

CORE MODULES: BA (Hons) Multimedia Journalism

You must take modules worth 120 credits at each level of the course. Each module is worth a specified number of credits.

Year one for full-time students (Level 4)

Law for Journalists (30 credits)

- *This module aims to provide students with a sound working knowledge of media law and ethics, and explores the ways such issues will affect their activities as journalists. This is designed to equip them with the knowledge to protect themselves from any legal and ethical challenges, and with a critical understanding of the key issues, concepts and debates pertaining to ethical questions in journalism.*
- *Students examine issues of defamation, copyright and confidentiality, and gain knowledge of the law of contempt of court and other legal issues. They are instructed about legal and ethical landmarks such as the Human Rights Act, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and other laws. In looking at the Freedom of Information Act, for example, they learn how journalists use this to obtain data that previously was unobtainable.*
- *Professional ethics for journalists are also explored, with special reference to Ofcom guidelines, BBC Producer guidelines, the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice, and the NUJ Code of Conduct, as well as to public interest arguments for the pursuit of responsible investigative journalism. Students examine and critically debate the ways in which individuals, communities and minority groups are reported and assess how to differentiate between sensationalism and responsible reporting. Students also study issues of self-censorship and commercial constraints, explore how to protect sources, and are made familiar with famous examples of chequebook journalism. Issues relating to racism, sexism, stereotyping, 'dumbing down' and so on are further explored and debated.*

Reporting Skills (15 credits)

- *Students study and practice the skill of news writing and learn how to structure stories in a logical, coherent manner and how to tailor them for their target audience. They pay particular attention to developing a critical sense of news values that will lead them to important stories, finding out where to look for and develop stories.*
- *Students look in detail at intro writing, learning about the importance of the five Ws – who, what, when, where and why. They learn which details to include and how to be accurate and consistent. They explore different writing styles and ways to approach effective communication. They learn how to select appropriate quotes and how to use them and learn about the importance of developing news contacts.*
- *There will be a logical progression through the module, starting with the re-writing of provided material and working through to more autonomous learning with students sourcing, researching and developing news stories both independently and in teams.*

Introduction to Magazines (15 credits)

- *The magazine industry is in an exciting though transitional period with the impact of the Internet and social media changing the landscape of print publications. This module will equip students with the knowledge and tools to work as practitioners in a complex magazine industry as it evolves in response to cultural change and the introduction of varied digital platforms.*
- *The module will explore the consumer magazine industry, the b-to-b market and online magazines. Students are required to research, write and produce a double page spread targeted at a specific consumer magazine, a double-page spread targeted at a specific b-to-b magazine, a digital version of each page targeted to the online version of both magazines and a final digital page targeted at an online publication, in which the most sophisticated interactive Web tools, such as Adobe InDesign are embedded.*
- *Students are taught feature writing, story sourcing and research skills, while also developing interview techniques. They also need to research the magazine industry extensively to ensure the content they create is suited to the target audiences of both the consumer and b-to-b magazines they select.*
- *Students also learn a range of subbing, layout and design skills using industry relevant software applications to create their pages.*

Introduction to Digital Media (15 credits)

- *In this module, students will learn and develop the skills necessary to work as online journalists for any news-based website of any size in the world. The taught sessions and coursework run hand-in-hand to build an understanding of what the internet is, how it works, how readers use it and therefore how we can best apply that knowledge to be successful in digital publishing.*
- *Key areas of focus are how writing for websites differs from print, how to gather information using social networks and forums, and how to publicise our articles effectively on those same media. The module will feature an introduction to web design, SEO keyword techniques, CMS use and basic HTML. All of this will be put into practice as students build their own blogs on niche subjects of their choosing. The intention is both that they learn how to write clickable news and features for the web, and use their sites as an effective means of getting a foothold in the industry.*
- *On a more academic level, the course is designed to provoke plenty of thought on how the rise of the online world has changed the face of journalism and examination of how the paper-based sector has had, and is continuing, to adapt. The ethics of speed vs accuracy and an introduction apps and the future will all be on the agenda as we cover the latest developments in this fast-moving space.*

Introduction to Broadcast (15 credits)

- *This module is an introduction to the techniques and concepts involved in television and radio broadcasting. It will enable students to understand how to use industry-standard camera and audio equipment and how to use the editing software required to turn this captured content into engaging TV and radio programming.*
- *Students will learn to structure their work in a logical and coherent manner and produce TV and radio news packages for clearly defined local news audiences. They will be taught the basic principles and grammar of story-telling with pictures and audio, and by the end of the module, will have received a solid grounding in the essential skills of broadcasting.*
- *Students will also develop a clear grasp of how journalism is changing in the digital age, and the increasing necessity to be multi-skilled. There will be a logical progression through the module, starting with essential camera and audio recording skills, moving on to filming techniques, interviews, script-writing and editing.*

