Course Specification

Course Summary Information	
1	**Course Title**	MA Black Studies
2	**Course Code**	PT1285
3	**Awarding Institution**	Birmingham City University
4	**Teaching Institution(s)** (if different from point 3)	
5	**Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation** (if applicable)	

6	**Course Description**

In 2017 Birmingham City University became the first university in Europe to launch an undergraduate Black Studies degree programme. Our MA Black Studies course aims to build on the success of this pivotal programme. Since its emergence Black Studies at BCU has been one of the most high profile and successful research activities since 2014 in the faculty. We have produced highly rated and world leading research, secured research funding and hosted some foundational research activities.

This course will be well suited to those already in employment as well as those wanting to develop specialist knowledge and build on transferable skill sets which will boost their employability and career options to working within education, local and national government, criminal justice, media, the arts and advocacy organisations. We have links with the public, private and voluntary sector organisations in local community, national and international settings. Engagement with stakeholders is fundamental part of the final project; which further enhances students' personal and professional development and networking skills.

What's covered in the course?

Black Studies has been hugely influential in debates on university campus across the UK. BCU staff are regularly invited to speak at student and staff organised symposia about 'decolonising' the university. It was students that pushed for courses such as Black Studies, asking questions like 'Why is My Curriculum White?'. From speaking at campuses across the country it is obvious there is a call for a postgraduate course in Black Studies.

In designing the course, we have built on the principles we have embedded into the undergraduate course. These have become the basis of the discipline of Black Studies that we are at the forefront of creating in academia. These key principles are embedded into the design of the degree and in module titles

- o Politics of Blackness. Black Studies is about connecting into the politics of Africa and the diaspora. We will explore critically and in relation to historical and existing social movements.

- o Black Studies in Action. Taking Black Studies knowledge off campus is indispensable to the discipline, therefore we will explore research methods and partnerships with public, private and voluntary sectors in the community. This will

feed directly into the Black Studies Project where student will develop a project with an impact off campus.

- o Intersecting Identities. The most developed area of research in the discipline is Black Feminism, of which the key principles will be explored in this module.

- o Race and Modernity. A critique of Eurocentric notions of progress is an essential component of 'decolonising' the curriculum.

- o Culture, Media and Representation. Popular culture has been a central tool for exploring Black Studies knowledge, which aims to engage in the real world. We will be drawing heavily on these traditions in the course.

- o Historical analysis. Throughout the modules we will be drawing on historical analysis to understand the contributions, experiences and perspectives of Africa and the African diaspora.

7	Course Awards		
7a	Name of Final Award	Level	Credits Awarded
	MA Black Studies	7	360
7b	Exit Awards and Credits Awarded		
	Postgraduate Certificate Black Studies	7	60
	Postgraduate Diploma Black Studies	7	120

8	Derogation from the University Regulations
	None.

9	Delivery Patterns			
Mode(s) of Study	Location(s) of Study	Duration of Study	Code(s)
Full Time	City Centre	1 Years	PT1285
Part Time	City Centre	2 Years	PT1286

10	Entry Requirements

The admission requirements for this course are stated on the course page of the BCU website at https://www.bcu.ac.uk/

11	**Course Aims**
	• Provide you with critical perspectives on society, developed from Black perspectives from across the African Diaspora. • Engage you in a discussion of the histories and politics of Black communities in the UK and abroad. • Enable you to apply a range of theories to the understanding social life. • Equip you with Black Studies skills so that they can apply in communities of practice. • Provide you with opportunities to construct a meaningful and relevant individual programme of study • Encourage the incorporation of your individual interests and original research into the programme of study and assessed work • Facilitate a learning environment that develops transferable skills which will enhance academic and career prospects. • Equip you with the skills for research careers

12	**Course Learning Outcomes**
	Knowledge and Understanding
1	Demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of past and present Black Studies theories and concepts.
2	Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to a critical understanding of Black Studies, and a wide range of interdisciplinary subjects.
3	Effectively communicate a critical understanding of key Black Studies concepts, theories and perspectives.
4	Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in Black Studies.
5	To apply Black Studies theories to have an impact on the social world.
	Skills and other attributes
6	Ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
7	Ability to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level
8	Apply critical reasoning and analytical skills with regards to the relationship between theoretical and empirical social research in order to carry out social research
9	Competent in self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and able to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.
10	Ability to select, justify and evaluate appropriate academic literature within a specialized subject area.

