Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Communication Design Studio 4

Image: Shannon Best

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
		2025-26

Course Title	Communication Design Studio 4
Course Contact	Steve Rigley

Credits	80
SCQF Level	10
When Taught	Stage 4, Semesters 1 and 2

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

Course Introduction

The Studio 4 course in Communication Design supports students in building a personal portfolio with work that may respond to set or negotiated projects. The course supports a self-directed learning approach, enabling students to use structured experimentation and idea generation to advance and resolve their individual interests within their specialist pathway. The three pathways are Photography (including Lens-based practice), Graphic Design, and Illustration.

The course encourages independent and collaborative learning in preparation for entering into professional practice. It focuses on supporting students in consolidating and expanding their research, identifying and applying technical skills and critical approaches in independent and informed ways, and maintaining, developing, and advancing approaches informed by curiosity and risk-taking.

Tutorials and group presentations provide the opportunity to develop and refine their skills in communicating complex ideas and engaging with critical input and feedback from tutors and peers, providing a supportive space to discuss ethical, societal, and environmental issues that emerge from practice. The course culminates with each student showcasing a body of work, demonstrating the requisite skills in project management and presentation to enter professional practice.

Course Aims

The aims of this course are to:

1. engender the critical handling of research and resources appropriate to specialist pathway interests
2. identify appropriate strategies for experimentation and the generation of ideas
3. discriminate between available technical skills and critical approaches
4. develop the project and learning management skills appropriate to communication design interests
5. develop presentation and engagement skills across a range of audiences
6. address complex ethical, societal and environmental challenges

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. identify and employ appropriate research skills and resources to inform and enrich their studio practice
2. employ structured experimentation and idea generation to a range of set and self-directed projects
3. identify and apply technical skills and critical approaches appropriate to a range of set and self-directed projects
4. manage their projects and learning, working both independently and in collaboration to develop a body of work reflecting your communication design interests
5. engage with, and present to, a range of audiences, which may include internal peers and staff, as well as external partners and clients
6. engage in complex ethical, societal and environmental challenges through set and/or self-directed projects

Indicative Content

This course will introduce students to:

- approaches to primary and secondary research within their specialised pathway
- advanced strategies for experimentation and idea generation within their specialised pathway
- advanced practical skills and critical approaches appropriate to personal interest within their specialised pathway
- professional presentation skills, both verbal and visual, to audiences appropriate to their specialist pathway
- external networks and resources appropriate to their specialist pathway
- opportunities to engage with ethical, societal and environmental challenges from within their specialised pathway

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

This studio course is designed as a project-based course. Project briefs encourage an independent, tutor-supported approach that emphasises individual and in-depth self-directed study at the threshold of professional practice.

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
80	800

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.

As a course taught over two semesters, the course includes a formative assessment point in which a student submits formative work. This is marked, with feedback and an indicative grade recorded, and made available to the student.

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 – along with 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.

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,	100%	Semester 2, Week 13

which is assessed holistically against the intended learning outcomes for this course.		

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 lists (per specialist pathway) are accessible via [Resource Lists](). These lists will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect subject developments. Tutors and peers will provide further recommendations appropriate to student's chosen area of research and focus. Graphic Design Illustration Photography