Advanced Reporting Skills (30 credits)

- *Building on the skills acquired in Reporting Skills, students further develop their news writing skills in this module, examining news writing for the web as well as for print. They examine and debate the impact of the range of structures; styles, content and language used for different audiences and explore the selection, use and effect of emotive quotes. They learn more about the ethical need for accuracy in order to avoid complaints, and explore the skills required to cover effectively and professionally the pivotal news event, the press conference.*
- *Students learn and explore the ethical issues associated with reporting court proceedings and examine ways of reporting the activities of local and regional councils. They find out how to deal with the emergency services in obtaining stories and hone their interviewing and research skills. There is an emphasis on students sourcing news stories, gathering information and writing it up to length and to deadline.*

Year two for full-time students (Level 5)

Politics and the Media (30 credits)

- *This module affords opportunity for the critical examination and exploration of the various relationships between politics and the media. The structure and processes of central UK government are studied in detail and debated critically, and students are invited to explore the impact of key political events. Key political processes such as the passing of laws and the running of elections are also studied.*
- *Students study and debate Britain's role on the international scene, including its position in Europe and the media's coverage of the EU. Case studies for this might include journalistic debates about the UK's involvement in the EU, the role of the Lords, and identity. On a wider scale, students look at the influence of press barons, the growth of spin, sound bites and choreographed media events. Particular attention is paid to local government structures, including the centralisation of control in urban areas and the devolution of powers from central government in London to Wales and Scotland.*

Shorthand (15 credits)

- *Journalistic Teeline blends and outlines are taught to help students build shorthand speed appropriately for the settings and situations in which they are most likely to need to employ their note-taking skills. Classroom work is further developed in workshops and through home study/practice. Students also complete shorthand tasks in real-life settings (i.e. sports matches, interview situations and press conferences) and examine and reflect critically on the currency and value of shorthand skills in the modern industry. The latter is designed to involve examination of situations where shorthand is a necessity for journalists, its value as evidence to support the journalist in her/his role and the value of shorthand skills in securing a job in the industry.*
- *Ongoing targets and assessment throughout the module enable students to develop a portfolio that provides evidence of progress and brings their note-taking speed up to the level required for the unseen examination. The module is designed to prepare students to sit the NCTJ Shorthand examination to a selected speed of 60 or 80 words per minute.*

Investigative Journalism (15 credits)

- *This module encourages a thorough, effective and ethical approach to journalistic work, revisiting, consolidating and testing the skills acquired by the students to date. It aims to imbue them with the confidence and knowledge to carry out the kinds of investigations that are essential to the work of many journalists. The module is designed to impress upon students the difficulties of attaining sensitive information. It thus explores and debates competitive and effective strategies to assist with this.*
- *Students examine the historical and political contexts of investigative journalism, both in Britain and abroad. They identify, critically analyse and discuss examples of effective and ineffective investigations.*
- *Students are expected to practice and demonstrate the skills and knowledge acquired in a journalistic investigation by producing three pieces of work for their portfolio: a news story; a news feature; a detailed proposal for an investigation, including: timescale; methods to be employed, including how/who to interview, research and write up the investigation; awareness of legal/ethical constraints; how to corroborate information acquired and how to produce the final report.*

TV Journalism (15 credits)

- *In the modern, 24-hour news channel environment, the job of a news journalist is changing. The traditional split between print and broadcast media is disappearing, as major newspaper companies look to diversify into local TV news channels as well. The importance of video journalism in its various forms is sure to increase as the media continues on its path towards convergence, which makes it advantageous for news journalists to be genuinely multi-skilled. This module will teach the core skills required for TV news: how to write for TV, present to camera, shoot and edit news packages. The activities on this module are designed to give a comprehensive overview of TV broadcast journalism and its techniques as well as hands-on experience with the appropriate technologies.*
- *Using skills they have already learned – including media law and ethics and news writing – students will discover how to craft video news packages and how to operate within a TV Studio, turning their own ideas for local news stories into professional TV packages. They will learn how to operate the necessary equipment, including cameras, sound recorders and editing software.*
- *Supervised by an experienced media practitioner working with industry-standard technologies and equipment, they will produce two pieces of TV journalism. Working in small groups, they will make a video news package based on a local news topic, individually writing scripts, narrating pieces to camera, interviewing the general public and taking it in turns to operate the equipment at the shooting and editing stages.*
- *For the second video piece, they will contribute towards a TV news programme filmed by the whole group in a TV studio ‘as live’. The content will be aimed at a local TV news audience and will involve many of the skills outlined above, plus those relevant to a TV studio. Students will be assessed on the TV broadcast journalism skills displayed and executed during the studio production.*
- *The third and final element of the coursework will involve students writing a critical essay on the ethical issues inherent in conforming to the Ofcom code.*

