Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Communication Design Studio 1A

Image: Belle Breslin

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
UCMD101A		2025-26

Course Title	Communication Design Studio 1A
Course Contacts	Steve Rigley

Credits	40
SCQF Level	7
When Taught	Stage 1, Semester 1

Associated Programmes	BA (Hons) Communication Design
Lead School	Design
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2024

Course Introduction

This course provides an introduction to Communication Design practice through a range of workshops, seminars, and set projects. The course supports students transitioning to GSA's learning community and a supportive studio environment within Communication Design alongside other Stage 1 students in the School of Design.

With guidance and support, students undertake studio learning that supports opportunities to work with a variety of familiar and unfamiliar tools, materials, and processes. The course nurtures curiosity, risk-taking, and play, and it encourages students to consider how meaning can be created and disseminated across various media, including traditional processes such as drawing and mark-making through to digital software.

Studio 1A comprises a range of projects, workshops and seminars. Some projects will be undertaken individually and some in collaborative teams. Students have the opportunity to present their work to peers and staff, helping build confidence and communication skills and providing a space to identify, engage with, and gain awareness of ethical, societal, and environmental themes. The course helps students to distinguish between primary and secondary research activities and apply basic technical skills and critical approaches to generate ideas.

Course Aims

The aims of this course are to:

1. introduce approaches to research
2. encourage curiosity and risk-taking
3. introduce basic technical skills and critical approaches
4. encourage basic project-management
5. develop basic presentation skills
6. raise awareness of ethical, societal and environmental challenges

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, the student will be able to:

1. distinguish between primary and secondary research activities within communication design practice
2. experiment and generate a few ideas when working with familiar and unfamiliar materials and processes
3. apply basic technical skills and critical approaches
4. Manage project work within prescribed resources using tutor and peer interaction and feedback to reflect and inform learning
5. communicate their ideas to peers and staff
6. identify some ethical, societal and environmental challenges

Indicative Content

The course will introduce students to:

- approaches to research
- strategies for experimentation and idea generation
- basic practical skills and critical approaches appropriate to a range of project briefs
- methods to collate, document and present work
- features within GSA's Learning Environment and resources
- some of the ethical, societal and environmental challenges that face Communication Designers

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

This studio course is designed as a project-based course. Project briefs encourage an independent, tutor-supported approach to directed and self-directed study.

A range of learning and teaching methods are used to support students to engage in an explorative and individual approach to learning. These include:

- briefings
- inductions and demonstrations
- technical workshops
- studio activities
- individual and group tutorials
- talks, lectures, seminars, and study visits
- group critiques and reviews, peer review, and presentations
- presentations and writing
- reflection and self-evaluation

Skills, including digital, material and technical resources, are introduced through inductions, demonstrations, and workshops.

Independent learning skills will be developed and supported through guided activities and digital online learning resources available on Canvas.

A variety of teaching and learning approaches, including in person, blended and online learning and delivery, are employed to support student engagement with the curriculum and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
40	400

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Students are supported in their learning through a range of activities with staff and peers, such as workshops, reviews and tutorials offering ongoing formative feedback as they progress through the course.

Formative feedback supports students in developing and refining their project work towards submission for summative assessment.

Formative feedback offers students the opportunity to present the progress of their project work to staff and or peers, receiving feedback to support the development and refinement of their project work towards submission for summative assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Arrangements

Summative assessment is designed to support students in reviewing, collating, and communicating work produced in response to project briefs and the various learning and teaching activities associated with the course.

Submissions are expected to include an annotated digital portfolio of work produced during the course, along with supporting physical artefacts – such as research and development work, prototypes and final outcomes – and a reflective self-assessment. In place of written annotations, students may opt to submit a short film and/or an audio recording.

Submissions are assessed against the Intended Learning Outcomes and the GSA Undergraduate Marking Scheme by the relevant staff teams and then moderated in line with the Code of Assessment, which outlines reassessment opportunities where a student has not passed the course. Written feedback is provided online. The assessment is supportive and constructive, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and offering guidance to inform future learning and direction.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Students are required to submit a body of work produced in response to project brief/s and learning and teaching activities, which is assessed holistically against the intended learning outcomes for this course.	100%	Semester 1 Week 13

Exchange/Study Abroad	
Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	No

Are all the students on the course taught wholly by distance learning?	No
Does this course represent a work placement or a year of study abroad?	No
Is this course collaborative with any other institutions?	No
If yes, then please provide the names of the other teaching institutions	

Reading and On-line Resources

The course indicative reading and online resource list is accessible via Resource Lists. This list will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.