

Course Information Sheet

BA (Hons) Digital Media

Mode and course length – Full-Time (4 years)

Location – ARU Cambridge Campus

Awarding Body – Anglia Ruskin University. As a registered Higher Education provider Anglia Ruskin University is regulated by the Office for Students.

Overview

The Digital Media industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the UK and the need for creative and innovative designers and artists has never been higher. This course will help you develop your artistic vision for the future of digital content with the research and analytical skills that help underpin the most innovative and creative ideas.

You will follow briefs and challenges that come straight from industry and will have the chance to work with students from other courses in team based collaborative projects. Based in the Cambridge School of Art, you will study in a culturally and artistically rich environment and benefit from our industry-standard facilities and vibrant community. Cambridge itself is at the forefront of the digital revolution, with many digital agencies and digitally-reliant companies starting up or opening divisions here in recent years, including Sookio, Onespacemedia and Amazon.

Our teaching staff and technicians will support you to develop your skills in drawing and visual communication, core design skills, interactive design, video, digital photography, web design, mobile apps, sound design, user interfaces and digital animation, as well as transferable skills that are in high demand such as team work, project planning, digital portfolio creation and marketing.

At the end of the course you will showcase your work as part of our annual Degree Show, attended by industry professionals, recruitment agencies, parents, friends and alumni.

Course Delivery

Our courses are delivered through teaching and learning methods which provide students with the widest possible exposure to a modern and innovative higher education experience.

These methods vary and could include attendance at lectures and seminars, undertaking laboratory exercises or work-based activities, practical work, performances, presentations, field trips, other relevant visits and e-learning through Canvas, our online learning management system.

Each course is divided into a number of 'modules' which focus on particular areas, each of which has a specific approach to its delivery. This information is published to students for each module they take via the Module Definition Form (MDF) and Canvas.

Assessment

Our modules allow you to demonstrate your progress by producing coursework to set projects, and formal briefs. At the end of each trimester you'll submit design work for practice-based modules, and a written document for contextual/theoretical modules.

These will then be graded and you'll receive written feedback.

You'll also receive on going feedback on your design project concepts and develop your learning in taught sessions, one-to-one discussions, project reviews, peer to peer feedback and group critiques.

Fees

Information about your course fee including any annual fee increases or deposits (if required) can be found in your offer letter.

Modules

Core Modules

Year 1: Foundation in Art and Design

This module will provide students with the necessary skills to begin studying at level 4 in Art, Design and related courses.

Students will be introduced to the core skills necessary to succeed in higher education, including researching and referencing appropriately, demonstrating appropriate ICT skills, and communicating effectively verbally and in writing.

Students will be introduced to practical art and design skills including developing skills of visual storytelling, image-making both in traditional and digital media, visual language and communication, formulating an independent creative response to a broad range of subject matter.

Students will also be introduced to the fundamentals of design from a creative perspective, and to some of the key ideas/movements dominating art, design and culture, during the past few centuries.

Students will work extensively in groups and collaboratively, with students from art and design, architecture and engineering pathways.

The module is made up of the following 8 constituent elements:

- Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC)
- Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- Composition and Style
- Creative Workshops 1
- Approach to Design
- Critical and Contextual Studies
- Creative Workshops 2
- Specialist Project

Year 2: Introduction to Creative Digital Media

This module introduces you to the basic skills and processes of Digital Media at the point where creative vision and digital technology meet. This will require you to balance technical capability with an appreciation of what makes compelling digital content. You will be introduced to the potential and scope of digital media through a series of short exercises and tasks. The fundamentals of this process are idea conception, research, experimentation and then production using industry standard hardware and software.

Student managed coursework will involve research into historical and contemporary contexts of Digital Media practice. Practical workshops, inclusive lectures and critique sessions will present, examine and address the fundamental issues of conceiving, making and analysing Digital Media. This format is designed to be relevant across a variety of digital practices with set tasks and projects undertaken either individually or in small teams; that will help you investigate the effects of your creative decisions via continual analysis and development. Sessions will explore and address: conceiving of, planning, making and reflecting upon a range of media such as producing text, imagery, video and sound across a variety of digital platforms.

