

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
2	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
3	<b>Final Award</b>	MA
4	<b>Programme Title</b>	MA Architectural Theory and Criticism
5	<b>Programme Code</b>	4115F / 4115P
6	<b>Programme Accreditation</b>	N/A
7	<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	N/A
8	<b>FHEQ Level</b>	7
9	<b>Last updated</b>	November 2011

### 10 Programme Aims

- 1 to establish a unique programme of study that focuses specifically upon architectural criticism, thus providing a resource not currently available in international masters programmes
- 2 to foster an expanded understanding of what criticism and critical practices are, which can overcome the familiar conceptual deadlock of earlier formulations
- 3 to address the needs of a wide constituency of scholars and practitioners who wish to elaborate and refine their own critical thinking and to equip themselves with tools for diverse forms of cultural engagement
- 4 to provide a programme with modules that have relevance for other schools within HaSS whose subject areas engage with issues of cultural criticism
- 5 to develop advanced research skills, the ability to critically evaluate and utilise current research, and to generate directions for further study that open onto to PhD routes
- 6 to diversify and enrich post-graduate studies in architecture by interlinking with other new masters initiatives and with the second professional degree (MArch)
- 7 to meet the criteria for level 7 qualifications as laid down in the QAA's National Qualifications Framework
- 8 to comply with University policy and QAA Codes of Practice

### 11 Learning Outcomes

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

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 Demonstrate understanding of how criticism has been historically conceptualised, and its relations with philosophy and cultural theories
- A2 Demonstrate knowledge of the differing manifestations of criticism, and be able to appraise them in their historical, social and intellectual contexts
- A3 Show in-depth knowledge, acquired by research, of a selected critical practice in architecture or a closely-related field.
- A4 Understand the roles and importance of criticism in contemporary architectural discourse, and be able to productively, effectively and strategically engage in it.

(see annex for mapping of learning outcomes onto modules, teaching and learning methods and assessment strategy)

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

Key foundational content for this course (A1 and A2) is primarily delivered in the two modules in Semester 1 (Cultural Theory and Architectural Criticism, Critical Modalities), through

lectures and seminar readings and discussions following directly on in two hour sessions. This programme is supported through Blackboard. In semesters 2 and 3 students develop specialist knowledge and understanding through self-motivated independent research, and there are few lectures. In semester 2, case study in criticism (A3), this research is supported by some lectures and workshops, and student-led seminars, and group work builds towards a self-organised public symposium at which students present their research in a range of formats from exhibit to walk, before submitting their case study. In semester 3, specialist knowledge of a selected subject (A4) is largely developed through independent learning and research, and in one to one tutorials, with a couple of skills based workshops on research and realisation at appropriate times.

**Assessment Strategy**

Assessment considers both verbal and written evidence that appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding have been reached. A1 and A2 are assessed in part with a verbal presentation at a seminar in modules Cultural Theory and Architectural Criticism and Critical Modalities, and more significantly through a 3500 word essay for each module. A3 is assessed in the case study with more emphasis on verbal evidence, since by this stage, students are expected to be aware of the importance of the context in which they make work, and give a public presentation in addition to a seminar presentation, but the written submission of a 5,000-6,000 word case study remains the most substantial element of the assessment. A4, as the synthesis of knowledge and understanding developed through the course, and awareness of how one's own work engages with existing debate and discourse, is assessed primarily through the 10,000-12,000 word dissertation.

**Intellectual Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Rigorously analyse and appraise intellectual positions and formulations in the field of cultural theory and criticism
- B2 Interpret the effects and productivities of critical modes, in relation to the contexts in which they are mobilised
- B3 Review and present material for debate in a seminar context
- B4 Identify, structure and successfully complete a programme of original research that displays reasoning and sophisticated argumentation

(see annex for mapping of learning outcomes onto modules, teaching and learning methods and assessment strategy)

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

It is largely through presenting material in seminar discussions (B3) and through the production and later in the course, through the presentation of their own research that students develop the relevant intellectual skills. B1 is introduced in relation to specific bodies of theory and texts in Cultural Theory and Architectural Criticism, and is developed to a more sophisticated level through presenting drafts in one to one supervision for the dissertation. B2 is introduced in Cultural Modalities by asking students to consider a range of forms of criticism from subversions of the layout of a page to protest and to develop ways of analysing and interpreting them. These skills are honed through the case study with particular emphasis on verbal communication and through the dissertation with emphasis on written communication. B4 is introduced in the case study with lectures, and great support from seminars, and becomes increasingly sophisticated, complex and self-directed in the dissertation with support primarily from one to one supervision as well as group-based workshops.

