

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information		
1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Art and Design
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	MA Culture, Style and Fashion Full-time
4.	Normal Duration:	1 Year
5.	UCAS Code:	N/A

6.	Overview and general educational aims of the course
	<p>Style is powerful. It drives consumption, persuades voters, and justifies fame. It can mask or reveal truths about individuals and groups – and in an increasingly visual culture, style and surface increasingly speak on behalf of the whole.</p> <p>MA Culture, Style and Fashion (CSF) is a unique course offered in both full-time and part-time modes that provides you with the opportunity to become expert in understanding trends and meanings in visual and material culture – in particular, those aspects of visual and material culture which are defined by their appearance, affected by fashion, and which communicate ideas and values through stylistic choices. This includes fashions in clothing but importantly does not preclude other forms and genres. It includes micro trends and ‘fads’ but it also includes much bigger movements and trends. This course recognises a need for a multi-disciplinary and multi-genre approach to understanding trends and style in 20th and 21st century culture, takes style seriously and interrogates the problems, preoccupations and ideals which lie beneath the surfaces – whether they are glittering and polished or authentically rough-hewn – of modern culture.</p> <p>You will learn through the study of core histories and theories, as well as a sequence of thematics which, time and again, resurface in our designed objects and images to engage and persuade us. You will develop an advanced knowledge of academic approaches to key concepts such as glamour, cool, nostalgia and others, as well as having opportunities to make in-depth exploration of specific objects, images trends and practices. You will develop a deep understanding of the political, social, environmental and ethical implications of style culture.</p> <p>The other distinctive feature of this course is the emphasis on communicating your ideas about culture to a range of realistic audiences in professionally appropriate yet innovative ways. Assessments take the form of, for example, academic conference papers, short audio/visual presentations or documentaries and journalistic articles for</p>

specified publications, allowing you to develop skills and knowledge relevant to a career in cultural research or as a commentator, perhaps going on to a PhD and a career as an academic equipped to participate in public debate and discourse, or as a journalist with a special level of insight and knowledge. Practical skills in the basics of 'mobile journalism' will support both career aspirations and emerging modes of primary research. Advanced research methodologies will also be taught. This aspect of the course acknowledges the increasing need for academics to be able to express and disseminate their ideas and their research effectively in professional, creative and accessible ways. It also acknowledges the need for journalists and cultural commentators who know more, who can make sense of the wealth of 'information' out there, and who can come up with novel and socially responsible perspectives.

The course is ideal for anyone who wants to question culture and style at an advanced level and who appreciates the importance of developing creative, innovative and professional communication skills for a career inside or outside of academia.

Where possible, live briefs and collaborations will provide opportunities with real vocational purpose and value, allowing you to network and gain relevant experience. For example, you will prepare an academic paper for the department's annual 'Visual and Material Delights' Symposium, there may be opportunities to collaborate with others to provide content for Notts TV, to 'curate' a film season, or to write articles to a brief set by a relevant magazine, or to undertake research which will support a company developing a product or service. You will be able to negotiate with your tutor the form your final outcomes take, allowing you to build on your strengths and tailor your experience towards a chosen professional field.

7. Course outcomes

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

If you have achieved the full Masters, by the end of the course you should be able to:

- Critically evaluate and apply relevant theoretical and historical perspectives to sustained analysis of aspects of visual and material style culture, and its relationship with corporate, individual and social formations of identity, creating advanced insights. (B)

- Recognise and interrogate novel or emerging themes within 20th and 21st century style culture and explore these in your major project as appropriate.
- Reflect critically on the relationship between the cultural artefacts and expressions being studied and relevant cultural and critical theory to allow for new interpretations or theories where appropriate. (B)
- Produce a substantial body of work which successfully addresses negotiated aspects of current debates within the broad area of fashion/design/style culture, informed by relevant theory/history and analysis of both secondary and primary sources. (B)
- Interrogate and articulate relationships between image and style and issues such as ethical/sustainable design and consumption, social relations and/or cultural politics in your work, considering local and global contexts.
- Reflect on and employ relevant conventions and adhere to professional ethical and legal research practises in the process and dissemination of your research.
- Employ professional research methods and methodologies relevant to this field and your negotiated research aims, rationalising your choices.