Ongoing critiques will formatively assess, analyse and evaluate your development; its emotive quality, functionality and appropriateness for purpose-within contemporary practice. This module includes ongoing personal development planning via a PDP Progress File using the SPARK cycle.

Year 2: Photography: Post Production Workflow

This is an intensive practice-based module designed to introduce you to the fundamentals of the post production workflow, giving you the means to control and manipulate your photographic images.

The module will introduce you to the fundamental principles of digital hardware, and Photoshop software. You will explore the use

of digital imaging techniques and processes in a series of lectures, practice-based workshops and discussions, where you will be actively working on projects and activities, individually and in groups. The relationship between techniques, methods and ideas will be explored through assigned projects, class activities and self-guided learning. Peer group reviews and one-to-one tutorials will support the development of your work throughout the trimester.

Year 2: Digital Media Design

During this module, you will be conceiving, researching, planning and making a variety of digital media artefacts with emphasis on process and experimentation within the scope of the set briefs.

You will continue to develop competences in the use of digital media software and will apply this to more challenging project briefs. The module examines the creative and interpretative decisions which determine content creation and functionality through the juxtaposition of multiple elements of type, text, colour and graphics, video, animation, visual communication and expressing ideas through drawing.

Practical interactive lectures present and address the historically fundamental issues of content creation and application for digital platforms; this format is designed to be relevant across a variety of digital practices with set tasks and projects undertaken; either individually or in small teams, to investigate both the functionality and aesthetic appeal of ideas through an explorative process. There will be more emphasis during this module on the way in which content and function are connected and how and where the user might interact with content.

Seminars and critiques will formatively assess, analyse and evaluate the projects development especially the emotive quality, functionality and their appropriateness for purpose. This module includes ongoing personal development planning via a PDP Progress File using the SPARK cycle.

Year 2: Introduction to Web Design

The module provides an introduction to web design and to the informed use of professional web design software. It is designed to equip you with the technical vocabulary necessary for the description and analysis of web material, and a working knowledge of industry-standard webdesign tools. This module introduces a variety of technologies, both code and non-code based.

You will undertake projects designed to explore and demonstrate an understanding of web design processes and media. These will be presented in a portfolio at the end of the trimester for assessment.

Year 2: History of Digital Media

The module examines the key theories and practices of Digital Media from its inception up to the present day and beyond. Lectures will address the rapid technological advances that mean our consumption of media is screen based and digital, and how this transformation is impacting on society. You will also be examining how analogue media is being transformed by the digital realm; how video, photography, sound recordings and animation have been affected by the digital revolution and what the consequences of these changes mean to Artists and Designers. The module will also include the way in which Artists and Designers have utilised technology to produce new digital work and the visual and aural languages that have resulted as a consequence.

Ideas such as the digital human, internet of things, virtual reality, augmented reality and the networked society will also be explored and the consequences of such developments discussed in group seminars.

This module will provide an historical and cultural framework within which students can begin to place their own practice and explore ideas with which to engage and research.

In this module there is an emphasis on developing academic skills that will prepare students for contextual studies in art and design at higher levels. This will focus on basic research skills that will enable students to acquire relevant source materials and knowledge in these specialist areas.

This module must be taken by all students, except in the specific circumstances where an international student may be required to take an additional English for Study module instead, in order to improve their English Language level.

Year 3: Interactive Narratives

Storytelling is a key human tool that helps us to explain and understand the world. The traditional linear approach to storytelling has been disrupted by digital media where the interaction of the end user can change the outcome and direction of a story, can explore character, environment or motivation of the central narrative. It has been argued that this digital media is more closely aligned to the way in which we experience the world; as a holistic and sometimes chaotic experience.

