

Course Specification

MA Illustration with Graphic Novel



1. General information

Course Title	MA Illustration with Graphic Novel		
Awarding University	Leeds Arts University		
University at which course is delivered	Leeds Arts University		
Relevant benchmark(s)	Master's Degree Characteristics (2020), Sector Recognised Standards		
Date of most recent review	20 April 2023		
Date of next review	2027-28		
Awards	Credits	Duration	Mode of study
MA Illustration with Graphic Novel	180	1 year / 2 years	Full time / Part time
PGDip in Illustration with Graphic Novel *	120		Full time / Part time
PGCert in Illustration with Graphic Novel *	60		Full time / Part time
*Exit Award only			

2. Course Aims

This course aims to:

This course aims to enable you to focus on the expansive field of illustration practice and storytelling. It will allow you to develop a broad overview of the subject area, including its wide and transferrable professional application, alongside a focused look at the graphic novel. The course aims to support your creative development through the production of imaginative and experimental work. You will develop your own approach and working methods for authorial illustration and storytelling where, as the 'author' of your creative project(s), you will define, direct and design the content as well its tone, style or voice.

The course aims to support you as you build your understanding of the relationship between theory, practice, and industry. You will be encouraged to investigate illustration's potential impact on the worlds we live in. The course offers the opportunity to participate in critical conversations relevant to contemporary global creative research as you explore illustration's function and value. This will include reflecting on practical drawing and analogue play, establishing communities of practice and approaches to short-form and long-form content. You will challenge existing approaches to illustration, explore innovative or interdisciplinary working methods and explore methods of creating impact through practice. You will aim to locate key audiences and establish your independent, bespoke ethos around the subject and its related fields in preparation for contemporary professional life or further study at PhD level.

3. Distinctive Features of the Course

The course pursues an authorial, comprehensive and expansive understanding of contemporary illustration through an open, inquisitive and explorative programme of study. It offers an overview of the broad possibilities for illustration as a professional and artistic practice alongside specialist insights into both authorial illustration and graphic novel practices. The course content is focused on storytelling, visual narrative and sequential illustrative practices, and their related theories. It

provides the opportunity to explore the specialist mechanisms which relate to both authorial practice and graphic novel construction. These may include works of fiction and non-fiction, reportage & graphic journalism, co-designed and collaborative stories, autobiographical, autofiction or other approaches derived from the 'lived experience'. The course values traditional and analogue methods which complement contemporary and digital practice. You will be encouraged to undertake in-depth examination and experimentation of interdisciplinary practical and theoretical research methods through simple, hands-on and playful approaches, and develop and reflect on your ideas through physical methods such as sketch booking, traditional visual planning, scamps, mocking-up, storyboarding and other physical formats such as making zines or artists' books. You will be encouraged to speculate and collaborate as you investigate the idiosyncrasies of practice research. You will study professionally relevant contexts and there is an expectation for you to establish links with industry during the course. This will be supported by the Careers, Employability and Enterprise team. You will develop professional skills and approaches as well as forge networks with a range of internal and external groups, organisations and individuals. During taught sessions, a range of venues, communities and individuals (such as studios/museums/galleries/creative charities and enterprises/illustration agents/literary festivals/publishers and independent illustrators for example) will be discussed. You will be introduced to illustration competitions and other opportunities, that will enhance your artistic and specialist illustration practices. Through active engagement with practical and theoretical research methods, and innovative modes of dissemination, you will generate your own content with a critical understanding of situated illustration, narrative and storytelling. By positioning illustrators as communicators who see the world through a lens of intense detail, the course will help you to deepen your own sense of ecological, cultural and social awareness, to encourage the production of conscientious, nuanced and refined stories. By developing a systematic understanding of the relationship between practice research and communication you will recognise opportunities to situate your work in context, for example through the design of sequential imagery (zines, graphic novels, comics, children's books, visual essays for example) critical writing and presentations, digital and screen formats, workshop, community-based or exhibitable practices.

