

# **MA Documentary Film**

Programme Specification 2020/21

<b>Awarding Body</b>	University of the Arts London
<b>College</b>	London College of Communication
<b>School</b>	Screen
<b>Programme</b>	Film and Television (L043)
<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>An applicant will normally be considered for admission if they have achieved an educational level equivalent to an honours degree.</p> <p>Applicants should have a proven interest in documentary films and a keen desire to make documentary films. You should know what kinds of documentary interest you and why you have an ambition to deepen your involvement in documentary film study and production.</p> <p>Successful applicants have generally made their own videos and have some experience of filming, but we can also consider candidates without a production background who demonstrate exceptional film ideas and directing potential. We often have applications from mid-career photographers or producers in related fields.</p> <p>Your experience is assessed as a learning process and tutors will evaluate that experience for currency, validity, quality and sufficiency. Your educational level may be demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honours degree;</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><b>APEL (Accreditation of Prior Learning)</b></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><b>Language requirements</b></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 7.0 (or equivalent) is required, with a minimum of 6.0 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>For further details regarding international admissions and advice please visit the <a href="#">International Applications page</a>.</p>
<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<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 that you have knowledge and awareness of documentary film culture, practice, directors, films and debates</li> <li>• Evidence of an understanding of what goes into making a good documentary idea and a keen</li> </ul>

	desire to make your own authored documentary films
<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>16</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:

Aim/Outcome	Description
Aim	Contextualise documentary film practices within broad historical, ethical and legal frameworks applicable to diverse sectors, from broadcast documentary to documentary cinema, activism and gallery contexts.
Aim	Develop your documentary film knowledge and techniques for professional application, career opportunities and enhancement.
Aim	Equip you with the skills and methodologies to create documentary films, including developing your basic filmmaking and editing skills, creating short documentary films and writing treatments and dossiers, and engaging in documentary practices to industry standards.
Aim	Develop your abilities in self-reflection, problem-solving, analysis and evaluation through both theoretical engagement and practical application.
Aim	Equip you with research and creative skills to author your major project that reflects your distinctive thinking and analysis, synthesis and evaluation of documentary practice, whilst reflecting academic rigor in supporting reflexive documentation.
Outcome	Conduct a rigorously planned and academically informed individually authored Major Project, supported by a critical, evaluative, reflexive and analytical report (Enquiry / Knowledge / Realisation / Communication / Process)
Outcome	Use a range of documentary skills for a successful production - from research to camerawork, producing, editing and promotion of your film. (Enquiry / Knowledge / Realisation / Communication / Process)
Outcome	Apply your knowledge of documentary film practices and methods to the creation of films, treatments, proposals, short documentary films, research dossiers and supporting documentation in line with professional practices. (Enquiry, Knowledge, Realisation, Communication, Process)
Outcome	Critically engage in theoretical perspectives on documentary and evaluate contemporary discourse on representation. (Enquiry, Knowledge)
Outcome	Apply a broad range of research strategies to a variety of different projects in a diverse range of formats. (Enquiry, Process, Realisation)
Outcome	Contextualise documentary film practices within an historical framework that understands documentary's evolving relationship in the in the digital media world. (Enquiry, Knowledge)

Outcome	Apply concepts of narrative to the creation of a documentary film (Knowledge, Enquiry, Communication, Process)
Outcome	Analyse the ethical and legal debates relating to documentary film practices within a legal framework. (Enquiry, Knowledge, Communication)
Outcome	Engage in critical self-reflection and peer review, developing your skills in evaluation and communication. (Enquiry, Communication, Realisation, Process)