13	Level Learning Outcomes
	Upon completion of the Postgraduate Certificate Black Studies students will be able to:
	systematically understand of knowledge, and a critical awareness of past and present Black Studies theories and concepts.
	Effectively communicate an understanding of key Black Studies concepts, theories and perspectives.
	Discuss comprehensive understandings of techniques applicable to understanding of Black Studies, and a wide range of interdisciplinary subjects.
	Upon completion of the Postgraduate Diploma Black Studies, students will be able to:
	Effectively apply originality in the use of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in Black Studies.
	Examine complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
	Develop knowledge and understanding, and to apply new skills to a high level
	Apply knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in Black Studies.
	Upon completion of 60 credits at Level 6 / the Bachelors Degree, students will be able to:
	To apply Black Studies theories to have an impact on the social world.
	Apply critical reasoning and analytical skills with regards to the relationship between theoretical and empirical social research in order to carry out social research
	Competent in self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and able to act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.

14	Course Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
	The Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy on this programme, in line with the University's Learning and Teaching Principles, is driven by the following concerns: • To ensure that you graduate with in-depth Black Studies knowledge and a broad range of academic, personal, and professional skills • To encourage you to develop a passion for lifelong learning, a thirst for knowledge, and an attitude driven by high achievement and excellence • To encourage engaged and deep - rather than passive and surface-level –learning • To facilitate your becoming an independent learner engaged in a range of pre-, and post-, sessional tasks outside the classroom, such as reading, research, collaborative work, and practical experience • To provide you with formative learning activities to aid understanding, confidence building and provide valuable feedback opportunities to support continuous development • To help you develop forms of assessment that are positive learning and developmental experiences rather than simply a 'means to an end' • To provide a supportive environment for you in the transition to university-level study, and for transition from level 4 through to level 6 • To ensure that your taught sessions have clear objectives and relate to module and programme-level outcomes along with summative assessments • To ensure that your summative assessments are aligned with the programme and module learning outcomes as well as the learning and teaching experiences

- To make sure that you are aware of the ways in which teaching sessions and assessment link to the wider module and programme-level expectations and learning outcomes
- To encourage you to maximise the opportunities, and the programme and university-level support, in relation to assessment feedback and continuous development
- To give you the opportunity to provide modular and programme-level feedback to staff to improve student learning
- To enable you to understand the discipline of sociology as not only theoretically informed but also evidence-based, relevant, professionally focused and applied
- To explore, and challenge, a range of conceptions and misconceptions about social life generated through interactions with peers, professionals, literature, media and personal experiences
- To encourage you to critically reflect on how society as a whole is structured and organised, and also on the social experiences of others as well as your own knowledge and social experiences
- To ensure that you acquire, and are aware of, the diverse transferable skills embedded in the programme curriculum (e.g., oral and written communication, research and presentation skills, and professional skills)
- To provide a broad and diverse range of teaching and assessment methods, including innovative use of the VLE – such as discussion fora, quizzes, blogs, wikis – to ensure not only that the above aims are met, but also to appeal to the various learning styles and teaching preferences of our students

Learning and Teaching Methods

The programme team employ a wide variety of learning and teaching methods to ensure that you are exposed to a broad range of learning styles and that all students get the opportunity to learn in ways which play to their particular strengths and preferences. Past teaching experience - and educational research - suggests that different students prefer, and respond to, different teaching and learning styles (e.g., some students prefer lectures and seminars, whilst others prefer workshops or student-led sessions, VLE etc.).

However, all of these different learning and teaching methods share the common aim of encouraging engaged, independent, and deep learners who are highly successful, knowledgeable, critical and reflective, and who can demonstrate a range of relevant skills. To this end, the programme promotes an 'active' approach to learning facilitated through group work, focussed practical tasks, live projects, and discussion and feedback.

You will be encouraged to engage in pre-sessional tasks for each module - such as reading, research, collaborative work, interactive learning, online materials and video lectures – so that face-to-face contact time can then be used more productively and can concentrate on the critical and reflective discussion of the key issues and debates raised. This also engages you as a partner in learning, requiring you to fully engage with the content, and encouraging you to engage in wider reading and research to develop your knowledge and skills.