The module will also focus on applying some of the common structures of both analogue and digital game design to explore how stories can be manipulated or explored by the 'user'. This module will also question the so called 'authorial voice' in storytelling and explore other means of storytelling.

You will conceive, plan and execute a branching narrative either individually or in a team. You will be expected to produce detailed storyboards and interactive guides or wireframes that explore a number of scenarios with sufficient research and conceptual understanding to support your ideas. Technologies may include the written word, images, video, animation and sound.

Practical workshops, inclusive lectures and critique sessions will present, examine and address analogue narrative structures as well as branching narrative structures on digital platforms. Sessions will explore and address: conceiving of, planning, making and reflecting upon a range of media such as producing text, imagery, video and sound for digital platforms. Ongoing critiques will formatively assess, analyse and evaluate your development; its emotive quality, functionality and appropriateness for purpose-within contemporary practice. This module includes ongoing personal development planning via a PDP Progress File.

Year 3: Interactive Environments

Working in a team, you will conceive, plan, make and then exhibit digital content that explores ideas based on 'physical computing', sometimes known as the 'internet of things'. Examples include wearable technologies, augmented reality, and computer controlled environments and augmented reality. In this module, you will be exploring how interactive design can be used outside the computer, tablet and mobile screens. The final outcomes can be expressed using a variety of media so that considerations of environments and space might play a key role in the idea. The scope of projects will be larger, more ambitious and challenging; reflecting the skills and interests of the whole team.

You will be expected to work within your team in a supportive and practical way. Professional practice for most commercial and artistic endeavours is based on team-work with each member having a clearly defined role: this does not necessarily mean a hierarchy in the traditional sense and you will be exploring some alternative project management methodologies such as Scrum.

You will be supported both technically and conceptually through a series of lectures and workshops that will allow you to develop technical, team building, project management and creative idea exploration. Critiques and peer review both in and outside of your own team will also help you to develop a more reflective approach to the outcomes of the project.

The group exhibition will encourage you to take ownership of the presentation of the outcomes and to work together to organise and promote an exhibition.

This module includes on-going personal development planning via a PDP Progress File using the SPARK cycle.

Year 3: Debates and Practices

This module's purpose is to explore the links between critical studies and practice. It is intended to enable you to enrich your knowledge and develop your articulacy about your specialism and draw on wider perspectives in relation to your own work. It will be especially attentive to debates about contemporary practice. The module will be seminar based and may be held in the studio, when appropriate and possible. Discussions will engage theory and history with your own developing ideas about contemporary production. The agenda will be open and respond to current events, work and interests.

Year 4: Digital Media Specialised Practice

This module is designed to set you challenges that primarily involve experimentation and exploration within digital media practice. This could involve specific media types and platforms looking at new ways of creating content or how a variety of media could be combined to form an entirely new approach.

These may include the concepts for a number of end outcomes within the scope of Digital Media and the expectation is that you will apply your own specialism in creating compelling and substantial digital content Briefs may include individually negotiated

work, live set briefs, or national competitions. There will be an initial portfolio review followed by individually negotiated projects that will further both skill acquisition, creative development emphasising experimentation and risk taking.

You will be encouraged to solve challenging digital media practice briefs utilising an enhanced awareness of contemporary digital practice and concepts. Briefs may include individually commissioned work, live set briefs, or national competitions. There will be an initial portfolio review followed by individually negotiated projects that will further both skill acquisition, creative development emphasising experimentation and risk taking.

Lectures, presentations, discourse and seminars will examine creative innovation, design solutions, emerging technologies and concepts within current Digital Media practice. This module includes personal development planning via a PDP Progress File using the SPARK cycle.

Year 4: Major Project: Digital Media

The Major Project is the culmination of the Art and Design undergraduate practice courses. Depending upon your course, you will pursue the Major Project individually or as member of a group. At the outset, you will prepare a demanding proposal for an independent creative project, to be approved by your supervising tutor. In this final project, you will need to demonstrate your capacity to work to a planned schedule, research your options imaginatively, take account of current thinking on the issues your project raises, develop your work in convergent and divergent ways, respond positively to criticism and arrive at creative solutions. You will be expected to display, in both preparatory and finished work, an advanced understanding of the methods, techniques, materials and processes appropriate to your chosen media. Your developmental work will be subject to peer and tutor review and assessed with your finished work.

