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**Programme Specification**

**Title of Course: MA Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory**

**Date Specification Produced: October 2012**

**Date Specification Last Revised: March 2021**

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Course Handbook on Canvas and in individual Module Descriptors.

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

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| **Title:** | MA Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory |
| **Awarding Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Teaching Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Location:** | Penrhyn Road/Knights Park |
| **Programme Accredited by:** | NA |

**SECTION 2: THE PROGRAMME**

1. **Programme Introduction**

This programme provides students with the opportunity to explore the specifically philosophical aspects and significance of contemporary critical theory, where 'critical theory' refers to those traditions of 20th-century European thought within which philosophy opens out onto critical diagnoses of the historical present, including feminist theory. The MA in PCCT combines study of the two main traditions of critical theory, the Frankfurt School and French anti-humanism (and their background in Kant, Hegel, Marx and 19th-century European philosophy more generally), with a focus on work by thinkers who have become influential only in the last two decades, e.g. Agamben, Badiou, Butler and Deleuze. The MA appeals both to students with a background in Philosophy, and to students with undergraduate degrees in related subjects like literature, politics and political theory, cultural studies, art history, and so on. It provides an ideal preparation for doctoral research in Philosophy and also in related fields in the humanities and social sciences. The MA also prepares graduates for a wide range of careers in education, the arts, politics and public policy.

The curriculum is designed to balance a focus on fundamental conceptual problems in the field with a wide range of options and opportunities to pursue topics of individual interest. The compulsory core module, 'Critique, Practice, Power' provides a historical and philosophical introduction to Frankfurt School and French anti-humanist conceptions of critical theory. After introducing the field with reference to Kant's critical conception of philosophy on the one hand and Marx's critique of philosophy on the other, the module focuses on competing interpretations of the concepts of critique and enlightenment in Lukács, Horkheimer and Adorno, Althusser, Foucault, and other more recent thinkers.

The MA in Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory is taught by internationally recognized specialists at the UK's most dynamic and inventive centre for research in modern European philosophy, the CRMEP. Since its inception in 1994, the CRMEP has developed a national and international reputation for teaching and research in the field of post-Kantian European philosophy, characterised by a strong emphasis on broad cultural and intellectual contexts and a distinctive sense of social and political engagement. The MA programme is enhanced by the CRMEP's lively and popular series of research events and CRMEP’s strong links with the Philosophy Department at the University of Paris 8, and continues to organise regular research events and collaborations with Paris-based colleagues.

The course also includes an optional integrated work placement or placements, which enables students to further develop their professional skills and enhance their employability. From the start of the course, students who select this option will begin to work to secure (a) placement(s) suitable for their course and career, supported and advised by the Careers and Employability Services team and the Professional Placement Module Leader. Workshops are provided on CV creation, interview techniques and placement searching, with drop-in sessions to provide additional support. In order to take the Professional Placement module, students need to have arranged a placement, approved by the Course Leader, by the end the preceding teaching block. Students undertake the placement either before the final module or following the completion of the final module. During the placement students will be supervised (online) by a tutor who, if possible, will visit during the placement. Depending on the location of the placement, meetings might take place face-to-face or via platforms such as Skype. The placement module will make use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Canvas for communication and dissemination of information between students and staff as well as making online learning materials available. Students will be required to keep a critical diary of the tasks and duties undertaken during their placement, to provide a framework for a reflective essay and work placement report, which is submitted for assessment at the end of the placement. They will also assemble and collate samples of work and evidence of achievement produced during their placement which will also be submitted for assessment. Placement providers will be asked to appraise the students’ work and this feedback will be made available to the student. The placement module will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

This integrated placement(s) provides students with a valuable opportunity to apply and develop their knowledge and skills in a professional working environment, enabling them to deepen their knowledge of the industry, develop their self-confidence, and strengthen their CV. Students undertaking placement activities are in a stronger position to gain the skills and experience which are valued by employers.

