

# **MA Photojournalism and Documentary Photography**

Programme Specification 2020/21

<b>Awarding Body</b>	University of the Arts London
<b>College</b>	London College of Communication
<b>School</b>	Media
<b>Programme</b>	Photography (L046)
<b>FHEQ Level</b>	Level 7 Masters
<b>Course Credits</b>	180
<b>Mode</b>	Full Time
<b>Duration of Course</b>	1 year
<b>Valid From</b>	September 1st 2020
<b>Course Entry Requirements</b>	<p>The course team welcomes applicants from a broad range of backgrounds, from all over the world. MA Photojournalism and Documentary Photography attracts students who apply direct from an Honours degree course, or a professional or academic qualification recognised as equivalent to an Honours degree, or those with other, equivalent qualifications.</p> <p>Graduates of all disciplines may apply, although most students have a background in Arts and Humanities. You must be socially aware, inquisitive, self-motivated and passionate about a career in photojournalism or documentary photography. Relevant professional experience or work experience in the industry is increasingly important.</p> <p>Educational level may be demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honours degree (named above);</li> <li>• Possession of equivalent qualifications;</li> <li>• Prior experiential learning, the outcome of which can be demonstrated to be equivalent to formal qualifications otherwise required;</li> <li>• Or a combination of formal qualifications and experiential learning which, taken together, can be demonstrated to be equivalent to formal qualifications otherwise required.</li> </ul>

	<p>APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning)</p> <p>Applicants who do not meet these course entry requirements may still be considered in exceptional cases. The course team will consider each application that demonstrates additional strengths and alternative evidence. This might, for example, be demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Related academic or work experience</li> <li>• The quality of the personal statement</li> <li>• A strong academic or other professional reference</li> <li>• OR a combination of these factors</li> </ul> <p>Each application will be considered on its own merit but we cannot guarantee an offer in each case.</p> <p>Language requirements</p> <p>All classes are conducted in English. If English is not your first language, we strongly recommend you let us know your English language test score in your application. If you have booked a test or are awaiting your results, please indicate this in your application. When asked to upload a CV as part of your application, please include any information about your English test score.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) is required, with a minimum of 5.5 in each of the four skills.</li> <li>• If your first language is not English, you can check you have achieved the correct IELTS level in English on the <a href="#">Language Requirements page</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Selection Criteria</b></p>	<p>Offers will be made based on the following selection criteria, which applicants are expected to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of prior knowledge and/or experience of Photography that would indicate potential to successfully complete the programme of study</li> <li>• Social awareness, inquisitiveness and passion about a career in photojournalism or documentary photography</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An ability to work on one or more projects over a sustained period of time and in an intimate and involved way (portfolio)</li><li>• A journalistic and documentary awareness and an understanding of research and practice methodologies and a realistic idea of what makes a strong project (project ideas)</li></ul>
<b>Scheduled Learning and Teaching</b>	<p>During your course you will engage with learning and teaching that includes both online and face-to-face modes. The advertised scheduled activity for the course will be delivered through a combination of live, synchronous and asynchronous on-line learning. This is often described as blended learning.</p> <p>Definitions of our learning and teaching modes can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

# Awards and Percentage of Scheduled Learning

## Year 1

<b>Percentage of Scheduled Learning</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Awards</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Postgraduate Certificate	60
Postgraduate Diploma	120

# Course Aims and Outcomes

The Aims and Outcomes of this Course are as follows:

<b>Aim/Outcome</b>	<b>Description</b>
Aim	Facilitate substantial development of your creative abilities, techniques, self-reflection, evaluation and personal vision within photojournalism and documentary photography;
Aim	Prepare you for the realities of the current marketplace by equipping you with the necessary methodological frameworks and in depth knowledge to operate in the professional arena and the relevant skills needed in the new digital landscape of communications;
Aim	Facilitate you in the organisation and development of a body of photojournalism and documentary photography that reflects a commitment to intelligent, involved, research driven and ethical photography as practiced at the forefront of the industry;
Aim	Establish a dynamic and meaningful framework of critical analysis and awareness of the nature of contemporary and historical photojournalism and documentary photography and its relation to other forms of practice, and to situate it within the context of wider social, economic and political forces;
Aim	Facilitate the development of critical self-reflection, problem-solving in complex and unpredictable situations, analysis and evaluation through both critical engagement and practical application in a collaborative engagement with fellow students;
Aim	Equip you with the knowledge and frameworks to conduct an independent self-directed major documentary project that reflects academic and journalistic rigour, a developed visual sense and critical self-evaluation.
Outcome	Demonstrate your creative, visual, intellectual and technical abilities to produce a body of work of professional standard within the fields of photojournalism and documentary photography (Enquiry, Knowledge, Realisation, Communication, Collaboration and Process)
Outcome	Critically evaluate newsworthy and documentary ideas in terms of their visual and commercial potential for development and presentation in the contemporary marketplace, as well as current

	research and advanced scholarship in the field; (Knowledge, Enquiry, Process)
Outcome	Critically analyse photojournalism and documentary photography within both historical and theoretical frameworks, evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline, as well as in contemporary discourse on technological change, representation, ethics and other issues, and apply your appreciation of these concerns to the location of your practice within a wider context; (Enquiry, Knowledge, Communication)
Outcome	Demonstrate, within your creative output, a thorough understanding of the ethical, legal, moral and commercial issues that impinge upon current practice; (Knowledge, Enquiry, Communication)
Outcome	Present a professional portfolio of work and market your ideas and stories, in a professional manner, in the marketplace with a thorough appreciation and application of the opportunities offered by digital technology; (Process, Realisation)
Outcome	Engage in critical self-reflection and formative peer review, reflecting your developed skills in evaluation and communication within an interactive online environment; (Enquiry, Process, Realisation)
Outcome	Conduct a rigorously planned and academically informed self-directed major project, completing the necessary original research and production, to industry standard, for a major documentary or photojournalistic project, supported by a critical evaluative and analytical report, showing originality in the application of knowledge and critique (MA). (Enquiry, Knowledge, Process)

	<b>Distinctive Features</b>
1	The course is intended for mature self-motivated students who are already established in their practice, or who can prove a dedicated commitment to a career in the industry. The intense, tightly structured and highly specialised nature of the course encourages you to develop your practice to a recognisably professional level, whilst at the same time encouraging you to develop a critical perspective on photojournalism and documentary photography, to analyse and reflect upon your own work and to develop a personal vision and strategy within the medium.
2	The course team has an excellent track record of teaching the practice of photojournalism and documentary photography to the highest levels as well as undertaking their own practice-based research projects leading to exhibition and publication internationally. The team’s approach to teaching is marked by a close, informal, but very professional working relationship with an energised group of students.
3	The full time course brings together people from around the world to London in order to discuss, explore and participate in contemporary photojournalistic and documentary practice. Placing great emphasis on learning as a social process that occurs through interpersonal interaction within a cooperative context, we employ numerous devices to establish a strong sense of group identity.
4	From the very outset, the cohort is encouraged to take the learning process beyond the classroom into an extended, continuous social-learning domain. The strong sense of group identity that is essential to a successful year is developed through a range of practical activities, including technical workshops, student led ‘knowledge sharing’ sessions, field trips and collaborative projects.
5	Throughout this process the role of the ‘tutor’ alternates between the traditional lecture based model and one of facilitating an effective group dynamic in which course members feel comfortable in.
6	Students progress in a structured way from small, set assignments towards the final self directed major project, thus building a repertoire of skills and methodologies. The course is practice based and highly vocational, and founded on a problem based experiential approach to learning.
7	The integration of theory and practice is foundational to the course. Students are introduced to critical concepts and ideas from the history and theory of photojournalism and documentary photography, and they are encouraged to wrestle with and respond to these in a way that actively informs their development as photographers. This is achieved through dialogue and discussion, reading, research and reflective writing. At each stage, students are equipped to

