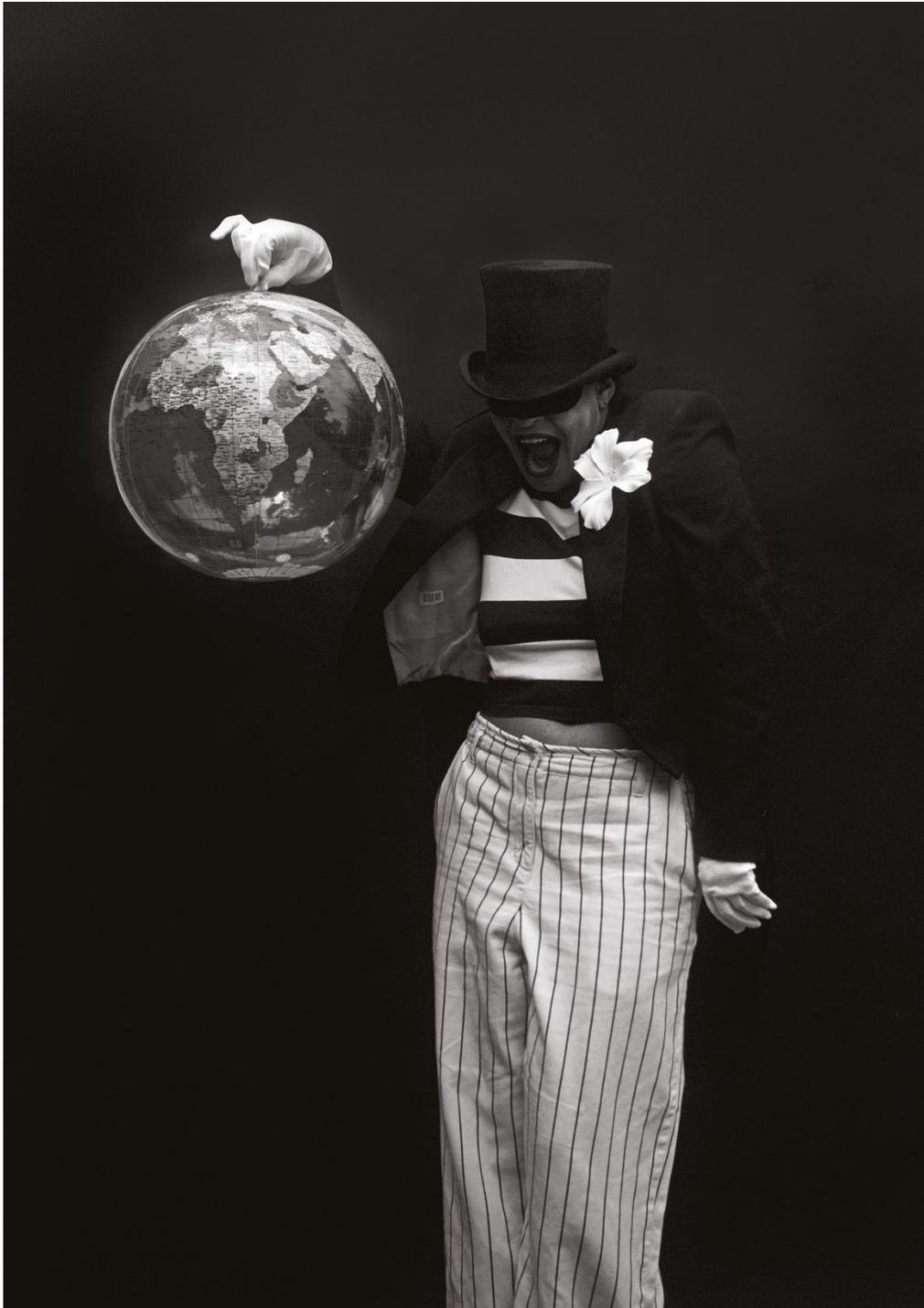**Glasgow School of Art Course Specification**
FACS4: Critical Writing

Carrie Mae Weems, *Performance Gesture 14 or If I Ruled the World* (2004)

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
UFACS		2025-26

Course Title	FACS4 Critical Writing
Course Contact	Dr Benjamin Greenman

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

Associated Programmes	BA (Hons) Fine Art
Lead School	School of Fine Art
Other Schools	
Date of Approval	Programme Approval March 2024

Course Introduction
This course comprises the 20-credit option for the Stage 4 critical and contextual submission. It is focused on your ambition to delve into an area of enquiry within critical studies that speaks to your own curiosity and the desire to form a critical perspective on an area of interest. It represents a substantive piece of self-directed critical inquiry and research and is a culmination and consolidation of the skills and experience that you will have acquired in previous years studying Fine Art Critical Studies. The alternative to the 40 credit Critical Writing Dissertation option, this 20-credit course is paired with the subsequent 20 credit unit, 'Creative Platforms', that is an option for Stage 4.

The course is structured around a self-directed, individual research project, on a topic of the student's choice. You will be allocated a supervisor who supports and guides you through the research, planning, development, and completion of your critical writing. Additionally, workshops based on research methodologies and strategies of critical writing, provide spaces for acquiring an advanced and purposeful understanding of what you are undertaking in your individual work, fostering a recognition of a critical self-hood, and construction of voice.

