Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Pre-sessional Course in English for the Creative Disciplines Online (PS ECD Blended)

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:
		2025-26

1. Course Title:
Pre-sessional English for the Creative Disciplines Blended

2. Date of Approval:	3. Lead School:	4. Other Schools:
PACAAG August 2024	School of Fine Art (as proxy board for Open Studio)	

5. Credits:	6. SCQF Level:	7. Course Leader:
0	UG & PG	Anna Rolinska

8. Associated Programmes:

9. When Taught:
14 weeks over May – September 2025

10. Course Aims:
1. Improve the ability to communicate effectively and confidently in English in academic settings, particularly in the context of critical art and design education, through engagement in relevant learning and teaching activities, including lectures, film screenings, seminar discussions, disciplinary text readings, research and studio-based projects, studio project reviews, etc.
2. Improve performance across the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and subskills (e.g. reading dense and/or lengthy texts, listening to lectures, effective note taking while reading/listening, giving academic presentations, participating in seminar discussions, writing texts in genres appropriate for the discipline, etc.) within the academic art, design and architecture context through critical engagement (both at the level of comprehension and production) with relevant oral and written text genres and associated feedback; it is intended that the students make progress within the 'Independent' category of the CEFR framework, from B1 to B2, the main features of the transition being increased engagement with language at the level of detail, complexity, familiarity and abstraction of the topic.
3. Facilitate the development autonomy and independence as a learner in a creative learning environment as well as a range of higher-order thinking skills (e.g. critical and analytical skills,

reflection, evaluation) and personal attributes (e.g. cross-cultural communication, creative thinking, collaboration, ethical awareness, adaptability, resourcefulness) in order to succeed.
4. Develop appreciation and understanding of the contemporary creative and cultural context of arts education, particularly within Scotland and the UK.

11. Intended Learning Outcomes of Course:

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- improve their listening comprehension when listening to lectures, talks and discussions in the context of the creative disciplines; develop relevant strategies to cope with increasingly more challenging and complex lectures and talks;
- improve their speaking skills necessary to actively engage with content and other participants during discussions, workshops and critical reviews in the studio;
- improve their reading comprehension and develop relevant strategies to be better able to cope with a range of disciplinary texts of varying degrees of complexity and length in order to locate significant and relevant information, identify the author's stance and discern between facts and opinions;
- develop the necessary note-taking skills while listening and reading in order to use the notes effectively during presentations, seminar discussions and conversations, and in writing;
- learn to identify, analyse and evaluate pieces of information from a range of spoken and written sources in terms of their relevance to own spoken and written work;
- develop the necessary skills in relation to referencing and citing in order to appropriately and accurately integrate source material in your own work to develop a logical and coherent argument;
- demonstrate a better understanding of the written genres typical of the creative disciplines, such as an essay, project supporting statement, reflective account, visual analysis, and an ability to produce them.

12. Indicative Content:

English for Creative Disciplines Online has 3 entry points for 14-, 10- and 5-week delivery depending on the uplift required by students.

The modules have varying lengths. The first module lasts four weeks and provides an introduction to the art school and using English in academic contexts. Modules 2 and 3 last 5 weeks each and they provide the students with an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the critical art and design education and what demands it poses on the use of the language, as well as consolidate the relevant communication and study skills. Each module is preceded by a few days of self-guided online induction which gives the student the opportunity to familiarise themselves with course-specific technologies as well as reflect on the requirements of academic study in an HE context.

Each module has a theme (1. Objects, 2. Sensory experience, 3. Sustainable practices and processes) and revolves around a small studio project to be carried out by students in pairs or small groups. Students are required to produce a textual/visual/material/digital artefact or a series thereof, the process being subject to formative feedback and group review. It is hoped that the studio project will provide a rich opportunity for the students to research what an artist's/designer's practice entails, interrogate own practice, beliefs and values, as well as the research/creation process. While the studio component is not formally assessed, it provides contextualised and authentic language practice and so feeds directly into language assessments

through a 'Module Integrated Brief'. Since the projects in Modules 2 and 3 more complex and are linked with more substantial language output (for example, longer written assignments for with the use of sources), the extended length of each module allows the students to engage with the process in a more reflective and critical way, with opportunities for more feedback from peers and teachers.

