

ROYAL HOLLOWAY
University of London
PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Arts in Victorian Literature, Art, and Culture**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2011**.

The aims of the programme are:

- to offer students the opportunity to engage in advanced and interdisciplinary study of the Victorian period, encompassing all the varieties of nineteenth-century cultural expression and contexts;
- to develop advanced skills of academic study;
- to offer the possibility of advanced work across a range of periods and media within Victorian studies, rooted in a core course that builds on the historic and geographical connections Royal Holloway has with the city of London;
- to develop advanced skills in literary study;
- to provide training in research techniques in the field of study;
- to foster an independent learning ability;
- to develop key communications, IT and management skills relevant for postgraduate work;
- through the internships negotiated with external institutions, to offer selected students experience of working in a variety of scholarly academic-related arenas, such as Libraries, Galleries, Institutes and Publishers.

The programme is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or two years of part-time study (104 weeks). On successful completion of the course a student should have an understanding of the area of the MA at a level appropriate for a postgraduate qualification. Whilst being a self-contained degree in its own right, the programme provides suitable and recognised qualifications for entry to a PhD course in the same or a closely related field.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- the development of a critical understanding of Victorian culture by focusing on the developing cultural representations and presences of London in the nineteenth century;
- an advanced grounding in the theory and practice of cultural studies;

- the evaluation of relevant critical, theoretical and contextual research at the forefront of the specific field;
- independent literary research at an advanced level using traditional and electronic resources;
- confidence in deploying the appropriate critical and technological skills as required in the specific field of study;
- the acquisition of knowledge of advanced scholarship in the chosen area of the discipline to a level appropriate for an MA degree.

Skills and other attributes

- the ability to evaluate relevant critical, theoretical and contextual research at the forefront of the field;
- the ability to analyze and critically interpret text and data;*
- to further develop skills in information handling and retrieval;*
- the ability to conduct literary research independently at an advanced level using traditional and electronic resources;*
- to further develop skills of reflection on reading and learning;*
- the ability to articulate knowledge and the understanding of texts, concepts and theories;
- the ability to present logical and coherent written and oral arguments of varying lengths;*
- the ability to comprehend and develop sophisticated concepts and original critical ideas;*
- enhance interpersonal skills, involving recognizing and respecting the viewpoints, and interacting constructively with other people;*
- enhance time management and organisational skills including working to deadlines, prioritising tasks, organising work-time;*
- in addition, the programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important in the world of work, and that strengthen our postgraduates' abilities to engage in lifelong learning and contribute to the wider community. These include: personal motivation; the ability to work autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; flexibility, adaptability and creativity.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching is mainly by two-hour seminars during the Autumn and Spring Terms and takes place in Egham. Seminars are timetabled as far as possible for late afternoon or early evening, to permit part-time students to attend. The core course will normally be timetabled from 5-7 pm on Thursdays in the Autumn Term.

A number of extra events may be timetabled in the central London facilities of the college, in Bedford Square, Bloomsbury. Students should be aware that (a) research resources including the British Library, Senate House Library, the Museum of London and the partner institutions are located in central London, and that (b) students intending to undertake an internship will usually find themselves placed in central London. Whilst the bulk of teaching on this MA takes place on the Egham campus of Royal Holloway, its London focus and the proximity of central London mean that students need to be prepared to avail themselves of the research and teaching opportunities of the capital from time to time.

The taught courses are designed to offer the possibility of advanced work across a range of periods and media within Victorian studies, rooted in a core course that builds on the historic and geographical connections Royal Holloway has with the city of London.

It is an objective of each course that all students contribute intelligently to seminar discussion; that all students deliver at least one seminar presentation per course; that all students write essays for the course, and undertake supervised work on a dissertation or other project.

All courses are examined by an essay of 5000-6,500 words. Each course essay represents 17.5% of the final course mark, with the dissertation making up the remaining 30% of the final mark.

Coursework essays may be based on seminar presentations, or be original pieces of work. Essays written in the first term must be submitted by the first day of Term II. These essays may be rewritten in the light of

the tutor's comments and discussion and resubmitted in a final form on the first day of Term III. Essays written in the second term must be submitted by the first day of Term III: these second essays will not be read and commented on in draft.