Three modes of submission are supported and for each you are able to define the area, purpose and scope of enquiry. Each mode recognises the expansive arena of academic and critical writing in the field of contemporary art and invites you to work in an academic mode or with hybrid forms of writing as befitting the aims of your enquiry. You are supported by your supervisor to form a critical perspective through whichever of these modes of critical writing you chose.

Essay: a discursive, interpretative and analytical essay on a topic of the student's choice, that sets out a critical argument on a subject drawn from an identifiable discipline, discourse or field of research.

Critical Journal: a critical and contextual analysis of your studio practice, or a specific concern of theme originating in that practice, situated it in a larger historical and cultural context.

Curatorial Rationale: an exhibition proposal that investigates and tests an idea, topic or theme dealing with the production of meanings between artworks, objects or artefacts and the space(s) of their display or installation.

Course Aims

This course aims to:

1. Strengthen your awareness of a variety of critical lenses and their relevant application to your negotiated self-directed enquiry
2. Advance your ability to evaluate and synthesise multi-disciplinary research sources
3. Develop your capacity to critically evaluate, research and interpret interdisciplinary sources and to critically reflect of your critical perspectives and methods
4. Advance your confidence and competencies in taking critical control over your self-directed enquiry
5. Support you to hone the articulation of your critical position through the appropriate registers of expression and to respond effectively to feedback

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate an advanced comprehension of critical discourses and approaches to resolve an independently developed enquiry
2. Analyse selected critical discourses to demonstrate the theoretical principles that resonate with the enquiry
3. Communicate a sustained evaluation of critical discourses, which addresses the ethical and political implications of research and writing
4. Use an individually selected range of academic and creative sources that takes into consideration the appropriate ethical dimensions, to effectively substantiate a critical position
5. Present a highly structured written argument using accepted academic standards that advances an informed critical perspective

Indicative Content

The course will introduce you to:

1. Ways of delineating the aims and scope of a self-directed writing project based on self-directed research
2. Critical writing options to appropriately present, synthesise and consolidate research grounded in the discipline and practice of critical enquiry
3. Strategies for developing their own voice, self-reflexivity, argumentation and critical perspectives through the practice of writing
4. Methodology, concepts and vocabulary suitable to their subject from a range of approaches in contemporary critical studies
5. Sources of practical writing skill and knowledge in academic and critical writing

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

You will be supported in the research, development and resolution of your critical writing by an allocated individual supervisor from the FACS team. The course is designed to encourage an independent, supervisor-supported approach that emphasises individual and in-depth self-directed study at the threshold of professional practice.

For students this is a fulfilling period of concentrated study that is guided by an ongoing dialogue with your individual supervisor in one-to-one tutorials. A sequence of drafts is submitted, which the supervisor provides feedback and guidance on in response to your specific aims and the form of your writing.

You will engage in:
- Self-directed study - consisting of independent research and producing written drafts leading to the Summative submission
- Scheduled tutorials -the principal mode of teaching on the course is a sequence of tutorials with an appointed supervisor. They are scheduled at key points in the timetable in order to support the arc of development, and these correspond to a sequence of draft writing submissions. In one-to-one tutorials feedback is provided on the student's evolving work, which is responsive to their individual research-writing practice. The tutorials are opportunities for feedback on drafts and conversations that punctuate, prompt and catalyse the development of the written work
- Workshops - underpinning the course are workshops, provided by the Library and the Student Support, that introduce or revitalise the student's skills and knowledge of critical writing at pertinent moments in the course timetable
- Lecture / seminar - recent graduates present an overview of their FACS4 work, share their experiences, and answer questions. This offers you a near peer-to-peer understanding and framing of the course
- Scheduled Supervisor drop-in – Supervisors schedule drop-in times at key points of the course
- Drop-in Hour – Year Leader and supervisors are available for one-on-one questions and discussion

Digital resources and online workshops are signposted on Canvas to support student independent learning, engagement with the curriculum and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
20	200

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

You will be supported in your learning through a series of tutorials with your supervisor and supervisor drop-in hours that provide ongoing formative feedback as you develop your Critical Writing.

In advance of the Formative Assessment, you will submit a Subject Choice Proforma followed by an essay plan and short draft. Verbal feedback is provided on each of these at tutorials with your supervisor. Formative Assessment provides an opportunity for you to present a substantial or completed draft of their Critical Writing.

You will receive written feedback and indication of your progress in relation to marking criteria. This will provide you with guidance that highlights both the strengths and areas for improvement in the submitted work, which is followed by a period of revisions, modifications, and editing of the work for the Summative Submission.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

The Summative Assessment brief is available on Canvas, which gives details of the submission requirement.

Summative Assessment will be via the submission of one of the three options for this course: An Essay; Critical Journal; or Curatorial Rationale. The required wordcount is 4,000 words.

Summative Assessment is designed to support you 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, which outlines reassessment opportunities where a student has not passed the course.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Summative Assessment will be via the submission of a 4000 word Essay, Critical Journal or Curatorial Rationale (agreed in advance with your supervisor)	100	Week 12

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 supervisor and peers provide further recommendations appropriate to the student's chosen area of research and focus. Course indicative reading and online resources lists are accessible via Resource Lists. These lists are reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.