Each module features theoretical input delivered by means of lectures, talks, film screenings, text readings, followed by discussions and student presentations to explore the concepts and methodologies in more detail, including relevant and illustrative examples of works of art and design. The approach taken to the presentation and exploration of the topics will be that of inquiry-based learning, which emphasises the need for consistent questioning, problem posing and solving, divergent and convergent thinking, multi-perspective evaluation and group knowledge construction. The topics and themes in Modules 2 and 3 are multi-layered and complex and their extended length allows the students to develop more nuanced understandings of those topics.

Relevant language input will be integrated into each block to help students process the input adequately, develop relevant study and language skills and produce output demonstrating their ability to use those in context. The overall approach is often referred to as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) which is considered as learning English by studying a content-based subject rather than learning a content-based subject through a medium of English. The significance and benefits of using such an approach are briefly outlined on the British Council website: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/content-language-integrated-learning

Each module aims to expose the students to a range of discipline-specific genres and texts, e.g. extended essay, reflective journal, exhibition review, seminar discussions, art critique, presentation, academic lecture, practitioner's talk, academic and semi-academic journal articles, and relevant study and language skills. It will also include workshops aimed at raising the students' language awareness through analysing features of the written and spoken texts in more detail and practising a range of language skills and subskills in more controlled activities. A staggered approach has been taken to slotting the language workshops into the course syllabus, with the proportion of the language input being front-loaded and gradually decreasing to make more space for the content input and practice through project component (with language still being part thereof, in line with CLIL principles). The latter will also become progressively more challenging in terms of the complexity of the input and output.

This will be further supported by regular one-to-one consultations during which the students will be able to keep track of their development in terms of short- and longer-term goals related to language study and study skills. Longer lengths of Modules 2 and 3 allow the course staff to offer more one-to-one consultations and so provide each student with more personalised support.

13. Description of Summative Assessment Methods:			
Assessment Method	**Description of Assessment Method**	**Weight %**	**Submission week (assignments)**
Listening assessment	Language Portfolio	25%	1 task per week
Reading assessment	Language Portfolio	25%	1 task per week
Speaking assessment	Final presentation and discussion plus a reflection video	25%	Final week of each module

Writing assessment	Extended written assignment (in each module a different discipline-specific genre)	25%	Final week of each module

13.1 Please describe the Summative Assessment arrangements:

All the modules will rely on formative/continuous assessment (see the section below for details) with 'summative' tasks spread over each module:

In each module, the tasks will be a combination of discrete and integrated assessment tasks in the four language skills, eg

• Listening – note-taking tasks; summaries of main ideas from a lecture submitted to a portfolio platform

• Reading – note-taking tasks; annotations of texts; summaries of main ideas from a lecture submitted to a portfolio platform

The tasks are referred to as 'summative' as even though there will be an expectation of progress over the duration of the block, some of the aspects of the improvement are difficult to quantify as particular tasks require different subskills, eg note-taking vs summarising. Besides, not succeeding to reach the expected module exit grades will not prevent the student from progressing to the next stage of the course. To strengthen the formative nature of progressing in-between the modules, the reports at the end of Module 1 and Module 2 will use descriptive grades, such as 'well on track', 'making progress', 'needs to work'. The third module will follow a similar arrangement but at the same time it will feature summative assessments in the four skills which together with the continuous assessment over the whole course (all the modules the student has attended) will provide the exit grades.

Each of the language skills will be given equal weighting of 25% in the final course assessment. While the summative tasks will constitute the bulk of each grade, other aspects of the student's performance will be taken into account, including class participation, homework, optional submissions to the language portfolio. The summative grades will be accompanied by formative feedback making recommendations as to what areas of language development the student should prioritise. The extended length of Modules 2 and 3 allows more time to process the feedback, discuss it and act on it, in line with principles of dialogic feedback frameworks.

The grading system uses a scale reminiscent of IELTS (1-9 with half points) but accounts for the specific language requirement in the academic environment so it is just a rough equivalent of the IELTS scale. It is also roughly mapped to CEFR B2 level. B2 levels in each of the four language skills are described thus (adapted to the context of art and design education):

• Listening: The student is able to follow extended speeches, lectures and films on general topics related to art and design, including more complicated lines of argument related to topics within their interests and a selected subject. They can get the gist of the speech acts and detail, especially when assisted by means of handouts and slides explaining some of the more abstract/unfamiliar information.

