

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
FACS2: Art and its Wor(l)ds



Nick Cave, *Until* (2019), installation view at Tramway, Glasgow

Please note that this course specification is correct on the date of publication but may be subject to amendment prior to the start of the 2025-26 Academic Year.

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
UFACS2	100962	2025-26

Course Title	Art and its Wor(l)ds
Course Contact	Dr James Hutchinson

Credits	20
SCQF Level	8
When Taught	Stage 2, Semester 1

Associated Programmes	BA (Hons) Fine Art
Lead School	School of Fine Art
Other Schools	
Date of Approval	PACAAG August 2025

Course Introduction

This course equips you with the critical contexts for considering your own developing artistic practice in relation to ideas about studio discipline specificity. The course demonstrates how artistic practices are informed by the historical and cultural contexts in which they emerge, including how artists align with or traverse the categorisations of artistic disciplines. This course invites you to establish your own critical position through the study of concepts and practices that sometimes contradict or add to existing histories and ideas about materials, forms and discipline specificity.

You will work within and outwith your discipline-specific cohort, learning about the debates and languages that have emerged from your chosen studio discipline, as well as those that span multiple disciplines, or that appear unique to disciplines other than that which you most easily identify. The course encourages you to explore what it means to work 'within' or even 'against' a discipline and asks you to identify if and where potential interrelations exist across disciplines.

Critical thinking is developed by examining the intersections of artistic practices, disciplines, and meanings to identify how artworks and ideas are appropriated, restaged, and gestured towards, across different paradigms. The course offers a space to rehearse your critical writing as a making-practice and as part of making practice. This approach enables you to develop new ways to articulate what it is you 'do' and how this is situated in relation to other artists/makers, and to relevant fields of artistic practice and critical theory.

Course Aims

This course aims to:

1. Develop critical engagement with continually changing disciplinary perspectives in contemporary art theories and practices
2. Examine the conditions surrounding artistic disciplines to be able to establish an informed position
3. Foster the ability to be a conscientious artistic citizen by recognising that art practices are embedded in and responsive to social, cultural, and political contexts

4. Develop the ability to undertake independent research that synthesises diverse academic positions, and to construct a logical argumentation that is supported by sound evidence
5. Build confidence in effectively communicating, analysing and handling knowledge in a way that recognises and acknowledges bias in the sources you are working with

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate informed knowledge and understanding of discipline-specificity and cross-disciplinarity, in relation to contemporary art theories and practices
2. Analyse and apply a broad range of disciplinary and cultural perspectives and values, to reflect their impact on framing art theories and practices
3. Communicate and evaluate how artistic practices are transformed through globally-situated social, cultural and political contexts
4. Use relevant academic and creative sources to construct an evidence-based argument through ethical reasoning
5. Present a well-planned and written argument to accepted academic standards that advances a critical perspective

Indicative Content

The course will introduce you to:

1. Critical discourses and theoretical approaches for exploring and explaining artistic disciplines
2. Historical and theoretical contexts for critically engaging with inter/cross/trans disciplinary thinking and making
3. Methods of critical analyses that encourage an objective and informed view of your own artistic practice
4. Ways to rethink materiality and subjectivity
5. Approaches to writing as a creative practice

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

This course uses a range of learning and teaching methods to inspire ideas central to creative criticality and artistic practice. Differing points of entry into the material being delivered is encouraged through the individual approaches introduced by the FACS teaching staff. This supports you to learn actively and engage in an explorative and individual approach to learning.

You will engage in small and large groups as well as lecturer-supported self-directed study through:

- Lectures – a combination of whole year cohort and discipline-specific lectures, employing a range of pedagogical techniques
- Seminars – a combination of whole year cohort and discipline-specific sessions take various forms including writing sessions, collective close-reading, discussions, student-led provocations and/or presentations
- Group Feedback session - guides you on how best to improve and build upon your work to date through verbal feedback from lecturer and peers

- Drop-in Hour – Year Leader is available for one-on-one questions and discussion at this time

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 range of activities with staff and peers, such as workshops, reviews and tutorials offering ongoing formative feedback as you progress through the course. You will have the opportunity to present a draft text for formative feedback to support developing and refining your written work towards submission for summative assessment. The submission is based on your reading of a range of texts about a single artwork and its related discourses.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

The Summative Assessment brief is available on Canvas and provides guidelines for the Summative Assessment, which is a critical reflection and evaluation of an artwork and its related discourses (word count: 2,500 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
Essay: critical reflection and evaluation of an artwork and its related discourses (word count: 2,500 words)	100	Week 12, Semester 1

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	

Reading and On-line Resources

The course indicative reading and online resources lists are accessible via [Resource Lists](#)

Discipline specific indicative reading and online resources are also available:

- Sculpture & Environmental Art
- Fine Art Photography
- Painting & Printmaking