<b>Distinctive Features</b>	
1	The course takes a broad and creative view of documentary film, from mainstream documentary film to gallery installations, documentary cinema, activist or guerrilla documentary with the freedom to explore the use of animated or dramatised sequences. Successive external examiners of this MA describe it as leading the field in the UK nationally.
2	You will be introduced to methodologies, as well as the theories, contexts and methods for specific forms of documentary filmmaking. You will also learn how to compile research dossiers to support your films. Your study will be framed by lectures and seminars on ethics, law, and documentary film history.
3	The synthesis of theory and practice has enhanced the success and employability of our alumni from whom there are many examples of successful projects culminating in engaging and even compelling films, many of which address significant social issues with creativity and flair and have resulted in many documentary film festival screenings, award nominations, television commissions and prizes.
4	In addition to the course units on history, theory and practice of documentary film, you will be able to develop collaborative projects that allow you to pursue specific areas of interest and frame your documentary ideas within other contexts.
5	You will work with a highly qualified and experienced team of practitioners, educators and researchers who deliver the course. The MA makes the most of the documentary industry in and around London, engaging with London as a media centre rich in stories, film-making opportunities, work experience and expertise. LCC embraces and contributes to London as a global city, drawing strength from London's internationality and diversity. Staff are drawn from a combination of academic backgrounds and the documentary film, television and NGO/charity sectors. The Course team regularly publish and produce film and television programmes, as well as maintaining links with other specialist institutions and the industry. Specialist guest lecturers from the industry who teach on the course know the industry at a national and international level, thus ensuring that the course reflects ongoing developments in the documentary sector. MA Documentary Film has a reputation for developing reflexive and thoughtful practitioners highly attuned to the context of production and the ethical responsibilities of the documentary director.
6	The course maintains links with a range of venues and film festivals.
7	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.

8	<p>Terms one and two of the course, will provide you with a detailed knowledge of creative documentary film making methods and practice, contextualised within a historical, critical and theoretical framework. You will explore contemporary documentary film practice alongside documentary histories. You will be encouraged and guided to develop your ability and skills to write treatments and proposals, shoot, direct and edit short films individually and in groups. Your ability to work both in groups and independently is equally important to your progress. The knowledge and skills that you acquire on the course will enrich your ability to work in documentary film environments within television, film or related industries and sectors. The documentary film-making skills you develop are sought-after and highly marketable which can lead to work in many other fields.</p>
9	<p>In terms three and four of the course, you will further your knowledge and extend your experience and practice of documentary film making by conducting a self-directed Major Project including your individually authored documentary film. This project should emerge from your own documentary film interests and is likely to be linked to your career aspirations and creative goals. In conducting this research, you will need to employ a set of skills and knowledge that are appropriate to both academic study and documentary film production. In this term your initiative and ability to work independently becomes increasingly important, as does that of working as part of a team in shooting and directing films. This phase of the course emphasises your ability to engage in the process of peer review and self-reflection. By engaging in and completing a self-directed major research project, you will be well placed to move into a documentary film-making role, on either a full-time or freelance basis. You may also see the MA as a pathway into full-time research, a higher research degree (MPhil / PhD) or higher education.</p>

## Course Detail

Get to grips with the entire documentary film making process on this comprehensive course, which blends theory with practical experience.

MA Documentary Film leads on exploring the full range of the documentary genre and modes of production that have brought about recent innovation.

The digital revolution means new ways of directing, producing and showing documentary films in broadcast, independent and web 2.0 media. You will learn the entire process – taking on the roles of producer, director, camera operator, sound-recordist and editor.

### What can you expect?

You can expect to be grounded in documentary direction, camerawork and editing - the key artistic and technical skills for a successful production team.

Each year students take their work from London College of Communication onto the competitive British and international documentary filmmaking circuit.

You will enhance your career prospects gaining valuable skills, vision and opportunities including guidance on pitching for funding and commissions.

In return, you'll need to be committed and passionate about your study and practice and be ready with strong ideas. You will also need to be open to constructive and supportive criticism so that you're able to push boundaries in your thinking, writing and reflection, alongside the making of your films.

The course culminates in you making a short documentary film (15-20 minutes). From identifying characters, stories and locations to shooting and editing with a particular visual style, you will be the complete author of your work.

Artistic, investigative, observational and activist film ideas are all welcome. These can be developed for the context that suits your work best – from broadcast to independent or gallery exhibition.

MA Documentary Film explores the traditions of international documentary film while offering modern documentary production facilities at London College of Communication.

Training includes shooting and directing on high-definition cameras and editing in Adobe Premiere. Practice is integrated with the theory so that filmmaking is critically and conceptually analysed within the historical and practical context of documentary film.

## What are our graduates doing?

### **Holly Cocker (2010):**

"I'm currently running my production company [Markthree Media](#) from Sheffield. We've recently made two episodes in the new series of CBBCs My Life; one on homelessness in London that was shot entirely with iPhones by kids and one on orphanages in Moldova, presented by a lad with Down's Syndrome.

We've also made a documentary about young with parents in prison for Radio One and are working on films for BBC Three and Channel 5".

### **Chloe White (2011):**

"I run the production company [Whalebone Films](#). We are an award-winning production company based in London and Hastings.

