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They come from different backgrounds – different countries, religions, ethnic group, and cultures. Some are experienced journalists eager to foster their reporting skills, while others are BA graduates who want to begin a career in journalism. The students who enrol to the [MA Diversity and the Media at Westminster University](#) designed and set up in partnership with the Media Diversity Institute (MDI), all want something different than what other masters' in Journalism or Media Studies usually offer. Not simply a combination of practice and theory, but a critical understanding of the social and media structures and journalistic practices impacting upon the social construction, representation and understanding of social diversity. Plus a first-hand experience in the practice of inclusive journalism.

Natasha Fernando was not sure what postgraduate course to attend after her Bachelor's Degree, so she took one year off to work for some news agencies and NGOs. It was while working at 3FF – a British charity that promotes understanding between different faiths, religions and cultures – that she realised her desire to study the roots of discrimination and the way it is still present and disseminated in countries that pride themselves for being diverse.

“This is the reason why, when I found the MA in Diversity and the Media, **I knew this was THE master’s course for me**

,” said Natasha. “I thought that this MA would also help me answer my personal questions regarding my own identity: born and raised in Italy but having Sri Lankan parents, I felt that the course would address the issues that came with having what I perceived was a ‘double-identity’.”



But what does the MA course teach its students? And what additional value can graduates offer to their work as journalists and media practitioners?

“All lecturers emphasized the value of diversity and the reasons why media should focus on the diversity issue in the respect of human nature and value,” said Sung Kwan Chun, Westminster alumni working as a Current Affairs Programme Director at MBC, South Korea. “This was a shock to me because I had never experienced this sort of teaching in my country or in my work place.” After returning to his work as a TV program director, his studies revealed to be very helpful: “My perception of the social issues in my country has been widened by my knowledge built up from lectures and debates with classmates. I am striving to include this new perspective into my TV program, when covering issues such as migration, gender gap and age representation.”

Lecturers at Westminster have a strong passion and belief in the inclusiveness of the media and try to transfer it to their students. Formerly a Senior Diversity Manager at the BBC, Sue Caro is now a lecturer in the Diversity and the Media MA with an enthusiastic eagerness to interpret the world in a more inclusive way. "Always make more effort" is her motto. "How could you make sure you have enough coverage of diversity groups? Always put more effort!" she says. **"When you find out all of your interviewee are middle aged white man, you need to spend one more hour to look for a women or black person or an old person to answer your question ."**



The same commitment to diversity is shared by other lecturers. Musab Iqbal, before moving to London, was a journalist and activist in India specialising on covering war and conflict. One of the first graduates of the course, Musab has recently returned to the same class – as a teacher this time. His module, "Reporting Diversity: Faith and Religion", not only introduces students to the complexity and diversity of religions and within the same religion, but also to the main media debates and discourses around it. **Any journalist covering political, social and cultural news cannot escape talking about religion.**

The press have created very stereotypical representation of some religious communities, so how the media gaze can be problematic when covering events and conflicts related to religion is what Musab shows to his students.

"Suddenly every big headline on the Western news media is about religion," said Song, current MA student from China. "We have really benefited from Musab's classes as we now have a more comprehensive understanding about the religion and are more sensitive about the media's narrative of the different religious groups and communities."

Unique in its approach to journalism, **“this MA will open students’ minds and eye in a way that will make them better journalists and media practitioners** ,” said Sue Caro, lecturer.

Modules explore the theoretical attempts to make sense and deal intellectually with social and cultural diversity such as gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age, and disability. This course helps students build a theoretical knowledge system and develop a critical thinking to respond to the challenges of social diversity.

The MA Diversity and the Media offers a perfect combination of practical and theoretical skills to prepare tomorrow’s inclusive journalists on one side and specialise those who are in the middle of their career on the other side. Within the same modules, students have a double gain. First, they learn to think critically and to analyse the media representation of social diversity, then, they apply those same theories, discussed during the module, by producing themselves journalistic content in the form of documentaries, websites and blogs, analytical features and audio clips. Students are provided with full training on how to shoot and edit videos, photos, and sound.

Within the School of Media, Arts and Design of Westminster University, the MA Diversity and the Media is a full-time course of 1 year. The university is now accepting [applications for the academic year 2016/17](#) starting in September 2016.

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Westminster University is currently offering a wide range of [scholarships](#) available for both UK/EU and international students for the coming year. Students interested in taking this postgraduate course in 2017/18 can also apply for [Chevening Scholarships](#) until the 3rd of November 2016.