Programme Specification Document

Approved, 2022.02

Overview

Programme Code	36456
Programme Title	Mass Communications
Awarding Institution	Liverpool John Moores University
Programme Type	Masters
Programme Leader	
Link Tutor(s)	Nedim Hassan

Partner Name	Partnership Type
Unicaf	Validated

Awards

Award Type	Award Description	Award Learning Outcomes
Alternative Exit	Postgraduate Certificate - PC	Critique key theories and concepts that underpin the study of mass communications. Undertake the evaluation of contemporary mass communications scholarship and professional practice.
Target Award	Master of Arts - MA	See Learning Outcomes Below
Alternative Exit	Postgraduate Diploma - PD	Critique key theories and concepts that underpin the study of mass communications. Undertake the evaluation of contemporary mass communications scholarship and professional practice. Critically debate the political, legal and ethical aspects of media and communication processes, systems and participation. Recognise and anticipate developments in the role played by media and communication in economic and political organisation at local, national, regional, international and global levels.

Alternate Award Names	

External Benchmarks

Subject Benchmark Statement	

Programme Offering(s)

Mode of Study, Mode of Delivery	Intake Month	Teaching Institution	Programme Length
Part-Time, Distance Learning	April	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	August	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	December	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	February	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	January	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	July	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	June	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	March	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	May	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	November	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	October	Unicaf	3 Years
Part-Time, Distance Learning	September	Unicaf	3 Years

Aims and Outcomes

Educational Aims of the Programme

The programme will explore mass communications across a range of media forms including: entertainment media, broadcast and digital, public relations, advertising and journalism. The programme will address issues of policy, governance, professional practice, international communication flows, digitalisation, political economy, cultural practice and research methods. The programme aims to provide a progressive and challenging curriculum that is informed by contemporary research and responsive to the changing nature of the communication industries. The specific aims of the programme are to enable students to: Critique key theories and concepts that underpin the study of mass communications Undertake the evaluation of contemporary mass communications scholarship and professional practice Critically debate the political, legal and ethical aspects of media and communication processes, systems and participation Recognise and anticipate developments in the role played by media and communication in economic and political organisation at local, national, regional, international and global levels Carry out original and independent research through the development of a critical appreciation of research methodologies appropriate for the study of media and mass communications Meet the challenges of employment in a global society through the development of their intellectual, analytical and research skills related to the study of mass communication

Learning Outcomes

Code	Description
PLO1	Critically evaluate how mass communications are organised, operated and managed
PLO2	Develop substantive and detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more designated areas of the field
PLO3	Consider and critically evaluate their own work in a reflexive manner with reference to academic and/or professional issues, debates and conventions
PLO4	Critically appraise mass communication with appropriate reference to social context and diversity of media use and engagement
PLO5	Communicate key theories, methods and concepts for the purpose of mass communications analysis
PLO6	Design, carry out and present various forms of research involving sustained independent enquiry at an advanced level
PLO7	Propose, design and conduct research that will demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of concepts, information and techniques at the forefront of the discipline
PLO8	Understand the limits of the major research methods associated with mass communications, and be able to apply this knowledge critically to their own work
PLO9	Apply critical debates in mass communications, including those concerned with ethics, policy and professionalism, to practical work.
PLO10	Appreciate how diverse audiences and communities engage with mass communications at local, regional, national, international and global levels.
PLO11	Work in a flexible and independent way, showing self-discipline and reflexivity
PLO12	Display a critical awareness of the roles that mass communications play in a range of cultural and social formations
PLO13	Plan and implement tasks in a professional manner.

Code	Description
PLO14	Communicate their findings clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
PLO15	Initiate, develop and realise distinctive and creative work within various forms of digital writing
PLO16	Retrieve and generate information, and critically evaluate sources, in carrying out independent research
PLO17	Communicate ideas at an advanced level, deliver work to a given length, format, brief and deadline, properly referencing sources and ideas and adapting a problem-solving approach demonstrating professionalism
PLO18	Put to use a range of IT skills from basic competences such as data analysis and word processing to more complex skills using web-based technology or multi-media, and develop as appropriate, specific proficiencies in utilising a range of media technologies.
PLO19	Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the varied contextual factors influencing mass communications industries and the role of these industries in contemporary political and social life
PLO20	Critically evaluate the limitations of research methodologies and using this judgement propose their own research design
PLO21	Demonstrate a critical awareness of current debates and research in mass communications
PLO22	Draw upon knowledge of the ways in which theories and concepts have developed in particular contexts in their assessment of contemporary issues and debates
PLO23	Appraise legal, ethical and regulatory frameworks which structure mass communication processes and practices
PLO24	Critically reflect upon their research and professional practice.
PLO25	Engage critically with theories and concepts in mass communications and put them to productive use

