1. **Title of the module**

MEMS8820 (MT882) Material Culture in the Early Modern World

1. **School or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module**

Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (MEMS)

1. **The level of the module (Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 7

1. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

30 credits; 15 ECTS

1. **Which term(s) the module is to be taught in (or other teaching pattern)**

Autumn or Spring

1. **Prerequisite and co-requisite modules**

None

1. **The programmes of study to which the module contributes**

MA in Medieval and Early Modern Studies

MA Modern History

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
2. Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the dramatic rise in the availability and consumption of goods, and of new global connections, cultural encounter and exchange in the Early Modern period and show the ability to bring these themes together.
3. Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the new insights which material and visual evidence has revealed in current research into everyday experiences, elite and popular culture, and the importance of artisans and craftsmen in Early Modern life.
4. Demonstrate a systematic understanding of different techniques and methodologies used to interpret material and visual evidence, and compare how material and visual evidence is used by historians and scholars in other disciplines (including anthropology, archaeology, sociology) to create and interpret knowledge.
5. Evaluate and critique current theoretical debates, problems and methodologies relating to the study of material culture across disciplines, including research into the agency of things, the body, practices, senses and emotions.
6. Use material and visual sources as evidence for historical argument in their own research, and understand how this evidence might challenge and extend existing historical narratives.
7. Demonstrate critical awareness of the challenges of using material and visual evidence for analysing wider historical change in the period, and develop strategies to overcome limits and gaps in the sources.
8. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
9. Critically approach a range of primary evidence, and use this evidence to formulate sophisticated and cogent arguments in response to questions about the Early Modern period.
10. Participate actively in historical debate in seminars, weighing evidence and reflecting on feedback and comments from peers and teachers to change their own position or to persuade others.
11. Present primary evidence, research findings and historiography in a clear style in both written and oral forms for specialist and non-specialist audiences.
12. Demonstrate a wide variety of scholarly and practical skills relating to the diverse field of material culture studies, such as reviewing exhibitions, or preparing an object biography for an online virtual exhibition.
13. Take responsibility for a short research project, including identifying an appropriate question and gap in current research, planning the project to take account for appropriate source materials, and undertaking self-directed, original research and advancing their knowledge to bring the project to completion.
14. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

This MA Module is a window onto the rich and diverse material culture of Early Modern Europe and the world. A primary objective of this module is to consider objects as sources, alongside more traditional textual sources, and to develop ways in which to use artefacts in historical research. The course starts with a critical overview of the way in which consumption has traditionally been treated by economic historians concerned with the quantity of objects produced and how they fitted into an economy of circulation and wealth. The main focus of the module is on a cultural history of things. Inspired by the ‘material turn’ and theoretical work by anthropologists such as Daniel Miller, material culture has more recently been used to answer research questions regarding the meanings things held for different people. Cultural historians, inspired by work in art history and museum studies, have begun to engage in analysing objects to evaluate the Early Modern world. We will explore how this has not only generated a diverse new set of sources to study, but also a new understanding of the agency of things in Early Modern society and a new way to access the everyday lives of people. Finally, as a group we will evaluate how things can make us question traditional historical narratives, which are often based on the texts elites produced. The main themes of the module allow students to explore objects in different contexts, from courtly collections to everyday domestic interiors, and to examine objects as carriers of meaning and agency. Furthermore, this module emphasises Europe’s place in a global world. We will see how the Early Modern period was a world of vibrant interconnections as a ‘New World of Goods’ flooded Europe. In working with extant objects, this module introduces interdisciplinary working with museum studies, art history and archaeology.

1. **Reading list (Indicative list, current at time of publication. Reading lists will be published annually)**

Appadurai, A., (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1986)

Brewer, J., and Porter, R., (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (1993)

Findlen, P. (ed.), *Early Modern Things: Objects and their Histories, 1500-1800* (2013)

Gerritsen, A., and Riello, G., (eds.), *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (2015)

Hamling, T., and Richardson, C., (eds.), *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its meanings* (2010)

Harvey, K. (ed.), *History and Material Culture: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (2009)

Richardson, C., Hamling, T., and Gaimster, D., (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe* (2016)

Rublack, U., ‘Matter in the Material Renaissance’, *Past & Present* (May 2013), 41-85

Smith, P., Meyers, A., and Cook, H. J. (eds.), *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge* (2014)

Welch, E., *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1400-1600* (2005)

*Exhibition Catalogues:*

Ajmar-Wollheim, M., Dennis, F., (eds.), *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (V&A, 1996)

Avery, V., Calaresu, M., and Laven, M., (eds.), *Treasured Possessions: from Renaissance to Enlightenment* (Fitzwilliam Museum, 2015)

1. **Learning and teaching methods**

Contact hours: 20

Private study hours: 280

Total hours: 300

1. **Assessment methods**
   1. Main assessment methods

Essay, 5,000 words

* 1. Re-assessment methods

100% coursework

1. **Map of module learning outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to learning and teaching methods (section12) and methods of assessment (section 13)**

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| **Module learning outcome** | *8.1* | *8.2* | *8.3* | *8.4* | *8.5* | *8.6* | *9.1* | *9.2* | *9.3* | *9.4* | *9.5* |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |  | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| Seminar | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5000 word essay | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** | **x** |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The School recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the module is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.

The inclusive practices in the guidance (see Annex B Appendix A) have been considered in order to support all students in the following areas:

a) Accessible resources and curriculum

b) Learning, teaching and assessment methods

1. **Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered**

Canterbury

1. **Internationalisation**

* The course trains students to find and use resources (digital and material) outside the UK and in foreign languages (without the need for specific language skills) and will give students confidence to access and explore a wide range of new material independently.

* There is the potential for field trips to examine materials in museums and archives in locations in a range of European countries. I intend to find funding from MEMS to cover students’ costs for any trips of this nature.

**FACULTIES SUPPORT OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of the delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs (Q6&7 cover sheet) |
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