Photojournalism (15 credits)

- *This module introduces students to the role of photography in journalism. Students are not expected to have prior technical knowledge in this area. Students study and critically analyse the work of leading exponents of the art and practice of photography, exploring what makes a powerful and memorable image. This work is designed to lead to the production of a written essay that should inform students' practical work in this module.*
- *Supervised by a professional expert, students explore approaches to the planning required to take photographs for both news and features, practising and debating the most effective ways to capture images that have emotional and ideological impact.*
- *Using industry standard equipment, students produce a portfolio of images suitable for use across a range of media, including newspapers, magazines and the Web and covering subjects such as hard news, sports, fashion and publicity.*
- *Students employ Photoshop software to manipulate their photographs appropriately for their target publications. They learn to write effective captions, and debate the relationship between image, text and viewer/reader of journalistic images.*
- *Students produce a personal journal charting the production of their practical work, from the development of initial ideas, research and application of knowledge acquired through research to production and completion of the practical task.*

Plus 15 credits of optional modules dependant on pathway

- **OPTIONAL MODULE: Photojournalism (15 credits)**
This module introduces students to the role of photography in journalism. Students are not expected to have prior technical knowledge in this area. Students study and critically analyse the work of leading exponents of the art and practice of photography, exploring what makes a powerful and memorable image. This work is designed to lead to the production of a written essay that should inform students' practical work in this module. Supervised by a professional expert, students explore approaches to the planning required to take photographs for both news and features, practising and debating the most effective ways to capture images that have emotional and ideological impact. Using industry standard equipment, students produce a portfolio of images suitable for use across a range of media, including newspapers, magazines and the Web and covering subjects such as hard news, sports, fashion and publicity. Students employ Photoshop software to manipulate their photographs appropriately for their target publications. They learn to write effective captions, and debate the relationship between image, text and viewer/reader of journalistic images. Students produce a personal journal charting the production of their practical work, from the development of initial ideas, research and application of knowledge acquired through research to production and completion of the practical task.
- **OPTIONAL MODULE: Radio Journalism (15 credits)**
Students explore and debate a range of approaches to radio news production and radio news presentation. The module aims to give students the opportunity to compile news packages, including recording and editing interviews for broadcast, and how to edit using Adobe Audition, incorporating appropriate cues and cuts. Drawing on and extending their knowledge of news sources and newsgathering and reporting, students learn about newsroom and studio operation, news bulletins, packages and programmes, recording and editing, interviewing, writing and story construction, ideas and treatments, roles and responsibilities, ethics and regulation. Students compare and critically evaluate a range of news and feature stories for editorial priority, produce instant vox-pops on topical issues of the day and perfect the vital skill of writing up accurate, tight copy ready for voice delivery on air. The presentation section covers voice coaching, live reporting, studio debate, and special reports. Students create demo discs and podcasts and are given feedback on their work. The module provides an overview of both commercial and public service radio journalism (eg BBC), including the new digital DAB radio services. Students explore what goes on behind the scenes, and debate key issues such as audience research, copyright and the broadcasting guidelines.

Final year for full-time students (Level 6)

Undergraduate Major Project (30 credits)

- *The individual Major Project module allows students to engage in a substantial piece of individual research, focused on a topic relevant to their specific pathway. The project topic will be assessed for suitability to ensure sufficient academic challenge and satisfactory supervision by an academic member of staff. The chosen topic will require the student to identify/formulate problems and issues, conduct literature and other appropriate media reviews, evaluate information, process data, critically appraise and present their findings. Regular meetings with the project supervisor should take place, so that the project is closely monitored and steered in the right direction. The assessment will be in the form of a written dissertation, video/audio documentary, or magazine project.*

Live News Production (30 credits)

- *At this level of study, students have acquired a range of news-gathering skills which they will put to use in real life situations. The emphasis is on practical, hands-on experience that will prepare students for live roles in the industry, introducing them to the pressures, pace and pitfalls inherent in dealing with the demands of the 24-hour news cycle.*
- *Students will be introduced to live reporting scenarios where they are required to plan, gather and produce news articles for print, broadcast and the Web. On given news days, students will source stories from the local area which they will develop into usable news packages. They will work in news teams with individuals taking separate roles and responsibilities: reporter, sub-editor, producer, presenter etc. Teams will produce live TV and radio bulletins as well as print publications and web pages, which they will submit as part of their final portfolio for this module. Strict deadlines will be a key component of news days and where possible will mirror the practice of industry. Students will also be encouraged to pitch their stories to news media.*
- *As part of the coursework for this module, students will be required to produce a running log of ideas for news stories and to be making contacts and regularly updating their contacts books. They will also be required to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses as evidenced by their performance on news days.*