The *dissertation* will be a piece of original written work, of between 12,000 and 15,000 words (excluding bibliography and appendices). The topic of the dissertation will be agreed between the student and whichever member of staff is allotted as supervisor and is normally required to be submitted by the beginning of September in the year of the completion of the programme.

Internships are an unassessed optional addition to the MA Victorian programme, intended to provide students with experience of working on a project connected with Victorian studies; such work may be of a traditional scholarly or archival sort, or may utilise and foster Humanities Computing skills. Institutions at which internships may be taken up are those with which the College has established an agreement in the London area: these include the British Library; the Word and Image Department at the V&A; Adam Matthews Digital Publishers; Linley Sambourne House. Interns might undertake any of the following: producing a catalogue of a published, manuscript, photographic or other Victorian resource; e-publishing Victorian text or texts; assisting in the daily work of a specialist museum. All successful applicants for an internship must also complete a dissertation which may or may not relate to the work conducted during the internship.

Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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Details of the programme structure(s)

The programme lasts 52 weeks, beginning in September. All students registered for the MA Victorian Literature, Art, and Culture take all four courses, complete the research methodologies course, and write a dissertation.

Core Course: EN5831: *Victorian London* (17.5%).
EN5001: *Methods and Materials of Research* (unweighted)
EN5830: *Aestheticism and Decadence in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (17.5%)
EN5837: *The Nineteenth-Century Novel: Contexts; Theories; Readers* (17.5%)
EN5838 *The Pre-Raphaelite Revolution: Poetry and Painting* (17.5%)

Dissertation: EN5839 (30%)

Plus four two-hour structured dissertation support workshops in Term III.

Part-time Programme Structure

The programme lasts 104 weeks for part-time students. Normally part-time students take the core courses, *Victorian London* and *Methods and Materials of Research*, plus one other course in their first year, and the remaining two taught courses plus the dissertation in the second year.

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Progression and award requirements

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework. To pass the programme a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which do not constitute more than 25% of the final assessment, provided that the overall weighted average is at least 50.00%, but a failure mark (i.e. below 50%) in the dissertation cannot be condoned.

The **Masters** degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The **Masters** degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any element of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

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Student support and guidance

- The Programme Director meets with the students on a regular basis to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- Course coordinators, tutors and dissertation supervisors provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice.
- Induction programmes for orientation and introduction to the Department and College by the Director of Graduate Studies.
- All staff available and accessible through an office-hour system.
- Detailed MA handbook and course booklets.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College and University libraries.
- Dedicated graduate computing facilities and study space in Egham.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Careers Service liaison officer.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre and the Educational Support Office for students with special needs.
- Membership of the Institute of English Studies; access to further research training seminars and courses.

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Admission requirements

Admission is normally based on at least an Upper Second in Single Honours English or in a related degree. An equivalent level of achievement is expected in applications from overseas candidates. Non-standard applicants and applicants from disciplines other than English will be considered on their merits and may be asked to submit written work for appraisal and/or attend an interview. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. For further details please refer to the [Prospective Students](#) web page. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

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Further learning and career opportunities

Graduates from this MA programme have successfully progressed into a wide range of professions which include journalism, publishing and the media, advertising and marketing, the creative industry, the public sector – especially curatorships and museum education – and teaching. For other graduates, completing an MA is the precursor to embarking on research, ultimately leading to a PhD. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

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Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 18th for 3* and 4* research. All staff in the English Department are highly regarded scholars, writers and critics and the quality of our research was recognised in the most recent Research Assessment Exercise, where ninety percent of our research was found to be of international quality. We also host the national English Subject centre, which drives innovation and improvement in teaching and learning across English studies.

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List of programmes

All the programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and lead to awards of the University of London. Programmes in English are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The banner code is given in parentheses.

Master of Arts Programme in Victorian Literature, Art, and Culture

MA in Victorian Literature, Art, and Culture (1442)

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