**Assessment Strategy**

Assessment considers both verbal and written evidence that appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding have been reached. B1 and B2 respectively are assessed in part with a verbal presentation at a seminar in modules Cultural Theory and Architectural Criticism and Cultural Modalities, and more significantly through a 3500 word essay for each module. B3 is assessed in both of these modules, and in the case study with greater emphasis on verbal evidence, since here students are presenting their own material in seminar and a public arena. B4 is assessed both through the written submission of a 5,000-6,000 word independently researched case study and in the 10,000-12,000 word dissertation.

<b>Practical Skills</b>
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <p>C1 Effectively conduct both primary and secondary research, strategically mobilising resources ranging from archives and libraries to databases and web resources</p> <p>C2 Plan and undertake practical field-work activities, such as interviews, where appropriate to the research programme being pursued</p> <p>C3 Conduct presentations that critically utilise diverse techniques and technologies</p> <p>C4 Skilfully assemble, format and present a major document, incorporating both text and images, using desktop publishing software</p> <p>(see annex for mapping of learning outcomes onto modules, teaching and learning methods and assessment strategy)</p>
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
<p>The more text-based research skills in C1 are introduced gradually throughout the course, with a general movement from secondary sources to databases and archives as research becomes more independent in the case study and dissertation. Where necessary, specific lectures and workshops address these directly. C2 is taught in the introductory seminars of the case study, and will be more appropriate for students looking at activism or event-based forms of criticism that require fieldwork approaches. C3 is taught more by example and by doing (in seminar and public presentations) than by delivering information about techniques, although the question of a critical relationship to the mode of presentation will be explored in a workshop in the case study, just as C4 is the subject of the 'realisation' workshop in the dissertation.</p>
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
<p>C3 is assessed through the presentation components of all modules except the dissertation, but with increasing attention to the awareness of the relationship of the mode of presentation to its subject and context. Both C1 and C2 are assessed in the dissertation and the case study, although C2 is not a necessary skill since its use depends on the type of investigation undertaken. C4 is assessed in the dissertation module.</p>
<b>Transferable/Key Skills</b>
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <p>D1 Analyse texts and images, formulate ideas about them, and convey those ideas with clarity in verbal and written formats</p> <p>D2 Communicate effectively to others when working in a group</p> <p>D3 Knowingly deploy a variety of IT resources and techniques in the context of specific tasks and intentions</p> <p>D4 Exercise initiative, self motivation and personal responsibility</p> <p>(see annex for mapping of learning outcomes onto modules, teaching and learning methods and assessment strategy)</p>
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
<p>Skills in D1 are built up throughout the course, in a guided way in semester 1 where texts, images, objects and so on are selected by tutors for discussion, and becoming increasingly self-directed in semester 2 where students select and present images and texts from their own research for group discussion, until finally in the dissertation this analysis will be developed through students' independent learning and discussed in one to one supervision. The seminar situation, which starts in semester 1, provides the learning environment for D2, D3 and D4 in the first instance. Initially students use IT resources in preparing for seminar presentations, and gradually build their skills towards publicity and public presentation in the case study, and in researching, organising material and presenting it in the final dissertation. All these skills build more by learning through use, than by 'teaching', as modules become more oriented towards self motivation and independent research.</p>
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
<p>D4 is not directly assessed although clearly it tends to be strongly present in exceptional work. D1, D2 and D3 are assessed in all modules (D1 and D3 primarily through written submissions but also in verbal presentations, and D2 primarily in the case study symposium</p>

but also in Semester 2 seminar presentations. However more emphasis is placed on the appropriateness of particular choices of format or technologies in semester 2 and 3 modules.

## **12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features**

### **Basic structure of the programme**

The programme consists of 180 credits across 12 months full time, and 24 months part time. In the first semester it aims to build core knowledge of the relationship between cultural theory and philosophy and architectural criticism, and in the range of manifestations criticism has taken historically and now. In the second and third semesters students identify and develop their own research into aspects of criticism, taking into account that the context in which critical written work intervenes (whether event in the semester 2 case study or extended text in the semester 3 dissertation) informs its format. Part time students will negotiate their route through the programme with the Degree Programme Director.

The programme consists of:

Semester 1: 2 x compulsory 20 credit lecture and seminar based modules each assessed through a seminar presentation and a 3500 word essay (Cultural Theory and Architectural Criticism ARC8101, Critical Modalities ARC8100), and one optional 20 credit module from an approved list drawn from other university departments. (60 credits in total)

Semester 2: A compulsory 40 credit seminar and research-based module case study in criticism (ARC8099), assessed through a seminar presentation, a public presentation (which could be a spoken paper, an exhibition, a walk etc) at a student organised symposium, and an extended case study, and one optional 20 credit module from an approved list drawn from other university departments. (60 credits in total)

Semester 3: A research-based dissertation which builds specialist knowledge and argument in a relevant subject to Architectural Theory and Criticism (ARC8102) (60 credits)

Optional Modules: As well as allowing reciprocities with the new MA Future Landscape Imaginaries and Architectural Design Research programmes in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape and the existing planning programmes, the approved modules list also allows students to take modules offered by the School of Arts and Cultures and the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology. A full list of approved modules is given on the MA ATC programme regulation document. Other alternative optional modules can be selected with the approval of the Degree Programme Director.