Each of the following learning and teaching methods ensure that you have clear objectives and relate to module and programme-level learning outcomes along with the formative and summative assessments. You will also made aware of the ways in which these teaching sessions link to the wider module and programme-level expectations and learning outcomes.

Lectures: The programme team use lectures to provide a structured, in-depth overview of a given topic, summarise the key arguments and debates, stimulate thought, and provide a series of points for further debate and discussion. You develop and expand on this knowledge through

seminar discussions and activities, tutorials, and pre-/post-sessional reading and research. Although lectures have often been criticised for encouraging a passive learning experience, our lectures remain an important educational tool, are delivered in an engaging and enthusiastic manner, and encourage interaction and independent thought through the use of interesting examples and innovative VLE techniques. Lectures develop a range of skills including active listening skills, note-taking and summarising skills, and the ability to retain and review information.

Seminars: The programme team use seminars as a teaching session for a group of up to 30 students and here we usually build upon the information from a lecture and/or from pre-sessional reading and other activities. It is usually planned and led by a tutor and could involve you in group discussions and debates, practical examples, student presentations, exercises, analysis of visual materials, amongst many other activities. Seminars are an opportunity to develop more in-depth knowledge, to practice academic skills, and to work through difficult ideas and examples to ensure you have a thorough grasp of that week's topic and relevant skills. Individual and group presentations, or student-led sessions, are often encouraged in seminars and are an excellent way of developing communicative skills and personal confidence.

Workshops: These are often used by the team when the content of the module best suits a mixture of lecture-style information and seminar discussion. The groups are usually slightly larger than seminars but much smaller than lectures, and the tutor normally spends small parts of the session communicating important information which is then interspersed with individual and group-based activities to ensure a good, working knowledge of that week's topic.

Tutorials: The programme team also often use formal and informal tutorials with individual students or small groups to enable the development of a deeper understanding of the key topics and to allow for detailed feedback on the knowledge and skills acquired.

Independent collaborative study: alongside the methods used above, and often integrated as part of the module, are opportunities to engage with fellow students in a range of tasks including the preparation of student-led seminars, research projects, presentations, amongst many other activities. Collaborative work provides you with a range of skills, including creative problem-solving, team-work skills, leadership capacities, and the ability to time manage.

Independent individual study: also, alongside the methods used above, and often integrated as part of the module, are opportunities to engage in a range of individual and independent tasks which can also include the preparation of student-led seminars, research projects, presentations, amongst many other activities. Independent work, in the form of presentation, projects and other assessment, provides you with a range of personal, academic and practical skills, including research skills, problem-solving, analysis and evaluation, and the ability to time manage.

Virtual Learning Environment: the programme team are also committed to blended learning and to the independent use of web-based platforms, particularly Moodle, for educational purposes. VLE supplements our other teaching methods but is also encouraged as a means for further learner engagement (through links to further reading, documentaries and other resources), for communication and collaboration (through student fora and web-based assessment), and also helps you to develop your technological skills. You will be able to access Moodle, the University's e-learning system, in order to receive online support, information about module and course developments and module-specific resources.

All of our learning and teaching methods place the notion of applied knowledge at their heart, and this is particularly apparent in the field-based work at Level 4 which is then complemented by core modules at Levels 4 and 5 which focus on the development of research skills and the

analysis of sociological research. Our Level 4 module 'Researching Social Life' not only provides you with a range of introductory-level research knowledge and skills prior to other research-led modules at Levels 5 and 6, but also provides you with a series of academic and employability skills taught on the module by the programme team in collaboration with colleagues from the Centre for Academic Success and the Centre for Enhanced Learning and Teaching. The emphasis on research skills, and on independent study, culminates in the final year with the 'Black Studies Project', which allows you to do your own original research in the form of an engaged research project in collaboration with a public, private or voluntary sector, not-for-profit organisation.

Module feedback opportunities: You are considered as a partner in the learning process and are therefore provided with regular opportunities, both formally and informally, to provide feedback to the module tutors and programme team about our learning and teaching methods to ensure continued improvement and success.