This module is exempt from the full ethical approval process in accordance with section 6 of the Academic Regulations (www.anglia.ac.uk/academicregs).

Optional Modules

(Subject to availability)

Year 2: Design: Contextual Studies

The module is designed to introduce the skills required during your course of study for researching, analysing and writing about art and design. It provides an overview of some of the major developments in art and design relevant to your subject discipline, considering issues of both industry practice and critical theory in relation to the social, cultural and intellectual climate of their times. The module may draw on examples from graphic design, interior design, fashion, industrial design, architecture, product design, media communications and fine art, but is taught with a particular emphasis on your own discipline. A constant question for us therefore concerns the possible definitions of 'design' itself. As well as this subject-specific content, the module also includes a series of workshops and exercises which introduce the skills of library research, critical analysis of visual imagery, essay writing and academic referencing, which will provide a foundation for your studies later in the course.

This module must be taken by all students, except in the specific circumstances where an international student may be required to take an additional English for Study module instead, in order to improve their English Language level.

Year 2: English for Study 1

This is the first in a series of English for Study modules. It aims to support those students who are at or below IELTS 6.0, or equivalent, in their academic writing/discussion abilities. It develops both students' grammatical accuracy and their ability to extract key points from a variety of spoken texts. It further requires students to demonstrate increasing awareness of essay planning and the importance of summary writing and referencing skills in academic essays. Discussion skills are also developed to ensure students are able to contribute in both seminar and tutorial discussions. The module, taught over two hours per week will consist of a variety of activities including group debates, and discussions, presentations, listening and comprehension exercises from authentic audio, and audio-visual material of academic lectures. Students will also be guided in independent learning, via the Language Centre and Library and the Language Laboratories through a wide range of media resources including newspapers and academic journals, videos, and internet.

Year 3: New Media Design: Graphic Design for Screen Based Applications

This module is designed to explore the role of graphic design across new media and screen-based contexts including web design and application interfaces, and to consider the implications and possibilities of new communications phenomena, social networks and viral marketing for the graphic designer. Workshops address the design of motion graphics and digital animation through Flash and AfterEffects software, and the development of web design skills introduced in MOD000090 Introduction to Web Design. Lectures and presentations identify both the creative opportunities and technical constraints of new media and motion graphics for broadcast and interactive applications. These include references from film and TV titling, web graphics and advertising, and consider the use of ambient, viral and guerrilla strategies. A series of individual and small group projects explores both the technical and conceptual issues involved in each of these aspects of practice, addressing the use of new media across a range of both practical and speculative contexts. These projects explore the emerging communication possibilities of new technologies, as well as providing detailed technical instruction on the presentation of the word and image on the screen. Individual and group tutorials throughout the module address the development of students' practice and the progress of each project.

Year 3: Time-Based Media

This module is designed specifically for level two students with no prior experience of video. As such, the module will provide a thorough introduction to video as a Fine Art medium while leaning heavily on your established practice to provide subject matter and direction. You will be expected to expand your practice through experimentation with digital video acquisition, digital video editing and televisual presentation. The module will begin with presentation and discussion of each student's work to date in order to establish relevant starting points and a group dynamic. This will happen alongside thorough inductions with digital video cameras and Final Cut Pro HD. Such inductions will be staff-led and delivered to the whole group. Once you have gained confidence, individual projects will be supported as appropriate, although group critiques will maintain the group dynamic. You will be expected to identify and engage with the formal properties of video and explore how the additional properties might be employed to expand established practice, for example: time, sound and screen-based presentation. This process will be complemented by presentation and discussion of historical and contemporary time-based art. The focus of assessment will be on intuitive experimentation and self-reflection; the relevance of the work to your existing practice and the understanding of the medium. The focus will not be on the production of a 'polished' product.