### **Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)**

This programme considers the relation between the production of architectural criticism and urban, architectural and cultural theory. Whereas comparable programmes tend to focus either on architectural history and theory or upon critical theory *per se* (which then frequently takes the form of an extended review of canonic texts), this masters explicitly thematises and thinks about the activity of criticism itself in its various manifestations, which can range from published essays to public demonstrations to new means of social and political engagement enabled by digital technologies. Students on the programme will therefore be encouraged to theorise and debate not just the 'content' of critical positions but their fundamental relation to representational forms and technological assemblages.

In a period when familiar conceptualisations of criticism have themselves come under critical attack, the programme recognises an urgent need to rethink what we mean by architectural criticism, its modes, and its scope. Specifically, it resists the familiar gesture of opposing criticism to practice, recognising that the design process is itself internally patterned by the critical and that, equally, criticism is subject to its own conditions of practice. The programme therefore is addressed not only to architectural scholars but also to designers who wish to develop their understanding of the role of criticism within – and the critical effects of – their own creative practice. While giving students the opportunity to develop knowledge and ideas through conventional seminar discussions and written projects, it also recognises that critical practices including writing are themselves interventions, and therefore asks students to

actively find forms in which their work can engage in spatial and public realms.

The 20-credit options that are built into the programme in both Semesters 1 and 2 allow students to take relevant modules that are offered elsewhere in the School of Architecture Planning and Landscape, the School of Arts and Cultures, and the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology. This results in a highly distinctive constellation of choices for students on the Newcastle MA\_ATC, which opens up to them resources available in the Faculty of humanities and Social Sciences and allows them to tailor their study route in relation to their specific interests.

**Programme regulations (link to on-line version)**

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

**13 Criteria for admission**

*Entry qualifications*

Applicants who hold a good honours degree (normally 2:1 ) from this or another recognised University or awarding body in a cognate subject\*;

\*eg. Architecture, Fine Art, Visual Culture, Cultural Studies, Literature, Geography etc.

*Admissions policy/selection tools*

All applications to be forwarded to DPD as selector. Whilst pre-selection interviews are not a requirement for this programme we may request interviews on a case by case basis if required.

*Non-standard Entry Requirements*

Practitioners with relevant experience or other qualifications may also be considered (by agreement with the Dean of Postgraduate Studies)

*Additional Requirements*

None

*Level of English Language capability*

IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent)

**14 Support for Student Learning**

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

*Induction*

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

*Study skills support*

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

*Academic support*

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-

Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

#### *Pastoral support*

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. Stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Union Society operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

#### *Support for students with disabilities*

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

#### *Learning resources*

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

### **15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

#### *Module reviews*

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching Learning and Student Experience Committee.

#### *Programme reviews*

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching Learning and Student Experience Committee. The FTLSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the University Teaching Learning and Student Experience Committee.

#### *External Examiner reports*

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching Learning and Student Experience Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

#### *Student evaluations*

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

*Mechanisms for gaining student feedback*

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

*Faculty and University Review Mechanisms*

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a two-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching Learning and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further five year period.

*Accreditation reports*

*Additional mechanisms*

## 16 Regulation of assessment

*Pass mark*

The pass mark is 50

*Course requirements*

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

**Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes**

**Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes**

<50	Fail
50-59	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit
70 or above	Pass with Distinction

<50	Fail
50 or above	Pass

*Role of the External Examiner*

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:

- i. See and approve assessment papers
- ii. Moderate examination and coursework marking
- iii. Attend the Board of Examiners
- iv. Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

The School Brochure <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marketing/services/print/publications/ordering/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.