Programme Structure

Programme Structure Description

Mass Communications is an MA programme which uses a core modular structure to investigate the diversity of media forms that have the potential to reach audiences on a broad international scale. It enables students to develop their advanced critical understanding of theory, concepts, debates, research methods, current research and professional media practice. Students will produce and critique their own digital writing, analyse policy documents, explore digital media cultures in detail and respond to assignment tasks through a variety of forms (including essays, dissertation and reports). In Theories, Concepts and Debates in Mass Communications students are familiarised with key perspectives on the mass media as an introduction to the programme. This will be complemented by Digital Cultures which will engage with contemporary research and an exploration of audiences and popular engagement with mass interactive media. Perspectives on Mass Communication Research Methods gives students a grounding in comparative research skills in preparation for their own dissertation and an appreciation of contemporary research practice. New Media: Policy and Practice encourages students to apply knowledge of regulatory frameworks which underpin professional practice to a critique of contemporary mass media and their own production of digital writing. The programme requires students to undertake a dissertation project which will be based on desktop research. To obtain the MA Mass Communications, students need to pass 180 credits across all the core modules. To obtain a Postgraduate Diploma in Mass Communications, students need 120 credits across all the core modules (with the exception of the dissertation project). To obtain a Postgraduate Certificate in Mass Communications, students need 60 credits across all the core modules (with the exception of the dissertation project). Students will register for one new module at a time and must complete the programme within 5 years.

Programme Structure - 180 credit points	
Level 7 - 180 credit points	
Level 7 Core - 180 credit points	CORE
[MODULE] 7501UNICAF New Media: Policy and Practice Approved 2022.01 - 30 credit points	
[MODULE] 7502UNICAF Mass Communications Dissertation Project Approved 2022.01 - 60 credit points	
[MODULE] 7503UNICAF Perspectives on Mass Communication Research Methods Approved 2022.01 - 30 credit points	
[MODULE] 7504UNICAF Digital Cultures Approved 2022.01 - 30 credit points	
[MODULE] 7505UNICAF Theories Concepts and Debates in Mass Communications Approved 2022.01 - 30 credit points	
Level 7 Optional - No credit points	OPTIONAL

Module specifications may be accessed at https://proformas.ljmu.ac.uk/Default.aspx

Approved variance from Academic Framework Regulations

Variance
Students will be eligible for a Final Module Attempt (FMA) once they have failed the first and referral attempt of a module. Students will not have to wait until all the assessment opportunities from the taught element of the programme have been exhausted. (approved 03/11/2022)

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The programme has an integrated teaching, learning and assessment strategy. The assessment strategy for the programme is underpinned by appropriate learning and teaching strategies which are relevant, provide a structured set of learning opportunities enabling achievement, of individual module, and programme level, learning outcomes. Critical awareness is achieved through interactive lectures, case studies, group discussions and individual reading and research. A blended learning approach will be adopted on the programme with resources to support learning provided via Unicaf's Virtual Learning Environment. Integration and synthesis across the programme lead to the programme's intended learning outcomes. These are assessed through a variety of formative and summative assessment including: essays, portfolio, research based exercises, critical review, research plan, student defined assessment and a dissertation. Specific details of these can be found in the module guides. Online interaction will act as a guide to the area of study and will focus on conceptual frameworks, areas or case studies. Formative tasks through discussion forums will expect students to work both collegiately and independently. The nature of these forums is intended to be interactive and group activities will be a significant part of student led and defined discussion. Students will be provided with opportunities to strengthen their presentation skills and communicate within an academic community in a professional manner. They will be supported throughout the programme to formulate ideas and responses to current debates and research so that they can develop an advanced understanding of the field and apply these ideas appropriately. The assessment strategy provides a structure of assessment through which students can meet the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Students' skills are assessed through the self-direction, innovation and judgement required to complete research essays and the dissertation. An element of the portfolio requires them to critically evaluate their own work in a reflexive manner. The relationship between formative and summative assessment enables tutors to provide feedback which will support students in their development and enable them to make the most of their academic potential. Students are required to consider different means of communicating their research findings, formulate their response to critical issues and contemporary debates and evaluate contemporary trends across a range of different types of assessment. Forums, independent study and research and the production of assessment all contribute to the development of professional practical skills. This area is the particular focus of the research design of the dissertation project and its management and critique in online study. Students will also have online discussion structured around the production of practical exercises and reflection upon their completion and professional practice. The extent to which students have developed these skills will be assessed through essays, research proposal, portfolio, critical reflection and the dissertation project. Students will be introduced to the VLE environment and encouraged to use it. Online interaction,. case studies and engagement with interactive forums will allow them to observe and discriminate between different perspectives, communication strategies and understand the responsibilities of academic research. These professional skills will be assessed through essays, the portfolio and the dissertation project.

Opportunities for work related learning

N/A

Entry Requirements

Type	Description
Other international requirements	IELTS 6.0 with a minimum of 5.5 in each sub-test or equivalent international qualification or a Unicaf English Placement Test score of 6.0 where proficiency cannot be determined otherwise.
Alternative qualifications considered	For standard entry, applicants must have the international equivalent of a UK 2:2 Honours Degree. For non-standard entry, applicants would normally be required to have a minimum of 12 months experience in a role in the communications sector or a related area. If an applicant does not have this experience, they will be required to demonstrate how their professional role(s) have enabled them to understand mass communications. It will also be necessary to explain in their application, how this programme will benefit their career progression.