Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Independent Research Project – Advanced in History and Theory of the City
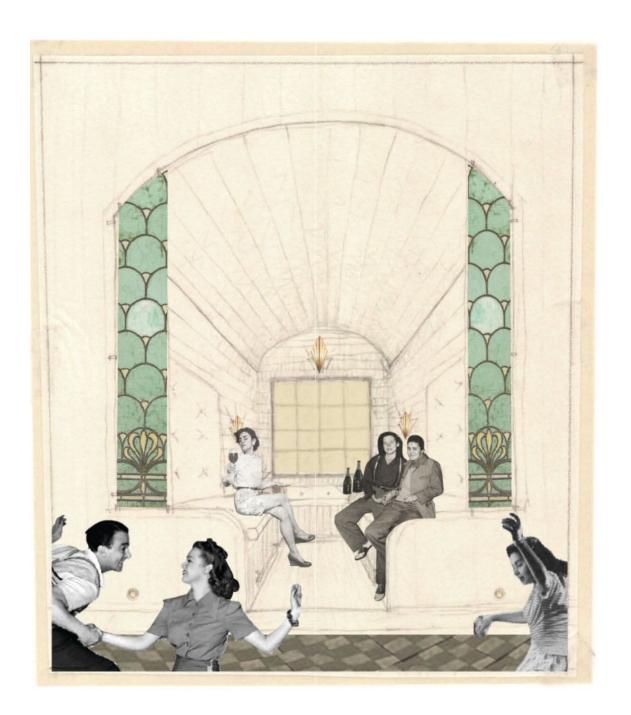

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Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
	100583 (50%); 100962 (50%)	2026-27

Course Title	Independent Research Project – Advanced in History and Theory of the City
Course Contact	Isabel Deakin

Credits	60
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Semester 3

Associated Programmes	Master of Architectural Studies
Lead School	Mackintosh School of Architecture
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval October 2025

Course Introduction

The Independent Research Project- Advanced in History and Theory of the City Course is the third course supporting the development and realisation of the student's Independent Research Project, which is delivered across PGT Stages 1, 2 and 3 through three interrelated courses.

This course is designed to give students the skills to create, develop, deliver and communicate the outcomes of their Independent Research Project in an area relating to the History and Theory of the City. The investigative studies and outputs undertaken in Semesters 1 and 2 offer a foundation for the realisation and communication of the final output, and completion of the Independent Research Project.

History and Theory of the City students will be required to evidence their critical understanding of the key theories and practices surrounding the development of our cities, drawing from architectural history and theory as well as sociology, cultural studies and urban planning. This course challenges students to synthesise, speculate and articulate their skills and practices for understanding, analysing and developing new knowledge about city form.

As this is a supervised independent research project, students are expected to operate with professionalism, self-direction and manage their own time.

Students are taught through a combination of tutorials and reviews. Through formative feedback, peer sessions and interim and final reviews, students can apply their learning.

Through this self-directed project students highlight their command at a Post Graduate Level within their chosen discipline in anticipation of their future professional or academic career path.

Course Aims

The aims of the course are to:

professionalism: facilitate a student's command of knowledge of professional ethics in terms of collaborative, inclusive, sustainable and safe design principles to respond to a refined research-

based design problem and evidence this through an advanced design led research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

design/create: facilitate a student's command of designing an advanced theory-based research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

research: facilitate a student's command of research skills to respond to a refined research-based design problem and evidence this through a theory-based research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

communication: facilitate a student's command of the integration of analogue and digital media to verbally communicate structured thinking, a response to a refined theory-based research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

skills: facilitate a student's command of critical reflection, communication and a structured methodology, with digital and analogue tools, to respond to an advanced theory-based research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

knowledge: facilitate a student's command of the creative use of advanced architectural theories, concepts, and techniques to address social, ethical and climate change challenges to respond to an advanced theory-based research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the Course students will be able to **synthesise, speculate and articulate:**

professionalism: knowledge of professional ethics in terms of collaborative, inclusive, sustainable and safe design principles to respond to a refined research-based problem evidenced through an advanced research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

design/create: a creative process with a refined research-based problem and evidence this through an advanced research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

research: advanced research skills to a refined research-based problem evidenced through an advanced research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

communication: the integration of analogue and digital media to verbally communicate structured thinking to a refined research-based problem evidenced through an advanced research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

skills: critical reflection, communication and a structured methodology, with digital and analogue tools, to a refined research-based problem evidenced through an advanced research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

knowledge: the creative use of advanced architectural theories, concepts, and techniques to address social, ethical and climate change challenges to a refined research-based problem evidenced through an advanced research output within the field of History and Theory of the City

Indicative Content

The Independent Research Project Advanced in History and Theory of the City course is designed to give students the opportunity to advance their individual architectural interests in the context of the History and Theory of the City. Students prepare a written textual thesis. The work is undertaken on an individual basis.

During the course students will be supported to:

- produce a written textual thesis which addresses and responds to the refined research-based design problem developed and explored in PGT Stages 1 and 2

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

Pedagogy:
Integration of the six learning domains enables work to be grounded in specialist knowledge relating to the student's chosen Pathway and enacted through their independent research project. The course is intended to develop students' mastery of iterative and reflective research practices while deploying their critical, ethical and professional position. Student learning is developed through the course. Groupwork and collaboration with other students are core to the student learning experience, enabling students to work productively with others. Independent learning is fostered throughout the year.

Delivery:
The course is delivered through regular seminars, using a range of learning and teaching activities, including individual and group tutorials. In this course, there is a greater emphasis on independent study. Peer discussions offer the opportunity for critical discourse, enabling staff and students to enter into a dialogue around historical and contemporary issues regarding architecture in the urban context. A hybrid approach to learning through in-person sessions and on-line support offers students access to flexible and inclusive learning. Private study consists of both staff-directed study and independent student- directed study.

Timetable:
Tutorials are delivered on a regular basis either in groups or individually with reviews at set points throughout the session.

Canvas:

The virtual learning environment tool Canvas is used for the dissemination, discussion, and access to relevant course information, and to signpost students to other relevant teaching and learning platforms used by GSA.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
30	600

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Formative activities are provided during studio courses, offering students the opportunity to obtain ongoing staff and peer feedback through discussion and review in relation to the course.

As such Formative feedback provided throughout the course fosters reflective learning while supporting the Summative graded assessment and feedback process, which generally happens at the end of the course.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

Summative assessment is undertaken at the end of the course and is designed and delivered to support student learning. Students' work is assessed against the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each course.

Summative assessment in studio courses is undertaken through coursework assignments. Coursework assignment submissions involve text-based submissions utilising both digital and physical tools and formats, as well as oral presentations. Written feedback is provided on all summative assessments.

All submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the GSA Code of Assessment. Reassessment opportunities where a student has not passed the course are outlined in the GSA Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Written Submission Students are required to submit their work for the Advanced Independent Research Project for assessment through presentation of a written dissertation (10,000 words) supported by a Summary Poster with both submissions assessed together against the course ILO's with one final course grade awarded.	100	Semester 3 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
Supporting the course, an indicative reading and on-line resource list is accessible via Resource Lists. This list will be reviewed and updated annually. Supervisors, tutors and peers will provide further recommendations appropriate to student's chosen research subject.