## Mapping learning outcomes on to modules, teaching &amp; learning methods, assessment

Intended learning outcomes	Where are they taught?	How are they taught?	How are students enabled to learn?	Assessed ?	How assessed?
A1	ARC8101 ARC8099 ARC8102	Lectures and seminars  Research project and seminars  One to one supervision	Independent reading, presentations in seminars, Research project, seminar and public presentation independent learning	Yes	Assessed seminar presentation and CT&AC essay
A2	ARC8100 ARC8099 ARC8102	Lectures, visits, seminars  Research project and seminars One to one supervision	Independent reading, presentations in seminars, Research project, seminar and public presentation independent learning	Yes	Assessed seminar presentation and CM essay
A3	ARC8099	Seminars and research project	Research project, seminar and public presentation	Yes	Assessed seminar and public presentation, and case study
A4	Throughout course, but synthesised to an extent in case study (ARC8099), and in dissertation (ARC8102)	Lectures, seminars Research project, workshops, one to one supervision	Independent reading, presentations in small groups and publicly, research project	Yes	dissertation

Intended learning outcomes	Where are they taught?	How are they taught?	How are students enabled to learn?	Assessed?	How assessed (primarily)?
B1	ARC8101 ARC8102	Lectures and seminars  One to one supervision	presentations in seminars  independent learning	Yes	Assessed seminar presentation and CT&AC essay
B2	ARC8100 ARC8099 ARC8102	Lectures, visits, seminars Research project and seminars  One to one supervision	presentations in seminars Research project, seminar and public presentation independent learning	Yes	Assessed seminar presentation and CM essay
B3	ARC8101 ARC8100 ARC8099	Seminars and group sessions towards public symposium	seminar presentations preparing for, giving public presentation	Yes	Assessed presentations seminar: CT&AC, CM, CS public: CS
B4	Begun in case study (ARC8099) and developed in dissertation (ARC8102)	Workshops, seminars Research project, and one to one supervision	Independent reading, primary research, seminars, presentations	Yes	Case study  dissertation

Intended learning outcomes	Where are they taught?	How are they taught?	How are students enabled to learn?	Assessed?	How assessed (primarily)?
C1	Introduced in ARC8101 and developed in	Seminars, and in lectures and workshops in case study and dissertation	presentations in seminars, research projects	Yes	Case study Dissertation

	ARC8099 and ARC8102				
C2	ARC8099 ARC8102	in lectures and workshops in case study and dissertation	Research projects	No	(optional mode of research)
C3	Introduced in ARC8101, ARC8100, with increasing sophistication in ARC8099	By example in CT&C, CM and in workshop in CS	seminar and public presentations	Yes	Assessed presentations seminar: CT&AC, CM, CS public: CS
C4	ARC8102	Skills introduced gradually throughout course, and in workshop during dissertation	Workshop exercise, research project	Yes	dissertation

Intended learning outcomes	Where are they taught?	How are they taught?	How are students enabled to learn?	Assessed?	How assessed (primarily)?
D1	Throughout course	Lectures, visits, seminars, research projects One to one supervision	presentations in seminars and in public independent learning	Yes	CT&AC, CM essays, case study and dissertation
D2	Throughout course with focus in ARC8099	Seminars, workshops	presentations in seminars, group preparation and public presentation	Yes	Assessed seminar and public presentations
D3	Throughout course with increasing sophistication	Research methods and realisation workshops	Research projects, seminar and public presentations, symposium publicity	Yes	Case Study, Dissertation as aspect of presentation
D4	ARC8099 and ARC8102	Workshops and Research project	Independent and group activities	No	(not directly)

### Optional Modules Mapping of Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Module Code
A1	APL8000,APL8001
A2	APL8000,APL8001
A3	APL8000,APL8001
A4	APL8000,APL8001,ARC8015,TCP8924
B1	APL8000,APL8001,DMS8001,DMS8007,ARC8015,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029,POL8048,POL8044 SOC8046
B2	APL8000,APL8001,DMS8001,DMS8007,ARC8015,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029,POL8048 POL8044,SOC8046
B3	APL8000,APL8001,DMS8001,DMS8007,ARC8015,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029,POL8048 POL8044,SOC8046
B4	DMS8001,DMS8007,ARC8015,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029,POL8048,POL8044,SOC8046
C1	DMS8001,DMS8007,ARC8015,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029,POL8048,POL8044,SOC8046
C2	APL8001,DMS8001,ARC8015,COM8057,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029,POL8048,POL8044 SOC8046
C3	DMS8001,ARC8015,COM8057,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029,POL8048,POL8044,SOC8046
C4	DMS8001,ARC8015,ICS8001,ICS8003,POL8029,POL8048,POL8044,SOC8046
D1	APL8000,APL8001,TCP8924,DMS8001,DMS8007,ARC8015,ICS8001,ICS8003,POL8029

	9,POL8048 POL8044,SOC8046,TCP8924
D2	DMS8001,ARC8015,TCP8934,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029,POL8048,POL8044,SOC8046 TCP8924
D3	APL8000,DMS8001,ARC8015,TCP8934,COM8057,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029,POL8044 SOC8046
D4	APL8000,APL8001,DMS8001,ARC8015,TCP8934,COM8057,ICS8001,ICS8003,GEO8016,POL8029 POL8048,POL8044,SOC8046