Year 3: Business for the Creative Arts

This module introduces you to the practical tools you will need to set yourself up in business in the creative arts, either as a company, a partnership, a freelancer or an employee. It also asks you to explore, imaginatively and creatively, a sector of the creative industries, and your own potential opportunities within it. The outcome of the module is a basic business plan or employment strategy developed from your ideas. Emphasis is placed on self-reflection, innovative thinking and communication skills.

Subjects covered include: the Creative Industries; analysing business ideas; types of business model; assessing your market; ideas behind marketing; basic accounts; tax and legal issues; and planning for start-up. You will be asked to translate these into practice by applying them to your own ideas, which will then become part of your own business plan or employment strategy.

The module is delivered by lectures, seminars, student presentations, critiques and workshops.

Year 3: 3D Computer Generated Imagery

This module will give you the skills and knowledge needed to devise and construct 3d models and objects using industry standard software. You will also be considering how these modules might be used and applied in a range of situations and outcomes; games, animations, motion graphics, architecture and Interior design.

Practical workshops, inclusive lectures and critique sessions will present, examine and address the contextualisation of 3D modelling and you will be researching and analysing current trends and developments. You will also be introduced to some of the most important concepts in 3d modelling such as interpretations of space, composition, lighting, texture and colour and will explore traditional drawing to plan and enhance your work.

Sessions will explore and address: conceiving of, planning, making and reflecting upon a range of 3D models and you will be challenged to meet a series of project briefs that will help develop both your creative and technical skills.

Ongoing critiques will formatively assess, analyse and evaluate your development; the emotive quality, technical competency

and appropriateness for purpose-within the given briefs requirements.

Year 3: Writing for Sequential Images

This module will give you an insight into common and alternative story structures and will enable you to build and create stories for sequential media, in particular picture books, graphic novels, animation and games. Central to this understanding and creation of a picture-based story is the combination of the handmade image and other modes of expression such as written text, sound, movement and interaction. You will gain insight into story structures and story development, character development, plotting and story-worlds. You will learn skills such as story development, adaptation, scripting, creative writing, dialogue and you will learn how to translate and adapt original material and existing texts into story treatments, scripts and storyboards for a range of visual media.

The insight into story structures and story development and the linked creative and practical processes are addressed in a series of classes and seminars, where both traditional and alternative forms of visual narration and image-text relationships are explored. In workshops, exercises and set briefs you will be challenged to apply this knowledge and create story texts, scripts and storyboards. This will include the creation of work based on your own ideas.

Ongoing critiques will formatively assess, analyse and evaluate your development; including the narrative quality, technical competency and appropriateness for purpose, within the given briefs requirements.

Year 3: Graphic Design for the Web

This module is designed to develop students' understanding of content creation for screen design, the module looks in specific detail at the contribution of graphic creativity and visual analysis to the technical discipline of content creation for screens. This defines the focus of the module in professional terms, identifying content creation as a specialism within the broader context of web design and defining the roles graduating students may expect to fulfil within professional web projects. A series of individual and small group projects addresses the use of web graphics across a range of commercial and self-initiated contexts including promotion, publishing, art-editorial, photographic and fine art applications. The projects explore both the technical and conceptual issues involved in each of these aspects of web practice. Workshops provide instruction around topics such as iterative design, workload management, storytelling and learning new technologies. Seminars explore current developments in web design practice in relation to student projects, and examine the role of the designer. Individual and group tutorials throughout the module address the development of students' practice and the progress of each project.