Professional Practice (15 credits)

- *This module is a bridge between the student experience and the working world. It aims to equip students to perform in the competitive journalism industry by acquiring relevant work experience during their life as students and also providing a theoretical framework so they can reflect on and contextualise their media experience.*
- *Students will explore areas of interest within actual industrial settings that may be pertinent to possible career paths. They will be on placement for a minimum of 10 working days. They will be expected to find their own internships, thus demonstrating initiative and persistence, key journalistic skills and will be on placement for a minimum of 10 working days. Once in a placement they will be encouraged to use all the skills they have acquired thus far in the classroom, developing both print and digital skills in ways that are appropriate to their individual work environments.*
- *Organisations are frequently inundated with requests for work placements; therefore it is important that students begin to make arrangements in the second year. Ideally, all students will have completed their 10 days before they enter the third year and that if they haven't they will complete it by end of the Christmas vacation in semester one.*
- *During the module students will be encouraged to exercise a range of skills: reflection/recollection/presentation of experiences; acquiring networking and job hunting skills; building contacts; exploring career paths; contributing to discussions on the work environment. In addition they will be expected to investigate the current industry debates on the ethics surrounding unpaid work within a vocational industry like journalism.*

Social Media and PR (15 credits)

- *The module will track the emergence of public relations (PR), explore the relationship between the press and PR, understand how the industry should operate ethically in the highly competitive world of communications, and how it sometimes may not, and how modern publicity campaigns are maximised by the use of social media.*
- *Students will examine how PR operates in a variety of different fields including the representation of national government, the concept and practice of 'spin' and the pseudo event, private sector PR, celebrity PR and charity and voluntary sector PR. The techniques of public relations including the function of the press release, advertorials, viral campaigns and damage limitation will be explored.*
- *Students will explore the advantages and resources of social media in maximising their campaigns and utilise a variety of digital media including relevant digital publications, multi-media websites, Facebook and Twitter. The module will cover SEO, Google Analytics and Trends, all of which will facilitate the most comprehensive use of the new digital platforms.*
- *The module will also look at how PR and news management has changed the face of modern reportage and news values. Some of the learning is embedded in real-life scenarios, where students apply theory and skills to public relations practice. It will also allow students to examine the controlling influence, role and function that PR plays in today's media world.*
- *Students will produce a PR campaign incorporating all the elements and techniques of industry practice and deliver a case study analysis via presentation.*

The Journalist as Entrepreneur (15 credits)

- *The digital revolution has produced an array of new opportunities for journalists; a rapidly growing number of outlets now demand professionally produced, trustworthy news around the clock. From the global to the hyperlocal, there are great rewards for those who are able to successfully create their own brands and media start-ups to take advantage of the commercial possibilities. The modern journalist needs to be both creative and commercially-minded in tapping into these opportunities. This module teaches students how to turn their ideas into business concepts and from there, into sustainable business models. Students will be encouraged to assess their own skills as entrepreneurs and be encouraged to build on these. They will learn about business fundamentals and how to manage budgets and cashflow.*
- *Students will discover how to work in different sectors, including the non-governmental area and not-for-profit. They will learn about the available funding streams and how to bid for funding. They will build on what they already know about branding and how to promote that branding across digital platforms and through multi-faceted marketing that includes events, training, merchandising etc.*

Research Methods (15 credits)

- *The module encourages students to develop further their independent learning skills, and prepares them to write a Major Project in effective academic style. It provides them with opportunities to develop further a critical approach to their learning, and to enhance their ability to assess, analyse and compare a range of journalistic texts, products and practices. The skills and knowledge attained in this module are designed to encourage an academically rigorous approach to study, stressing the same thoroughness in thinking and structuring as is necessary in effective journalistic work. The lecturers will wherever possible demonstrate that these purposes are mutually complementary.*
- *Students are expected to question, investigate and inform their understanding of an aspect of the industry in detail and depth. They are provided with a rigorous grounding in academic research methods and approaches, a range of which will be utilised in the Major Project in Semester 2. Lecturers provide regular feedback via tutorials in order to support student learning, to help them to develop their approaches to research, and to debate key ethical questions appropriate to their project ideas. The process of gaining ethics approval for all research projects is a key component of this module and is dealt with via tutorial.*