Range of Assessments & Formative Learning
In addition to the wide variety of learning and teaching methods employed by the programme team, we also utilise a broad range of diverse formative and summative assessment methods to ensure that you acquire the relevant academic and transferable/employability skills required to succeed both inside and beyond the university. As is the case with teaching styles, different students prefer, and respond to, different assessment methods (e.g., with some students preferring coursework over exams, and vice versa, and others excelling in assessments that emphasise oral over written communication, collaborative over individual work etc)..

Our assessment methods, as with our learning and teaching methods, also share the common aim of encouraging engaged, independent, and deep learners who are highly successful, knowledgeable, critical and reflective, and who can demonstrate a range of relevant skills. We are committed to the idea that assessment should not be seen as simply a 'means to an end' but should be a positive learning and developmental experience in itself. It should be useful to tyou and give you ample opportunity to demonstrate your learning.

Each of the following assessment methods, both formative and summative, ensure that you have clear objectives and relate to the teaching sessions as well as the module and programme-level learning outcomes. You are also made aware of the ways in which these assessment methods link to the wider module and programme-level expectations and learning outcomes.

Formative Learning: Formative learning opportunities are crucial to building confidence, understanding and a partnership approach to the learning experience, and to support you in your continuous development. They provide you with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills, and to get important forms of individual or collective qualitative feedback, prior to submitting a summative assessment. It clarifies to youwhat the expected standards are, encourages dialogue as well as self-assessment, and helps both the tutor and the you to know what additional support is needed. Formative assessment occurs in various ways throughout the programme and involves feedback from peers and tutors alongside individual reflection. Feedback on work in progress is available prior to the submission of summative assessments. It will differ from module to module but involves an opportunity to measure and reflect upon progress to date, and to seek the required support and develop the skills needed to succeed.

In addition to formative feedback, each module provides learning and teaching sessions on assessment and revision prior to summative assessments.

Summative Assessment: A range of summative assessment methods are employed involving both individual and group assignments; coursework assignments, oral presentations and

practical project work, and examinations. The course also employs online assessments for some of its modules. Summative assessment methods for all modules are identified in the course handbook, in the module guides, and on the module Moodle site. The assessment method for each module, along with the assessment details and criteria, are also specified in an assignment brief. These are clearly linked to the programme and module-level learning outcomes and the level-specific assessment criteria.

Each of the following assessment methods are ones that the team use to not only assess the level of knowledge and understanding acquired on each of the modules, but also to assess a range of academic and transferable skills required of sociology graduates.

Essays: this is an important element of university-level assessment used by the course team, but only one of many. It requires, and demonstrates, the following skills: structured writing with clarity and precision, the ability to analyse and interpret information and arguments, critical thinking, independent analysis and judgement, research skills, planning, the ability to structure and organise an argument.

Presentations: the programme team use presentations, both individual and group-based, to assess the following skills: oral communication, time management, independence, collaborative teamwork, technological skills, analytical research skills, gathering info (and appropriate sources), the ability to analyse and interpret complex information.

Project (& multi-media) work: there is some element of project work, both independent and collaborative, required at each level of the programme; however, it is a particular focus in the final year with the 'Black Studies Project', which allows you to do your own original research in the form of an engaged research project in collaboration with a public, private or voluntary sector, not-for-profit organisation. Different projects, at each level, require different skills, but all involve the following: structured writing with clarity and precision, the ability to analyse and interpret information and arguments, critical thinking, original and independent analysis and judgement, in-depth research skills, time management and planning, the ability to structure and organise an argument.

Reflective assessments: all of the above forms of assessment involve some level of reflective work. Assessment particularly focuses on the following skills: thoughtful and insightful self-reflection, the ability to identify areas for social and personal development, the ability to apply theoretical ideas to oneself and one's personal and social experiences to date.

The programme team seek to ensure that these assessment methods not only encourage a wide range of knowledge and skills, and encourage you to become both independent and engaged deep-level learners, but also that they are sensitive to the knowledge and skills that you are expected to be able to evidence at the different levels of your programme (i.e., Levels 4, 5 and 6). Assessment, and learning outcomes, at Level 4 require less advanced knowledge and skills from you than those at Levels 5 and 6, and Level 5 requires less than Level 6. These later levels develop your knowledge and skills and encourage increased specialism, further independence, and deeper skills and knowledge.