1. **Aims of the Programme**

The general aims of the Programme are:

* to offer students the opportunity to study modern European philosophy and contemporary critical theory (in both the German Frankfurt School and French anti-humanist traditions) to an advanced level within a taught programme
* to enhance students’ knowledge of the main lines of inquiry in contemporary critical theory, informed by an awareness of their grounding in the development of the post-Kantian philosophical tradition, notably in the work of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud.
* to enable students to develop an advanced understanding of current debates in the field of contemporary critical theory
* to foster students’ ability to develop general philosophical skills, both in class discussions and in individual written work, of interpretation, analysis, criticism and argument
* to provide training in advanced research skills and the use of research resources, both physical and electronic
* to develop students’ ability to construct a complex argument and to express that argument in clear and accurate English prose
* to provide students with a solid foundation for further postgraduate research or professional development.
* The 2-year programme with integrated placement(s) also provides students with an opportunity to enhance their professional skills, preparing them for higher levels of employment, further study and lifelong learning

This programme allows for three exit qualifications: Masters (180 credits), post-graduate Diploma (120 credits), and post-graduate Certificate (60 credits).

1. **Intended Learning Outcomes**

Where appropriate, the programme outcomes are referenced to the QAA subject benchmarks for Philosophy\*, the Master’s Degree Characteristics (2020) and the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2014), and relate to the typical student.

\* There is no benchmark statement relating specifically to Philosophy at Level 7. Where appropriate, we are guided by the most recent QAA benchmark statement for Philosophy at Honours level.

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

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| **Programme Learning Outcomes** |
|  | **Knowledge and Understanding****On completion of the course students will have advanced knowledge and understanding of:** |  | **Intellectual skills** **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |  | **Subject Practical skills** **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |
| A1 | The central features of the two main traditions in twentieth-century critical theory (Frankfurt School and anti-humanist), in the light of recent and current critical debates | B1 | Interpret and analyse complex and difficult philosophical texts, informed by current critical practice | C1 | Work independently and manage their time effectively |
| A2 | The formative role of the post-Kantian philosophical tradition (especially Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche) in the development of critical theory  | B2 | Consider and critically examine unfamiliar ideas and terminology | C2 | Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations of their work |
| A3 | The main ideas and arguments of two or more major thinkers within the post-Kantian tradition of European philosophy, as presented in canonical texts | B3 | Recognize methodological errors, rhetorical devices and unnoticed assumptions  | C3 | Locate appropriate electronic and physical research resources and plan a programme of library-based research appropriate to an MA dissertation |
| A4 | The distinctive features and modes of argument and presentation of the post-Kantian philosophical tradition. | B4 | Construct and sustain complex arguments about matters of a fundamental and abstract nature and express them in clear and accurate English prose. | C4 | Organise and sustain wide-ranging research over a period of time and to structure and present a complex argument in a coherent fashion |
|  |  |  |  | C5 | Demonstrate professional skills (including self-presentation, communication, interpersonal/teamwork, research and information literacy, numeracy, time-management and project-planning, management and leadership skills, and ethical practice). |

In addition to the programme learning outcomes identified overleaf, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow students to develop a range of Key Skills as follows:

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| **Key Skills** |
| **Self-Awareness Skills** | **Communication Skills** | **Interpersonal Skills** | **Research and information Literacy Skills** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Management & Leadership Skills** | **Creativity and Problem Solving Skills** |
| Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development | Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken work | Work well with others in a group or team | Search for and select relevant sources of information | Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data | Determine the scope of a task (or project) | Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems |
| Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback | Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing | Work flexibly and respond to change | Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately | Present and record data in appropriate formats | Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources | Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence |
| Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets | Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others | Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement | Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information | Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments | Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary |  |
| Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts |  | Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback | Accurately cite and reference information sources | Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data | Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants |  |
|  |  | Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs | Use software and IT technology as appropriate |  |  |  |

1. **Entry Requirements**

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

From BA: Normally a good (2:1 or upper-second class honours, or better) undergraduate degree or its equivalent in a relevant or related subject (including but not limited to philosophy, history, politics, cultural studies, fine art and visual culture, modern languages). Applicants with other kinds of qualifications will be considered on an individual basis.

A minimum, overall IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent is required for those for whom English is not their first language.

1. **Programme Structure**

This programme is offered in full-time, part-time and ‘with professional placement’ mode, and leads to the award of MA Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory (interim awards: PG Cert Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory; PG Dip Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory).