We work primarily in non-fiction, short-film format and our repertoire includes documentaries, animated content, educational, promotional and fundraising films. We've just finished a [short film for the Guardian](#) on climate change and Christianity in the USA and we're working on a feature – [1001 Days](#)".

### **Uzma Hussein (2014):**

"I've been working as an Assistant Producer, in casting, developing storylines and second camera assistant on a number of BBC and Channel Four documentaries. In 2015 I was nominated for the [Limelight Film Awards](#), in the documentary category. In the same year I also worked with Sean McAllister, who won the Grand Jury prize at Sheffield International Documentary Festival.

My role involved story development, direction in sound design and some editing. Currently I'm working with Brian Hill on a documentary-musical themed around Asian immigration to the UK, to be broadcast in summer 2018 as part of the BBCs British Asian Season".

### **Hanna Aqvilin (2016):**

"I've been filming in New York and Japan as Assistant Producer on a documentary project I initiated with [True Vision Productions](#), to be shown on BBC Two This World.

My graduation film [Faye Presto, Queen of Close-up](#) won best documentary at [Fastnet Film Festival](#) and has since been shown in 16 festivals, winning prizes in four of them."

### **Ansiq Li (2016):**

"I'm working for the International Department of China Intercontinental Communication

Centre in Beijing. I am producing Modern China: How We Made It – a three episode documentary to be broadcast on Discovery in 2018.

I have two projects with Lion TV and BBC called China On Stage and Lines Through China. My graduation film LAOGA was shortlisted for the [Fastnet Film Festival](#) and showed at film festivals in Japan, Egypt and China”

**Niels Ladefoged (2010):**

“I was the Creative Producer of [Free Speech Fear Free](#), directed by Tarquin Ramsay. It won the American INSIGHT Free Speech Award in Philadelphia and it will be released in Germany and France and will appear on Amazon Prime and Netflix (in German-speaking countries).

I co-founded [newsPeeks](#). As well as directing independent documentary films, I am a freelance video journalist and a camera operator”.

**What does industry say about our course?**

**Donna Howard, [Digital Learning Associates](#):**

“We came to the LCC Documentary Filmmaking screenings and were really excited by the work we saw.

It was fantastic to see that each person was empowered to seek out the stories they wanted to tell – big or small – and it was clear that the students had developed confident, distinct approaches to telling them. We'd love to have voices like those of your filmmakers on board”.

**Ria Gibson, Operations and Content Manager for [BAMM Global](#):**

“We continue to be impressed with the level of quality coming from MA Documentary and Photojournalism courses at LCC.

We have a long successful history of using graduates for ongoing freelance work, for both fieldwork and editing. They come with that special combination of both technical skills allied with intelligent thinking to help create human stories that have more insight”.

**Mode of Study**

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

**Course Units**

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

## **Autumn, Term 1**

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

This unit introduces documentary film making to equip you with the core skills of documentary film production.

### **Documentary History and Theory (20 credits)**

This unit seeks to position documentary production within a historical context.

## **Spring, Term 2**

### **Documentary Process and Practice, (continued)**

### **Documentary Practices: Taster Film and Pitch and Critical Context (20 credits)**

This unit further develops skills in camera work, producing, directing and editing, now in a more exploratory and individually authored context.

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

Building upon your study in the first unit, you will have the opportunity to study the ramifications of contemporary theoretical debates, documentary history and theory in relation to a chosen approach and research methodology.

## **Summer, Term 3**

### **Documentary Practices: Taster Film and Pitch and Critical Context (continued)**

### **Documentary Practices: Ethics and Methodologies (20 credits)**

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

This term allows you to develop your own specialist interest in documentary through the completion of a Major Project, involving the production and direction of an individually authored documentary film, accompanied by a research dossier, a proposal and a treatment.

## **Autumn, Term 4**

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

If you are unable to continue or decide to exit the course, there are two possible exit awards.

A Postgraduate Certificate will be awarded on successful completion of the first 60 credits and a Postgraduate Diploma will be awarded on successful completion of the first 120 credits.

### **Learning and Teaching Methods**

- Workshops
- Lectures
- Screenings
- Tutorials
- Self-directed study
- Peer review

### **Assessment Methods**

- Essays
- Presentations
- Taster tape
- Pitches
- Critical and evaluative reports
- Documentary film
- Research dossier

### **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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