	develop a combination of journalistic, academic and practice-based research skills, the culmination of which is a critical and evaluative report that underpins their final major project.
8	The course also offers a programme of visiting speakers (including ex- students), consisting of leading and influential figures from the world of photojournalism and documentary photography. These speakers may also contribute to seminars and tutorials. The course maintains close connections with the industry, including agencies, photography magazines, editorial publications, galleries and book publishers.
9	An essential feature is the group dynamic of the enrolled community of students which has become a flourishing element of the course, providing mutual support, criticism and networking, as well as skill and information sharing. This process continues years after the end of the course through group emails, informal meetings and group exhibitions. You will have the opportunity to work with fellow students in the planning and curating of your final project work in an end of course degree show, which is an important springboard to help develop your career profile.
10	Professional and Personal Development (PPD) is embedded in every term of the course through regular discussions of professional practice and the visiting lecturer program.
11	One of the differences you will experience between working at postgraduate level and working at undergraduate level is that you will be expected to timetable and manage your own learning to a much greater extent at postgraduate level. Your success on the course will depend to a great extent on how rigorously and responsibly you take this self-direction and how well you respond to tutorial advice. The level of self-management required of you will increase throughout the course.
12	This reflects the degree of initiative and commitment that you will need to operate in the professional arena.
13	The course's teaching philosophy is centred on the creation of a collaborative learning space, where individuals can enhance their practice through interaction with their peers. This forms a 'community of practice' that mirrors the larger professional community of photojournalism and documentary photography. Mapping and modelling this larger community prepares the students for entry into the profession, providing a 'sandbox' in which they can develop their professional practice in a controlled environment. Our intention is that students learn through growing into a practice based collaborative learning community, which then enables them to be part of the wider community of practice of

photojournalists. The combination of practice based, experiential learning is underpinned by theoretical and contextual studies that locate the practitioner within a community of practice, and locate that community within a broader socio-cultural milieu of the media.

## Course Detail

MA Photojournalism and Documentary Photography is a vibrant Masters course with an international reputation, which brings together research and practice for photojournalists and documentary photographers who want to take their practice to the next level.

Photojournalists have explored and recorded the human experience since the inception of the medium, recording significant moments in history, documenting unfolding news and creating enduring images that can change people's understanding of the world.

The documentary approach is a slower, more reflective form of practice, which adds deep research to synthesise the complex global conditions you wish to address.

Whether you want to situate your work in a newspaper, art gallery, book or a public space, MA Photojournalism and Documentary Photography offers you the opportunity to develop your existing skills and expand your creative practice in order to do so.

With an emphasis on contemporary political and social issues, the course will engage you with the ethics of photographic practice as well as the aesthetics.

### **What can you expect?**

The course aims to equip students with a thorough grounding in the discipline, through lectures, seminars, workshops, and crits.

In the first term, you will follow a rigorous programme of photographic assignments, leading to initiating and developing your own projects and areas of special interest as the course progresses.

All this takes place within the framework of the history and development of the medium, together with critical, ethical and theoretical contexts. You will be writing as well as photographing for every submission, and learning how to speak about your work in a professional context.

### **Work experience and opportunities**

During the second term, you will have the opportunity to collaborate with external organisations, working to real-time briefs, which will help you understand different contexts and potential uses for your work.

Previous collaborative partners include human rights NGO [Reprive](#), environment litigators [Plan B](#), and LCC's innovative platform the [Refugee Journalism Project](#).

At the same time, you will be encouraged to find creative freedom by exploring and rethinking your practice, perhaps by experimenting with photographic processes to expand your vision. Your practice will become more research-focused.

