Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Design History & Theory 20 Credit Submission

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
UDHT4D		2025-26

Course Title	Design History & Theory 20 Credit Submission
Course Contact	Nicholas Oddy, Head of DHT

Credits	20
SCQF Level	10
When Taught	Stage 4, Semester 1

Associated Programmes	BA (Hons) Communication Design
	BA (Hons) Fashion Design
	BA (Hons) Fashion Narrative
	BA (Hons) Interaction Design
	BA (Hons) Interior Design
	BA (Hons) Silversmithing & Jewellery Design
	BA (Hons) Textile Design
Lead School	School of Design
Other Schools	
Date of Approval	PACAAG August 2025

Course Introduction

This course comprises the 20-credit option for the Stage 4 submission to DH&T and represents a substantive piece of self-directed critical inquiry and research. The course is structured around a self-directed, individual research project, on a topic of the student's choice. Students are allocated a supervisor who supports and guides them through the research, writing and submission process.

The course offers Stage 4 students a range of 20-credit modes of submission to support agency and differing research methods, topics and interests. Details of the modes of submission are introduced to students in Stage 3, Semester 2 and are published in advance of the course commencing in Stage 4. All modes of submission are supervised on an individual basis and indicative modes of submission for this course include:

- **Essay:** a discursive, interpretative and analytical essay on a topic of the student's choice, that sets out a critical argument on a particular subject (indicative word count: 5000 words)

- **Critical Journal:** the student researches and contextualises their own studio practice by comparing it to those of others and situating it in a larger historical and cultural context (indicative word count: 5000 words)

- **Curatorial Rationale:** an exhibition proposal on a topic of the student's choice that selects art or design artefacts and offers critical interpretation as if curating an exhibition in a particular site (indicative word count: 5000 words)

- **Visual Essay:** an illustration-led submission focusing on in-depth, close, and comparative visual analysis, with a substantial part of its content told through images and captions supported by a critical and analytical text (indicative word count: 3000 words and at least 30 images)

Course Aims

The aims of this course are to:

1. encourage an active and critical engagement with source materials according to individual research interests and historical and/or contemporary contexts

2. advance students' confidence in taking critical control of their chosen topic

3. equip students with an advanced vocabulary to engage in discussion on issues of increasing relevance to their own studio practice

4. advance and resolve skills in formally presenting debate and discussion in critical, historical, and cultural studies

5. support understanding of the importance of self-directed and critically reflective work in critical, historical, and cultural studies

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. understand and critically apply selected research methods according to individual research interests and chosen visual and textual strategies

2. recognise and demonstrate through critical discussion that different critical opinion can be reached on written, visual and material culture.

3. employ a range of key terms and definitions within relevant discourses on history, cultural studies, design, and material and visual culture

4. apply resolved and critical visual and textual skills in presenting discussion in history, cultural studies, design, and material and visual culture

5. show understanding of the importance of self-directed and critically reflective work in history, cultural studies, design, and material and visual culture

Indicative Content

The course will introduce students to:

- self-directed study and research
- multi-disciplinary approaches to critical inquiry
- global perspectives on material culture, politics and ethics
- languages and vocabularies of critical and contextual studies
- research sources and principles of research
- independent argument and critical analysis

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

This course encourages an independent, tutor-supported approach that emphasises individual and self-directed study in critical and contextual studies.

Learning and teaching methods support students to engage in an explorative and individual approach to learning and include:

- briefings
- tutorials with allocated supervisor
- group presentation
- reflection and self-evaluation

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
5.5	200

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Students are supported in their learning through a range of activities with staff and peers, such as individual tutorials offering ongoing formative feedback as they progress through the course at plan, interim draft, and final draft phase.

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

Formative feedback offers students the opportunity to make a work-in-progress presentation to peers and tutors, receiving feedback to support the development and refinement of their project work towards submission for summative assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

The assessment brief describes and provides guidelines for the summative assessment, with students selecting from a choice of modes of submission.

Summative assessment is designed to support students to reflect on and communicate work produced in response to the assessment brief and learning and teaching activities associated with the course.

Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Self-directed research project (indicative word count 5000 words or stated equivalent, as per assessment brief for selected mode of submission)	100	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
Given the self-directed and individual nature of learning in this course, each student compiles their own reading and resource lists as the research progresses. The student's supervising tutor and peers provide further recommendations appropriate to the student's chosen area of research and focus.