Feedback, Feedforward and Continuous learning
The programme team will encourage you to maximise the opportunities, and the programme and university-level support, in relation to formative learning, summative assessment feedback, and continuous development. Feedback and feedforward opportunities take many forms, such as formative learning and summative feedback at the individual level, but also group and peer-based feedback. Tutors ensure through written and oral feedback and feedforward on essays, exams, presentations, projects etc, that you are aware of what you are doing well, what you need to improve on, how you can do it, and what extra feedback and support is available.

You are encouraged not only to get further feedback, in addition to written feedback, on an individual and group level from module tutors, but also to take on board any issues in previous formative/summative assessments for this and other modules. You are then encouraged to look at your wider learning needs, across all modules, with your personal tutor and to identify any additional support from the Centre for Academic Success.

Learning Partnership
The staff team seeks to create an open and inclusive culture of learning where staff and students jointly contribute to the pursuit of learning.
To succeed in your studies, you are expected to adopt the highest standards of professionalism and integrity, both in relation to their studies and in their dealings with the people connected with their study environment. There is a direct correlation between the amount of effort that you put into your studies and what you get out of it. To this end, we expect all students to:

- Engage fully with your learning activities
- Attend all timetabled sessions and attend punctually
- Prepare fully for all classes
- Participate fully in class (whether by way of listening attentively to the tutor or fellow students, contributing orally to class discussions, or undertaking any other task required) and to allow others to do so
- Take responsibility for your own learning in partnership with us
- Engage fully in all formative and summative assessments, submit work on time, and make the most of assessment feedback and the wider academic support available
- Help to maintain an academic atmosphere which is conducive to learning for all
- Consult the student handbook and the subject information on Moodle
- Regularly check the announcements and course materials on Moodle and in their email folder
- Treat all student colleagues and staff (both academic and administrative) with courtesy and respect, both inside and outside class
- Communicate politely, whether via e-mail or otherwise
- Advise us about any circumstances or needs that might affect your ability to fully participate in all aspects of university life
- Be tolerant of the views expressed by tutors or student colleagues provided that they are not sexist, racist or otherwise inappropriate, and observe the University's policy in relation to equality as set out on the University Website
- Treat others as you would expect them to treat you.

15	**Course Requirements**		
15a	**Level 7:**		

In order to complete this course you must successfully complete all the following CORE modules (totalling 160 credits):

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value
SOC7001	Politics of Blackness	20
SOC7003	Black Studies in Action	20
SOC7005	Intersecting Identities	20
SOC7006	Representation, Discourse and Culture	20
SOC7004	Understanding Self Through History	20
SOC7007	Black Studies Project	60

In order to complete this course you must successfully complete at least 20 credits from the following indicative list of OPTIONAL modules.

Module Code	Module Name	Credit Value
CRI7057	Understanding Domestic and Sexual Violence	20
CRI7052	Homicide and Harm: Critical Understanding of Violence	20
CRI7035	Inside Out	20
LAW7135	Global Health Law	20
LAW7123	International Criminal Law	20
LAW7133	Refugees and the Free Movement of People	20

15b   Structure Diagram

Please note list of optional modules is indicative only. Students' choice will not be guaranteed for optional modules but a fair and transparent process will be adopted and shared with students.

Level 7

SEMESTER ONE	SEMESTER TWO	SEMESTER THREE
Core Politics of Blackness (20 Credits) Black Studies in Action (20 Credits) Understanding Self through History (20 Credits)	Core Intersecting Identities (20 Credits) Representation, Discourse and Culture (20 Credits)	Core Black Studies Project (60 Credits)
	Optional Understanding Domestic and Sexual Violence (20 Credits) Homicide and Harm: Critical Understanding of Violence (20 Credits) Inside Out (20 Credits) Global Health Law (20 Credits) LAW7123 International Criminal Law (20 Credits) LAW7133 Refugees and the Free Movement of People (20 Credits)	

16 Overall Student Workload and Balance of Assessment

Workload

% time spent in timetabled teaching and learning activity

Activity	Number of Hours
Scheduled Learning	152
Directed Learning	216
Private Study	1432
Total Hours	1800

Balance of Assessment

Assessment Mode	Percentage
Coursework	70%
Exam	0%
In-Person	30%