Course outline: Factual Development and Production

Module 1: The Factual Commissioners

Understanding the different needs of factual commissioners is fundamental to the successful development and production of factual programmes. In this module we're going to review the factual output of some of the biggest commissioners of factual programmes to discover what 'makes' a factual programme on the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 etc.

Module 2: Developing and Pitching Factual Programmes

Where do ideas come from, and how best to develop them and present them to commissioners? In this module we're going to review the process of developing, pitching and ultimately selling factual programmes to broadcasters.

Module 3: Pre-Production

In this module we begin to plot the transition from script to screen.

Module 4: Directing and Producing Factual Programmes

In this module, we'll consider the practical challenges of directing and producing different kinds of factual programmes, including observational documentary, factual formats, fixed rig, reality, factual drama with reference to executive producers, producers and directors working with these forms.

Module 5: Post-Production, Delivery and Distribution

Here we consider how to write commentary, how to source and clear archive and music rights for use, how to ensure your programme is compliant and how to work with a distributor to exploit your programme post transmission.

Module 6: Pitching Factual Programmes to Discovery (Graduation Project)

This final module sees students create their own programme proposal specifically for one of the Discovery channels and then pitch it to a senior Discovery commissioner(s).