• Reading: The students can read written texts concerned with topical issues in the content of art and design, including historical and contemporary issues. They can distinguish between the main and detailed ideas as well as recognise different writers' particular attitudes and viewpoints. Longer, denser and/or abstract texts may require longer processing and/or assistance/support in form of pre- and post-reading discussion/reflection points.

• Speaking: The student can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity on topics related to art and design. They can present clear, detailed descriptions and explain a viewpoint by accounting for advantages and disadvantages of various opinions in one-to-one conversations and group discussions.

• Writing: The student can write clear, detailed texts on a range of discipline-specific subjects, following the conventions of the genres typical of the discipline, like essay or review, and using information from sources to support their particular viewpoints in compliance with the referencing conventions.

14. Description of Formative Assessment Methods:
Formative assessment will be based on a portfolio of work (written and spoken plus visualisation) developed throughout the duration of the course (see the next section for detailed arrangements), subject to self-evaluation, peer and tutor feedback focused on feed forward and aiming to help students improve over time. Participation in daily live class as well as formative feedback on written drafts will also be part of the formative assessment procedures.
14.1 Please describe the Formative Assessment arrangements:
Each student will create a Language Portfolio (eg using Padlet) and will be asked to submit outputs on a daily basis to evidence their learning and development of necessary language skills. Outputs can include videos of students reflecting on their participation in the critical review; written summaries of texts read for the live class; written or spoken summaries of discussions in live class; notes taken during lectures or on readings, etc.
Additionally, for every written assignment there will be an opportunity to submit the first draft in order to obtain detailed feedback on the content, organisation and language in form of in-line comments and overall commentary. Each student will be able to get a one-to-one tutorial during which they can discuss the feedback and changes to the first draft.
The students will also have a studio project every module, to be completed in pairs or small groups. As part of the studio project, they will conduct primary investigation and secondary research and build a series of artefacts, all of which can feed into submissions to the Language Portfolio.
These artefacts will feed into the whole cohort exhibition displays curated collectively by the students and tutors: • Module 1: The studio project will relate to the topic 'Objects', which involves a visual response to an object from the GSA Archives and Collections. All the created objects will be curated into an online exhibition which will feature written and spoken outputs: a 'catalogue entry' for the created object featuring a visual analysis plus a short essay comparing the object with another one and an 'artist's talk' providing an interpretation of the objects.   • Module 2: The collaborative studio project is an exploration of spaces through creating a multisensory map for other groups to evaluate. The accompanying language-based outputs include: a critical review evaluating the experiences, a supporting statement for each experience explaining the rationale and process and a reflective account of the collaborative process.   • Module 3: The collaborative studio project will focus on sustainable practices and processes in art and design; the students will have to create a small series of work engaging with sustainability and related issues like climate emergency; the language-based outputs will include a presentation of the creative work, a discussion of sustainable practices, processes, themes and methods relevant to the students' prospective disciplines, and a referenced essay on a similar topic.
To help the students develop their practice and portfolio, formative feedback events will be held regularly throughout the course, including group critiques, self-evaluative events structured around the idea of the critical response process, and individual consultations with the tutor. For

example, after each studio tutorial or critical feedback, the students will be asked to record a short video in which they speak about how they evaluate their participation and learning during the studio tutorial.

15. Learning and Teaching Methods:	
Formal Contact Hours	**Notional Learning Hours**
2-3 hours daily	
15.1 Description of Teaching and Learning Methods:	

The course is intended to be delivered in a blended format. Following the consultation with the previous students as well as the China Office, the first module is going to run wholly online using asynchronous and synchronous modes of delivery and interaction. Due to the 7/8-hour time difference between East Asia (where a considerable majority of the students will be based), each study day will feature:

- around 4-5 hours of asynchronous coursework in form of pre-recorded lectures with follow-up tasks, including collaborative tasks, and guided self-study delivered via Canvas, Planet e-Stream, Microsoft Office 365 and technologies accessible to the students, with teachers providing individual and collective feedback in writing or speaking via email and other communication channels;
- 2-3 hours of synchronous study via Zoom software to facilitate students' interaction with each other and tutor; this will be predominantly group tutorials with some time set aside for individual consultations during which the students can discuss their progress and action plan.

