Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
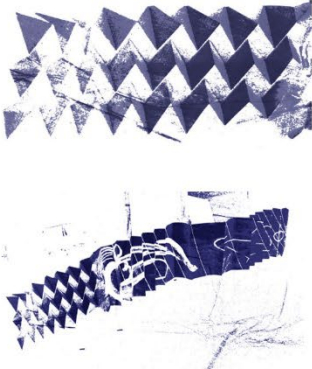# Design Studio: Exploring Context

Credit: Iestyn Howarth, Marika Mista 2023

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
UPRD211		2025-26

Course Title	Design Studio: Exploring Context
Course Contact	Mil Stricevic

Credits	40
SCQF Level	8
When Taught	Stage 2, Semester 2

Associated Programmes	BDes/MEDes Product Design
Lead School	Innovation & Technology
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2024

Course Introduction

This course provides an opportunity to apply the design process within the parameters of a 'real world' context.

Students will develop design proposals which can be seen to respond directly to the insights derived from the synthesis of research from multiple perspectives, informed and developed through an iterative feedback loop of research, testing and feedback.

The course introduces the importance of applying a blend of research tools to develop design outcomes whose relevance, purpose, value and functionality can be clearly traced to the intended recipient and context of use, culminating in a standalone presentation to an external audience.

Course Aims

This course provides students with the opportunity to:

- Harness the constraints of working within a 'real' context (i.e. live client organisation) as useful parameters to inform the development of design proposals which are not only innovative but appropriate and viable.
- Use a blend of primary and secondary research methods - including ethnographic, market analysis etc – to reveal design opportunities that demonstrate relevant purpose & value within the context for which they are intended.
- Evaluate a range of designed responses to a specific challenge through a process of diverse ideation, testing and feedback.
- Explore the design of bespoke, innovative experiences and reflect on how they add value to the perception of brands and organisations.
- Prototype a designed outcome with a degree of refinement which is appropriate for presentation to an external audience.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Incorporate observational & ethnographic methods within broader research strategy to generate relevant and useful insights that inform the development of design proposals.
- Demonstrate divergent thinking and understanding of mutual benefit for multiple stakeholders in the generation of a range of innovative design concepts within a commercial context.
- Demonstrate an iterative process of refinement and testing to develop an experience proposal which is both semantically and functionally appropriate to the intended context of use.
- Communicate the value of a design experience to an external audience using appropriate media.

Indicative Content

This course covers the following content:

- The examination of brands and organisations
- Working with a live brief
- The development of design concepts that are client specific
- Concept presentation

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

In this course, students will be expected to increasingly take significant responsibility for the management of their learning. Emphasis will be placed on the gradual encouraging of self-reliance and personal academic development.

This course is designed as a practice-based experience which supports students in their introduction to studio-based learning and practice. This is further supported by TSD (Technical Services Department), who provide workshop and material-based learning.

The principal teaching strategies employed on this course are:

Tutorial (group and individual) - designed to provide academic support through individual or group meetings with staff to discuss the different directions and aspects of projects or course-based activities as well as progress on the programme/course overall.

Review (group and individual) - enables the development of key presentation skills and encourages students to receive and give constructive feedback regarding each other's work, and an opportunity to debate project input. These may be tutor-led, tutor-facilitated, or peer-led allowing students to fully explore all aspects of practical submissions within a reflective discursive framework.

Presentation (visual and verbal) - an important learning device used to generate peer debate regarding the generation, development or overall success of concepts, and their practical realisation within the context of a project brief or proposal. Students present work to their peers, tutors and stakeholders when relevant through appropriate visual and verbal means (including: models or mock-ups, portfolios, videos, slideshows, etc.).

Lecture - often used to introduce key knowledge to support practical work project development

Self-Directed Learning - self-directed study emphasises the importance of autonomy, reflection upon personal learning and project work within an individual and/or a collaborative environment.

Guest Speaker sessions (when relevant) – include input from visiting lecturers/guests from industry and academic staff enabling students access to, and understanding of, relevant contemporary practice, research and commercial context. Talks arranged at the School of Innovation and Technology are often open to all students regardless of year group or programme.

This course is supported by a virtual learning environment tool (Canvas) for the dissemination, discussion and access to relevant course information, and signpost to other relevant teaching and learning platforms used by GSA.

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 formative assessment activities that enable students to reflect on their learning as they progress through the course. This includes: • Regular feedback from tutors through engagement in individual and group tutorials, reviews and presentations • Class discussion and peer input

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements
Summative assessment is designed to support students to reflect upon their learning on completion of a course. It provides an evaluation of progress made and the level of achievement identifiable in the work submitted. Following an assessment presentation, students will submit a body of work for assessment. Grades will be awarded using the GSA marking scheme following/adhering to the assessment regulations in the Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Annotated portfolio: Students are required to submit an annotated portfolio of work (2D & 3D) that responds to a given project and that includes the prescribed deliverables	100%	Week 12

Exchange/Study Abroad	
Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	Yes
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	N/A

Reading and On-line Resources
An on-line resource list will be provided to students at the start of the course. This will be reviewed annually to remain relevant and current for the course and subject specialism. An indicative list of resources is accessible via Resource Lists.