(B) – these specific learning outcome statements have been benchmarked against the QAA benchmark statements for similar courses and level.

Skills, qualities and attributes

If you have achieved the full Masters, by the end of the course you should be able to:

- Communicate effectively and professionally for audience/s appropriate to your negotiated aims.
- Use appropriate methods to analyse relevant cultural artefacts or expressions in detail and to create advanced or novel interpretations of them. (B)

- Take responsibility for your own learning: planning effectively, prioritising tasks and solving problems in order to meet all briefs and deadlines, becoming an autonomous learner. (B)
- Evaluate and use appropriate professional technologies effectively, exploiting the potential for the use of technologies to support innovation and creativity in your work.
- Participate and communicate professionally and effectively with staff, peers and relevant others, enhancing the learning community.
- Plan and execute appropriate primary and secondary research for negotiated, independent projects in a professional and critical way.
- Explore, evaluate and advance upon existing work in the negotiated field/topic in terms of both form and content, as appropriate. (B)
- Develop a strong personal repertoire as a writer/verbal/visual communicator, appropriate to future aspirations. (B)

(B) – these specific learning outcome statements have been benchmarked against the QAA benchmark statements for similar courses and level.

Learning Outcomes for the Interim awards

If it is confirmed that after studying this year long course, these course outcomes have not been fully met following the decision made at the Board of Examiners or following the Referral Board, then the work submitted will be re-assessed against the learning outcomes for the interim awards of either the Post-graduate Certificate (equivalent to 60 credits) or the Post-graduate Diploma in Culture, Style and Fashion (equivalent to 120 credits). If either of these sets of outcomes have been satisfactorily met, then you will be offered the appropriate award.

8. Teaching and learning methods

The following teaching and learning methods are used within the course:

- Lectures
- Tutorials

- Group tutorials
- Seminars (including peer group activities, discussions and presentations)
- Workshops
- NTU's Online Workplace (NOW)
- Directed and self-directed learning
- Team working/collaborative working
- Off-site activity/relevant work experience

The course will be taught through reading groups, seminars, lectures, workshops, group and individual tutorials and supervisory sessions. You will be taught by experienced lecturers who are experts in the field and committed to teaching and learning excellence and innovation. Guest speakers will enrich the course with specialist academic knowledge, challenging perspectives and insight into current cultural developments and the relevant creative industries.

There will be opportunities to share learning experiences and forge collaborative relationships with other Masters students in the School of Art and Design and in the Centre for Broadcasting and Journalism. Studying visual and material culture in a Department of Fashion, Textiles and Knit (FTK) itself centrally located within the School of Art and Design, provides great informal opportunities for observing emerging themes and trends locally. A special quality of NTU students' work, noted by our external examiners, is the creativity and sensitivity to aesthetics which comes from being in an art and design environment.

You may also have the opportunity to go on study trips abroad organised within the School to enhance your study of style cultures. Local and national visits to relevant exhibitions, collections or heritage sites will be part of the learning experience, in addition you might also make visits to shops, buildings, companies or other social spaces or events for research purposes. Some of these will be self-directed, others will be organised by your tutors. (The University's Global Fund can be approached for help with overseas study visits in support of major projects).

All course documents, handbooks, seminar readings, guidance for specific tasks and some teaching and learning material will be available on NTU's Online Workspace (NOW). The NOW is also an important source of access to other information and support for learning provided by the University including software tutorials, revision tools for grammar and the Library Information Services (LIS) etc.

9. **Assessment methods**

This course comprises one year-long 180 credit module, and you will be assessed continually with formal and informal formative assessment points throughout the course. You will receive feedback on your work in progress and on assessed tasks as you go, from tutors and from your peers. At formalised formative assessment points you will receive written feedback and an indicative grade (at least once per term) to enable you to understand how well you are progressing in relation to meeting the course learning outcomes. At the end of the module (the course) you will submit all of your work and this will be assessed 'holistically' against the learning outcomes. This means all work formatively assessed during the module will also form part of the assessment process and be considered when awarding your grade. Therefore your final grade will reflect your overall achievement against the outcomes. This process of continual assessment, feedback and holistic summative assessment at the end of the course is designed to encourage you to become an independent and reflective learner, evaluating your learning experiences in order to inform the next ones, building on strengths and tackling any weaknesses as appropriate as you progress through the module. It also allows you to learn from the course before your work is finally assessed.