Each day's scheme of work will follow a model of flipped classroom, whereby input and guided practice opportunities are frontloaded and help the student develop knowledge, skills and confidence to engage in free practice during the synchronous meeting with peers and tutor at the end of their study days. Despite the real-time contact being less than on the face-to-face pre-sessional course, there will be more opportunities to provide rich formative feedback through the means of technology.

Modules 2 and 3 will be delivered in two formats: 1) fully online and 2) on campus with elements blended learning. Each day will start with an online plenary focusing the students on the main aims of the day of study and giving them the necessary preliminary information. This plenary is delivered asynchronously by means of a pre-recorded video. This will be followed by a 2-3 hour period of intensive self- or collaborative study with a possibility of quick consultations with the teacher. Each day will end with a hands-on workshop of two hours during which the students will discuss the study outcomes in small groups facilitated by the teacher.

To account for students with different learning paths in terms of the required target grades, a level of differentiation will be built into the programme. So far the portfolio tasks have been divided into compulsory and highly recommended. To maximise the chances of the postgraduate students seeking the whole band uplift at the end of the course, they will be asked to submit all the tasks so that they have increased opportunities for learning and individualised teaching through teacher feedback directly on the tasks. The class sizes will be kept smaller to facilitate smooth and timely feedback provision and additional practice tutorials can be scheduled to help those students keep on track. Longer term, if the proposed change positively affects student numbers, there is a possibility to teach these students in separate classes.

16. Pre-requisites:

Main course English language requirement	Pre-Sessional English course language requirement	Course we recommend
IELTS 6.5 overall with no individual skill lower than 6.0	At least 5.5 overall Maximum of one skill at 5.0	14-week course (Modules 1, 2, 3)
	At least 6.0 overall Maximum of one skill at 5.0 All other skills must be 5.5 or higher	10-week course (Modules 2, 3)
	At least 6.5 overall Maximum of one skill at 5.5 All other skills must be 6.0 or higher	5-week course (Module 3)
IELTS 6.0 overall with no individual skill lower than 5.5	At least 5.5 overall None of the individual skills lower than 5.0	14-week course (Modules 1, 2, 3)
	At least 5.5 overall Maximum of one skill at 5.0 All other skills must be 5.5 or higher	10-week course (Modules 2, 3)
	At least 6.0 overall Maximum of one skill at 5.0 All other skills must be 5.5 or higher	5-week course (Module 3)

17. Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	No
18. Are all the students on the course taught wholly by distance learning?	No
19. Does this course represent a work placement or a year of study abroad?	No
20. Is this course collaborative with any other institutions?	No
20.1 If yes, then please enter the names of the other teaching institutions:	

21. Additional Relevant Information:

22. Indicative Bibliography:

Adamson, G. (2010) The Craft Reader. Berg.

Barnet, S. (2014) A short guide to writing about art. 11th Ed. Pearson.

Berger, J. (1972) Ways of Seeing. Penguin

Chick, A. (2011) Design for sustainable change: how design and designers can drive the sustainability agenda. AWA Academia, Ch.7.

Collins, H (2010). The theory and practice of research for the creative industries.

Cottrell, S. (2008). The Study Skills Handbook.

D'Alleva, A. (2010) How to write Art History. Laurence King.

D'Alleva, A. (2012) Methods and theories of art history. Laurence King.

Fletcher, K. (2019) 'Introduction' in K. Fletcher (Ed.) Design and Nature. Routledge, pp. 9-13.

Gröppel-Wegener, A. (2016) Writing Essays by Pictures: A Workbook

Harmon, K. A. (2010) The Map as art: contemporary artists explore cartography. Princeton Architectural Press.

Makela, M. (2019) 'A Nourishing Dialogue with the Material Environment' in K. Fletcher (Ed.) Design and Nature. Routledge, pp. 173 – 178.

Makhoul, A. and Morley, S. (2014) Keywords and concepts for international students in art, media and design. John Wiley and Sons.

Mida, I.E, and Kim, A. (2015) The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object-Based Research in Fashion. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Robertson, M. (2021) Sustainability Principles and Practice. 3rd edn. Routledge, Ch. 1, pp. 3-12.

Sontag, S. (1982) On Photography. Penguin.

Turkle, S. (2011) Evocative Objects: Things We Think With. MIT Press.

Williams, G. (2014) How to write about contemporary art. Thames and Hudson Ltd.