4. Course Structure

4a. Module Framework

Level 7	Credit points	ECTS	Learning hours
Beginnings	30	15	300
Call to Action	30	15	300
Resolutions	30	15	300
Research Methods	15	7.5	150
Business Planning	15	7.5	150
Visualising Research	15	7.5	150
Digital Marketing	15	7.5	150
The Dissertation	30	15	300

4b. Course Map / Structure (overleaf)

Full Time Mode						
Trimester 1 (September - December)			Trimester 2 (January - April)		Trimester 3 (April - July)	
Beginnings (30 credits)			The Dissertation (30 credits)		Call to Action (30 credits)	180 Credits
Visualising Research (15 credits)	Business Planning (15 credits)		Research Methods (15 credits)	Digital Marketing (15 credits)	Resolutions (30 credits)	
Part Time Mode						
	Trimester 1 (September - December)		Trimester 2 (January - April)		Trimester 3 (April - July)	
Y1	Beginnings (30 credits)		Research Methods (15 credits)	Digital Marketing (15 credits)	Call to Action (30 credits)	90 Credits
Y2	Visualising Research (15 credits)	Business Planning (15 credits)	The Dissertation (30 credits)		Resolutions (30 credits)	90 Credits

5. Course Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the following learning outcomes, you will be eligible for the award of MA Illustration with Graphic Novel.

CLO 1 Research	Create specialised work outputs, which are informed by current practice, research and scholarship	Beginnings (30) Dissertation (30) Call to Action (30) Research Methods (15) Visualising Research (15)
CLO 2 Analysis	Use, analyse, critique and evaluate a range of research methods, as you develop your specialist, subject and professional knowledge and practice.	Beginnings (30) Call to Action (30) Research Methods (15) Visualising Research (15)
CLO 3 Subject Knowledge and Understanding	Evidence an in-depth knowledge and understanding of your specialist, subject and professional practice, including that of contemporary critical and conceptual debate, and practical developments.	Dissertation (30) Research Methods (15) Business Planning (15) Visualising Research (15) Digital Marketing (15) Resolutions (30)
CLO 4 Experimentation	Experiment with techniques, ideas and approaches to advance your specialist, subject and professional practice.	Beginnings (30) Call to Action (30) Resolutions (30)
CLO 5 Techniques and Processes	Choose, apply and evaluate a range of techniques and processes appropriate to your practice.	Beginnings (30) Call to Action (30) Research Methods (15) Business Planning (15) Visualising Research (15) Digital Marketing (15)
CLO 6 Personal and Professional Development	Work with autonomy, initiative and professionalism as you evaluate, revise and disseminate your practice.	Dissertation (30) Resolutions (30) Research Methods (15)

		Business Planning (15) Visualising Research (15) Digital Marketing (15)
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6. Learning and Teaching Strategies

The learning and teaching methods and strategies included in this course are aligned to the descriptor for master's degrees as defined by the Office for Students in the *Sector Recognised Standards* document (February 2018). Further information is available by following this link: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/>.

The *Characteristics Statement [for] Master's Degrees* (February 2020) has also informed the design of the award. In particular, the document notes the following:

... all master's degree graduates have in-depth and advanced knowledge and understanding of their subject and/or profession, informed by current practice, scholarship and research. This will include a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject and/or profession; critical skills; knowledge of professional responsibility, integrity and ethics; and the ability to reflect on their own progress as a learner. Further information is available here: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/master's-degree-characteristics-statement.pdf>

Therefore, the learning, teaching and assessment strategies on this course have been designed to enable the student to become effective practitioners and researchers; to develop critical and analytical skills and to develop and evidence in-depth knowledge and understanding of their subject area. They also encourage and facilitate an experimental approach to practice and research and allow the student to extend their specialist technical knowledge. They are designed to support and facilitate personal and professional development and allow the student to work with initiative and autonomy.

Teaching and Learning:

Teaching and learning strategies include the following approaches:

- Lectures and presentations
- Seminars and discussion groups
- Independent research and self-directed study
- Demonstrations including technical demonstrations and workshop inductions
- Peer group presentations and collaborative practice
- One to one tutorials
- Group tutorials and 'crits'
- Individual presentations
- Live projects

Assessment:

Assignment submissions are made in response to set briefs. The content of the submission is usually negotiated with your tutor, and related to, or derived from, your research interests.

The briefs and assignment requirements are informed by the module content and may include for example, subject specialist art-based practice work, written submissions, presentations, business and research plans, research books, sketch books and/or work books.