Year 3: Contemporary Digital Approaches

This module is designed to advance your skills and knowledge of digital imaging practice. The course will illustrate how, through a more integrated approach in the use of digital imaging software in conjunction with fieldwork and research, you can articulate ideas and statements and explore new possibilities in image creation. You will be expected to have, at least, a basic knowledge and level of skill in Photoshop at the outset. You will also be expected to generate all your own source images through fieldwork and/or photography studio practice. The emphasis throughout the course will be on the integration of technique and practice to explore ideas and concepts. By examining the imaging workflow, from capture through to output, you will experiment with different aspects of image construction to enable a clearer understanding of the processes and skills involved. There will be assignments and technical workshops to illustrate these points. You will be expected to complete assignments and to conduct contextual research to support your work. You will be expected to share your assignment outcomes and research with the rest of the class through participation in class crits. Tutorial guidance will be given to help develop your practice and research.

Year 3: Building an online Audience

As a Designer or Artist you must have the knowledge and skills to get noticed amongst the vast quantity of content online and with increasingly shorter attention spans of audiences. The ability to build and engage an audience is one of the most valuable skills you can learn for self-promotion and could lead to employment or the development of an online business / project. It requires a unique combination of social intelligence, creative problem solving and analytical thinking. This module is a launching pad for mastering the digital marketing skillsets you will need and to provide a professional identity that will further your career goals.

Part of this module will focus on creating a professional online presence; identifying and then utilising content management systems (CMS) to create a professional profile. Since the web is highly networked you will identify ways in which social media, peer to peer file sharing, and search engine optimisation (SEO) help drive traffic to your content and connect you with potential employers / clients.

Practical Workshops, inclusive lectures and critiques will help support you in developing the skills required to successfully develop and employ online content. The core of this module will include the deployment of content live on the internet, and engagement with the wider community. Practical workshops will introduce various online platforms and content management systems (CMS), peer to peer file sharing strategies, and professional networking. Lectures will address some of the contextual and developmental aspects of CMS, and new ways in which content is being or could be shared. Critiques and peer review will support your reflective practice.

Year 4: Research Project

The Research Project is intended to foster your independent study with the guidance of a tutor. You will devise your own project which will reflect on /co-ordinate with / enhance your own studio work and interests. Self-reflexivity and a critical distance will be encouraged. The seminars provide a forum for students to learn from each other's research. There will be opportunities for individual tutorials with a member of staff. The Research Project may include a variety of relevant topics, including reporting on work experience. It may be illustrated with photographs, drawings, video. The approach is to be discussed with the tutor concerned.

Year 4: Research Assignment

The Research Assignment is intended to foster your independent study with the guidance of a Supervisor. On the Research Assignment module, you will devise your own project which will reflect on / co-ordinate with / enhance your own studio work and interests. Self-reflexivity and a critical distance will be encouraged. The classes provide a forum for students to learn from each other's research. There will be opportunities for individual tutorials with a member of staff. The Research Assignment may include a variety of relevant topics, and the topic will be negotiated with your supervisor. It may be illustrated with photographs, drawings, video. The approach is to be discussed with the supervisor concerned.

Year 4: Working in the Creative Industries

Gaining work experience enhances employability, and work based learning offers you the chance to gain industry knowledge, skills, contacts and networking opportunities.

This module is designed to give you the opportunity to explore a working environment in the industry that they have identified as relevant to their present or future needs. The module will encourage self-managed learning, and serves to increase employability by developing personal organisation, team-working, and networking skills - thereby increasing self-reliance and confidence. The experience can be used as a basis for directing and focussing your career plans, and can influence your final year projects.

You are required to identify, negotiate and agree with an employer (or employers) the terms of the placement in association with a module tutor, to ensure that the module learning outcomes can be achieved. You will create a reflective report on your work experience. This will include: the application procedure you have conducted (CV, letter and portfolio); market and background information on the employer; your role(s) on the placement(s); academic and vocational analysis; skills and experiences (opportunities, advantages, constraints, aptitudes and interests). You will also be asked to include a workplace diary that logs activity and supports an analysis of the learning achieved. The employer will be asked to complete a Student Feedback package on completion of the placement. The work placements may be carried out in a variety of settings depending upon your requirements, areas of interest and availability of opportunities. The minimum period will be 100 hours, and you can undertake more than one placement for the module.