal** module, you undertake research and development processes that support you in conceptualising an original, innovative concept for your final project that is communicated in a detailed proposal and presentation. This is followed by the **Thesis Film Resolution** module where you carry out your creative work, typically progressing through pre-production, production and post-production processes with self-determined milestones, during an extended period of individual tutoring and support. Throughout the creation of your thesis project, you will keep a detailed record of your practice which is collated and critically and analytically evaluated in an accompanying notebook.

As part of the course, you will have the opportunity to attend an in-person residency that brings the cohort together at least once per year. The residency focus will vary but could include joining a production masterclass, attending film festival screenings, or participating in a research conference. These in-person activities are optional and not required to complete the course but instead offer supplementary skills development and experiences that will

further your learning. Some students will be highly encouraged to attend where relevant to an area of specialisation or professional focus.

Following the submission of your thesis film and successful completion of the course, you will also have an opportunity to participate in a graduation event that showcases your work, providing a platform to engage with industry and further strengthen your filmmaking network.

**Course Modules**

| CODE | MODULE | CREDITS |
|---|---|---|
| **Introduction** | | |
| FMD700 | Positioning Practice | 15 credits |
| **Carousel** | | |
| FMD701 | Modes of Making: Process | 15 credits |
| FMD702 | Film Aesthetics: Research | 15 credits |
| FMD703 | Encountering Performance: Practice | 15 credits |
| FMD704 | Co-lab: Practice | 15 credits |
| FMD705 | Constructing Narrative: Process | 15 credits |
| FMD706 | Film Industries: Research | 15 credits |
| FMD707 | Cinematic Voices: Practice | 15 credits |
| **Thesis Film** | | |
| FMD708 | Thesis Film Proposal | 15 credits |
| FMD709 | Thesis Film Resolution | 45 credits |

## Course Model

Your workload is balanced across a number of consecutive modules which all run independently. There are three stages of study and two progression points in the course where you move from the introductory module **Positioning Practice** to the seven carousel modules, and from the carousel stage to the final two project modules **Thesis Film Proposal** and **Thesis Film Resolution**. There is no progression within the carousel modules which are designed to be taken in any order as determined by your intake time of year. All modules are a core part of the course and there are no options to select or deselect modules.