Entry is normally at level 7 with BA or equivalent qualifications (See section D). Transfer from a similar programme is possible at level 7 with good passes in comparable level 7 modules but is at the discretion of the course team. Intake is normally in September.

**E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies**

N/A

**E2. Work-based learning**

Work placement is an integral part of the 2-year programme and students will receive support from the award-winning Careers and Employability Services team.

While it is the responsibility of individual students to secure appropriate placements, the Careers and Employability Services team offers each student support at all stages of the application process, including writing CVs, completing application forms, participating in mock interviews, assessment centre activities and psychometric tests. Sourcing and applying for placement(s) give students the opportunity to experience a competitive job application process.

The experience of the work placement period enables students to apply their learning in the professional work environment, to reflect upon their own personal experience of working in an applied setting, to focus on aspects of this experience that they can clearly relate to their prior learning, and to evaluate the relationships between academic skills and employers’ expectations. Students will be assessed during and at the end of this period, through a portfolio of work, which will be marked as pass/fail.

**E3. Outline Programme Structure**

The degree consists of 180 credits, four modules of 30 credits each and a final dissertation of 60 credits.

All students will be provided with the University regulations. Full details of each module will be provided in module descriptors and student module guides.

Students on the 2-year programme (with integrated placement) must complete all modules except the final ‘capstone project’ module, by the end of TB2, and then work in their placement(s) for a maximum of 12 months. The student should confirm that their placement opportunity is available by the end of May, and the course team will confirm whether this is acceptable within two weeks. Students on placement(s) must complete a portfolio assessment which includes a reflection on how they have applied the skills they have developed during the previous year, within a professional working environment.

A comprehensive list of all possible options is provided here. The option list in any given year will be carefully constructed to ensure that the course curriculum is coherent, enabling students to achieve the programme learning outcomes via their chosen selection of modules.

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| **Level 7** |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit** **Value** | **Level**  | **Teaching Block** |
| Critique, Practice, Power | PH7901 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Dissertation | PH7001 | 60 | 7 | 2 and 3 |
| **Option modules** |
| Kant and the Aesthetic Tradition | PH7701 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Art Theory: Modernist, Avant-garde, Contemporary | PH7703 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Plasticity and Form | PH7704 | 30 | 7 | 1 or 2 |
| Philosophy of Art History | PH7705 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Kant and His Legacy | PH7801 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Hegel and His Legacy | PH7802 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Nietzsche and Heidegger | PH7803 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Recent French Philosophy | PH7804 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Topics in Modern European Philosophy | PH7805 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Political Philosophy | PH7806 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Modes of Subjection | PH7907 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Recent Italian Philosophy | PH7903 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| German Critical Theory | PH7904 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Marx and His Legacy | PH7905 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Philosophy and Psychoanalysis | PH7906 | 30 | 7 | 1 or 2 |
| **CDNJ./;** |  | A2 | S |  |  | S | S |  |  | S |  |  |  |  |  | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| A3 | S |  | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| A4 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| **Intellectual Skills** | B1 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B2 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B3 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| B4 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| **Practical Skills** | C1 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C2 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C3 | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |  |
| C4 | S |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| C5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | S |

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**Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.**

**Technical Annex**

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| **Final Award(s):** | MA Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory |
| **Intermediate Award(s):** | Postgraduate Diploma in Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory Postgraduate Certificate in Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory |
| **Minimum period of registration:** | 1 year full-time, 2 years full-time (with Professional Placement); 2 years part-time |
| **Maximum period of registration:** | 2 years full-time, 3 years full-time (with Professional Placement); 4 years part-time |
| **FHEQ Level for the Final Award:** | Masters |
| **QAA Subject Benchmark:** | There is currently no benchmarking statement specific to Philosophy at postgraduate level. |
| **Modes of Delivery:** | Full-time, Part-time and ‘with Professional Placement’ |
| **Language of Delivery:** | English |
| **Faculty:** | Kingston School of Art |
| **School:** | Creative and Cultural Industries |
| **Department:** | Humanities |
| **Course/Route Code:** | PFPTH1PTH02 |
|  | PFPTH1PTH99PPPTH1PTH02 |