Before your major project, you will benefit from hostile environments training, as well as an introduction to multimedia and bookmaking practices. We will help you shape a specific critical and theoretical context for your project, to help you think, write and speak with confidence and clarity about your work.

In the final term, you will be editing your major project and working towards the Postgraduate Shows, regularly attended by leading industry practitioners. Your final portfolios will be reviewed by renowned experts in the field of documentary photography: picture editors, curators, photographers and critics.

### **Course Units**

MA Photojournalism and Documentary Photography is Full Time mode which runs for 45 weeks over 15 months. You will be expected to commit 40 hours per week to study.

Each course is divided into units, which are credit-rated. The minimum unit size is 20 credits. The MA course structure involves five units, totalling 180 credits.

### **Autumn, Term 1**

#### **Photojournalism and Documentary Practice (40 credits)**

#### **Histories and Theories of Photojournalism and Documentary Photography (20 credits)**

In Photojournalism and Documentary Practice, you will examine the theoretical, methodological and practical frameworks necessary for the research and production of successful photo essays.

This unit explores the technical, aesthetic and journalistic aspects of the photo essay, including the generation of ideas, research, shooting, picture editing and caption writing. Particular emphasis will be placed on developing a news sense of what 'makes a story' and on the application of multimedia techniques in narrative storytelling.

The unit History of Photojournalism and Documentary Photography traces and analyses the development and historical context of photojournalism and documentary photography, identifying the major practitioners and movements, with an emphasis on their methodologies.

## **Spring, Term 2**

### **Collaborative Unit (20 credits)**

### **Documentary Practice with Research Methods (40 credits)**

The Collaborative Unit offers a unique opportunity to collaborate with external organisations and practitioners. Working to real-time briefs, this unit equips you with new methods of working, which will be invaluable post-graduation.

Documentary Practice with Research Methods further develops your knowledge of the methodology of documentary and photojournalistic production, culminating in the production of larger scale photo essays, series or installations. This is underpinned by an emphasis on research principles, strategies and methods.

## **Summer, Term 3**

### **Documentary Practice with Research Methods (continued)**

### **Major Project (60 credits)**

In this term, as well as completing the Documentary Practice unit, you will start to plan your major project, assisted by a variety of workshops by experienced practitioners in hostile environments, bookmaking and design, multimedia practice. You will create a rigorous, research-based critical framework for your project.

## **Autumn, Term 4**

### **Major Project (continued)**

This final phase of the course aims to consolidate your learning experience during the previous units through the completion of a Major Project. This will involve both the production of a major body of documentary/photojournalistic work and a related 5000-word critical report.

The majority of students produce the work for the Major Project during the summer period, meaning you work independently during this time, so you must be self-reliant and well prepared in advance for this part of the project.

The final form of the work is flexible. Previous students have presented their work in the form of a book dummy or an exhibition, immersive website, a portfolio of images as prints, multimedia presentation or as a film. Your related report must reflect academic rigour and a critical approach.

The hallmark of our graduates is their ability to combine the personal with the political, in order that their stories touch their intended audience. You will work to refine a sensitive, ethically-minded, inclusive, passionate and intellectually rigorous body of work that demands to be seen.

#### **Learning and Teaching Methods**

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Tutorials
- Group Work

#### **Assessment Methods**

- Portfolio
- Essay
- Critical reports
- Research papers
- Documentary and photojournalistic projects

#### **Reference Points**

The following reference points were used in designing the course:

- The Learning and Teaching policies of the University of the Arts London
- The College policies and initiatives
- Level descriptors
- Benchmark statements



*The University will use all reasonable endeavours to provide the Course and the services described in this Output. There may be occasions whereby the University needs to add, remove or alter content in relation to your Course as may be appropriate for example the latest requirements of a commissioning or accrediting body, or in response to student feedback, or to comply with applicable law or due to circumstances beyond its control. The University aim to inform you of any changes as soon as is reasonably practicable.*

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