Giving feedback to others through formative peer assessment in scheduled sessions and informally as part of the cohort will also help sharpen your critical skills and reflection on your own learning.

The assessments guide you through a range of learning experiences in a sequence which enables you to build a body of knowledge and skills appropriate to your final negotiated project. You can make choices with the support of your tutor about what form your assessments will take and the themes and topics you might explore, with greater freedom to negotiate these as the course progresses. This means that you can tailor your assessments to ensure you not only meet the course aims and outcomes but play to your strengths and your future aspirations.

Following summative assessment at the end of the module, if for any reason a full Masters award is not achieved, your work will be reassessed against the learning outcomes for interim awards PG Certificate in MA Culture Style and Fashion and PG Diploma in MA Culture Style and Fashion.

As already suggested, forms of assessments on this course will be varied, realistic and relevant to the professional contexts and negotiated with your tutor. Where the focus is on demonstrating understanding and application of theories explored in the taught sessions, an academic essay format may be appropriate; or, it might be a blogpost responding to a current media event which uses those theories to demonstrate both subject knowledge and the ability to write for a different context and audience. Or it

might be a verbal presentation of work in progress, which allows a student to explore ideas with tutor and peers in a more immediate way, stimulating the group and benefitting from live discussion and idea-generation. At the beginning of the course, you will present work in a variety of 'realistic' formats, demonstrating different skills. You will be expected to present a paper at NTU's annual student conference – "Visual and Material Delights" symposium. These experiences will then prepare you to make choices about the formats that your project outcomes will take as written in your negotiated brief for your final independent project, a 'synoptic' assessment – which allows you to bring together all you have learned and to relate it to relevant work/employability goals you may have.

10. **Course structure and curriculum**

At the start of the course, you will meet the other students and find out more about the course and the facilities. We will also spend a bit of time finding out more about your prior knowledge and experiences, your skills and hopes for the course. There will also be an 'Induction' - a combination of course and university events which will help you to adjust to the department, school and NTU, Masters study and this course specifically. You can find out more about this via the Starting at NTU website (details of this will arrive after you receive your offer confirmation).

The curriculum is designed to give you a focused overview of the key histories and theories relevant to studying aspects of visual and material culture to which style is important, followed by specialist investigations into dominant themes in 20th and 21st century style. The first part of the course (about two thirds of the first term) addresses fundamental questions like 'why does style matter?' and 'where do trends come from (and where do they go?)'. These questions are simple to ask but less easy to answer – you will learn a range of perspectives on these, appreciating the importance of class, taste and distinction, branding, identity and cultural appropriation, style in modernism and postmodernism, consumer culture and more. Key issues for society relating to globalisation and the need for more sustainable ways of life are obviously implicated and considered both as we go and in specific, focused sessions . At this point in the course you will also be developing your journalistic and academic writing skills through tasks and taught sessions/workshops.

The next section of the course will engage you in a sequence of exciting thematics which together constitute the keynotes of 20th and 21st century style culture; for example 'glamour', 'authenticity', 'nostalgia', 'technology', 'cool'. These are growing in scope and importance in the field. You will encounter the relevant literatures alongside

some of the visual and material artefacts they relate to, for example designed objects, adverts, films, popular artworks or practices. Together staff and students will consider these texts and derive knowledge of different author's perspectives, reaching for new insights into the defining characteristics and variations of the theme. As we progress through the sequence of themes you will build perspectives on the overlaps and discontinuities between them. These themes, and the core theories and histories before them, will inform and inspire your work.

In this section you will also evaluate the benefits and limitations of a thematic approach, as well as considering a range of appropriate methodologies for advanced study of style culture. This will prepare you for the final section and your negotiated major projects as well as setting you up for potential further study.

