Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Studio Work 1B Environmental Architecture

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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 Academic Year.

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
TBC	100122/100583	2026-27

Course Title	Studio Work 1B Environmental Architecture
Course Contact	TBC

Credits	30
SCQF Level	Level 7
When Taught	Semester 2

Associated Programmes	BSc in Environmental Architecture with Honours
Lead School	Mackintosh School of Architecture
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval September 2025

Course Introduction

Building on the foundations of Studio Work 1A, the Studio Work 1B Environmental Architecture course continues to develop students' engagement with the challenges and opportunities of architectural design in the context of rural Scotland, with a particular emphasis on landscape, settlement, and the environmental performance of architecture. The course fosters students' capacity to analyse and respond to architectural contexts through an environmental lens, supporting the development of value-based, regenerative design approaches. A comprehensive studio project allows students to deepen their skills in drawing, making, environmental evaluation, and representation, while refining their iterative design process. Studio Work 1B/Environmental emphasises architecture as both a creative and technical discipline. Students are introduced to fundamental environmental principles, such as thermal comfort, daylighting, site microclimate, and material provenance, and begin to use environmental simulation tools to inform design decisions. Design outputs are evaluated not only for spatial and cultural meaning but also for their environmental performance and low-carbon potential. Teaching is delivered through a combination of tutorials, fieldwork, skills workshops, and specialist lectures. Through formative feedback, peer reviews, and formative assessment, students apply their learning on the course across the semester. Each studio brief is accompanied by a small selection of carefully selected texts which situate the design projects within a wider architectural discourse.

Course Aims

The aims of the course are to:

professionalism: develop students' understanding of legal, regulatory, and statutory frameworks as they relate to environmentally responsible architectural design, and to foster ethical awareness in the delivery of low-carbon, regenerative proposals

design/create: cultivate students' ability to engage creatively with environmental, socio-economic, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions of architecture, producing design proposals that demonstrate contextual sensitivity and environmental performance

research: equip students with design-led research skills that support the evaluation and analysis of site, material, and environmental data, enabling the development of sustainable and adaptive architectural responses in rural settings

communication: strengthen students' ability to communicate architectural and environmental intentions visually and verbally, through a range of analogue and digital media including environmental simulation outputs

skills: build students' capability to apply a coherent and iterative design methodology using analogue tools in the development of spatially and environmentally responsive proposals

knowledge: advance students' knowledge of architectural theories, environmental systems, and material strategies, supporting the creation of proposals that are spatially rich, contextually grounded, and environmentally informed

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the Course students will be able to **explain and demonstrate:**

professionalism: an understanding of professional ethics and regulatory frameworks in the development of environmentally responsible architectural proposals, applying inclusive, safe, and low-carbon design principles within the context of a rural settlement

design/create: a creative and environmentally informed design process to produce architectural proposals that respond to the environmental, cultural, and socio-economic characteristics of a specific rural context

research: basic design-led research methods to analyse site conditions, materials, and environmental data, supporting the development of adaptive and sustainable architectural responses in a rural setting

communication: architectural and environmental intent clearly through visual, verbal, and written means, using analogue and digital media, including basic environmental analysis outputs

skills: analogue tools to iteratively test and refine small-scale architectural proposals in response to environmental performance criteria

knowledge: an understanding of architectural theories, environmental systems, and material strategies, and apply this knowledge to the design of contextually sensitive, environmentally conscious buildings and spaces in a rural setting

Indicative Content

Students continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of the contemporary challenges and opportunities of designing in a rural context, with a specific focus on environmental responsibility, material choices, and regenerative design in relation to the design of a climate responsive dwelling through the lens of environmental performance and low-carbon strategies.

During the course, students will:

- extend their fieldwork and environmental observations to develop a critical understanding of the cultural, social, and ecological conditions of a particular rural settlement
- design a small-scale, climate-responsive dwelling that addresses contextual, environmental, and societal factors, informed by a creative and iterative design process
- communicate architectural intent effectively through drawings, models, diagrams, and presentations tailored to different audiences at different stages of the design process
- engage with architectural theories, environmental design principles, and material strategies to inform the development of spatially and environmentally responsive architectural solutions

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

Pedagogy:

Studio is both a learning space and a form of reflective practice where knowledge, skills and attributes are transformed into design competencies. Integration of the six learning domains enables design work to be grounded in specialist subject areas, Architectural Technology/ HAUS/ Professional Studio, and enacted through design projects. The course is intended to develop students' use of iterative and reflective design practices while developing their critical, ethical and professional position as an architect and designer. Student learning is developed through the course, supported by staff and student field trips, which enable students to address real-world issues in the context of specific communities and places. Groupwork and collaboration are core to the student learning experience, enabling students to both work productively with others while contextualising the role of the architect in relation to other disciplines and practices. Studio tutors along with visiting guests offer students insights into the constantly changing world of architectural practice. Independent learning is fostered throughout the year.

Delivery:

The course is delivered through regular studio sessions, using a range of learning and teaching activities, including individual and group tutorials, design reviews, seminars, workshops and lectures by staff and invited guests. Design forums offer the opportunity for critical discourse around issues raised by the studio project, enabling staff and students to enter a dialogue around contemporary architectural issues. A hybrid approach to learning through in-person 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:

Studio tutorials are delivered on a weekly basis either in groups or individually with pin-up tutorials and design reviews at set points throughout the session concluding with design forums at the end of the projects.

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	300

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods
Formative feedback is delivered during the course, offering students the opportunity to obtain ongoing staff and peer feedback through presentation, discussion and review of design projects. 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. During the academic session staff deliver assessment workshops with students, clarifying both the Formative and Summative assessment processes delivered within the Programme.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements
Summative assessment is generally undertaken at the end of the course. Students' work is assessed against the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each course, which are aligned with the professional competencies required for architectural practice. Summative assessment in studio courses is undertaken through coursework assignments in the form of studio design projects. Coursework assignment submissions involve visual and text-based submissions utilising both digital and physical tools and formats. Students are supported in preparing their submissions with feedback and provided with example submissions. 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. During the academic session, staff deliver assessment workshops with students, clarifying the assessment process delivered within the Programme.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Portfolio Students are required to submit a digital Portfolio of their studio design work for assessment	100%	Week 13

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.