Throughout the module, you will continue to develop and innovate ways of documenting research and expressing research outcomes to a range of audiences using some simple audio-visual methods, supported by specialist demonstration and tuition.

After Easter, you will have an opportunity to plan and execute a substantial project to challenge current thinking in a specialised field with a variety of publishable or exhibitable outcomes designed to develop your personal and professional skills for future careers.

There is scope for collaboration with other students or external agencies in this project, where, for example, you might research, devise and co-create a short 'documentary' with a student on a different course or undertake a research project to inform a design company's approach to a new product or service, or you might produce a body of journalism for a specific publication or range of publications. Or perhaps you will know you want to focus on researching and writing a substantial Master's thesis. This will be negotiated with your tutors to ensure the project will enable you to meet the learning outcomes and that it is manageable. You will receive ongoing support in this via supervisory meetings and group tutorials.

11. Admission to the course

Entry requirements

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

12. **Support for learning**

In addition to working closely with your tutor in managing the projects and outcomes, the following support is also available, English Language support takes place once a week and is designed to support study and progression at master's level.

NTU's Online Workspace (NOW) contains all documentation relating to every aspect of the masters course.

IT Tools - research databases and creative applications such as InDesign, PowerPoint, aspects of Adobe Creative Suite as appropriate.

Progress tutorials take place regularly with the designated tutor. After each assessment students will receive feedback from the relevant tutor.

Pastoral tutorials will take place with the Course Leader.

Professional skills and employability workshops relevant to home and international students will take place during the year of study.

If for any reason due to your specific circumstances, for example your employment, feel that you are not able to fulfil your course commitments, you need to immediately inform your tutor and the course leader. This will allow the course team to consider alternative arrangements in order to support you with your progression on the course.

13. **Graduate destinations/employability**

On graduating, you will be equipped with expert and current knowledge and skills relevant to a range of potential careers and further study: cultural journalism across a range of subjects and media, authoring cultural books and commentary for a wider audience, research/consultancy where understanding of trends and issues affecting consumers is needed, curation or communication roles in relevant cultural institutions i.e. museums, galleries and archives.

Graduates could also potentially teach in FE or Higher Education or progress to PhD, with the goal of teaching and/or research. Graduates will also display all the postgraduate attributes which fit you will require in professional roles, for example independence and self-direction, literacy, team-working, communication in a range of media, the ability to prioritise and meet deadlines and to solve problems.

Opportunities exist within the course to establish relationships with relevant institutions, publications and companies and you will leave with a body of work which can be used to evidence your knowledge, skills and currency to employers to pitch to a

production company, or submit for publication (in a variety of forms) where appropriate.	
14. Course standards and quality	
<p>All module assessments are sampled by an external examiner to ensure that the work meets national standards and that the internal assessment process is fair, with final awards being confirmed by the Board of Examiners. The external examiner then submits a report to the school which informs the development of the curriculum. External examiners are selected on the basis of their relevant academic and industry expertise.</p> <p>You can offer feedback about the course at any time either directly or through your elected course representative, but you will be asked for formal feedback on your learning experiences both at key points during the course and at the end of the year. Once per term the course team meet with student reps at the Staff/Student Liaison Meeting and the Course Committee, where they contribute to discussions about the currency of the curriculum and the future aspirations of the course. This enables the course team to monitor the quality of the student's learning experience during the course and respond appropriately.</p> <p>The course team also gather feedback from graduates and from any external collaborators or visiting professors to ensure the course remains relevant and current.</p>	
15. Assessment Regulations	
This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16c of NTU's Quality Handbook).	
16. Additional Information	
Collaborative partner(s):	n/a
Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:	BA Cultural and Media Studies (2008) and Master's Degree Characteristics Statements (2015)
Course recognised by:	n/a
Date this course specification approved:	SASQC Approval: 1 November 2017. Approval for PCR/Curriculum Refresh Modification Course Change and updates
Any additional information:	
This MA course affords you the following benefits:	

- Innovative curriculum with scope for launching many new lines of academic enquiry
 - Scope for developing innovative ways of communicating ideas.
 - Encourages students to tailor their experience towards academic or media-related destinations, or other relevant careers, such as in galleries or museums
- Preparation for PhD