

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification

Course Title: Studio Work 3B Environmental Architecture

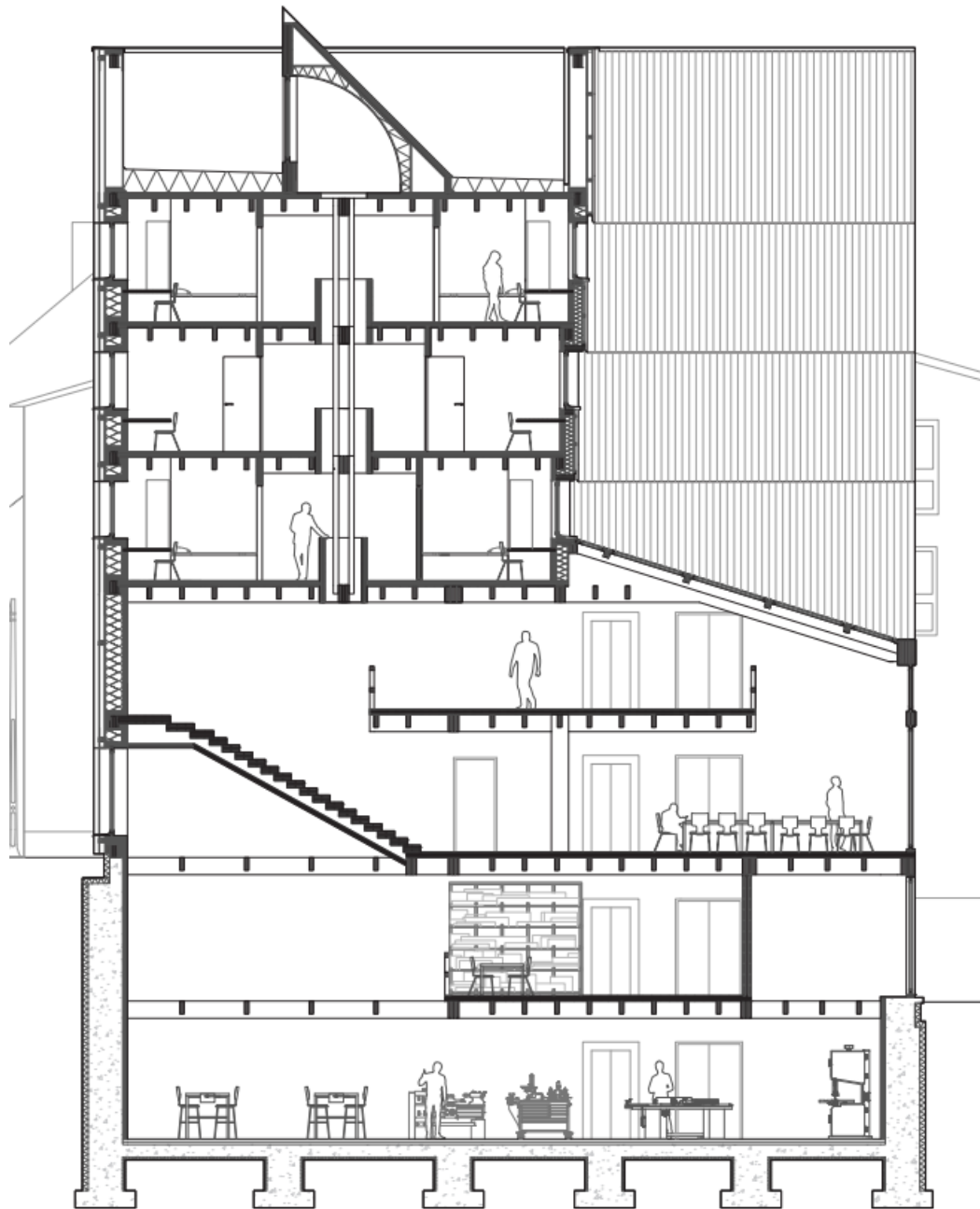


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Please note that this course specification is correct on the date of publication but may be subject to amendment prior to the start of the Academic Year.

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
TBC	100122/10058	2026-27

Course Title	Studio Work 3B Environmental Architecture
Course Contact	

Credits	30
SCQF Level	Level 9
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

The Studio Work 3B Environmental Architecture course builds on the Studio Work 3A course, enabling students to advance their engagement with architecture as an environmentally responsive discipline situated within the socio-ecological realities at the urban scale of a rural town. The course supports students in developing regenerative design proposals that address climate, community, and material challenges through spatial and environmental innovation. Focusing on a comprehensive design project, students work with the complexities of constructing and evaluating buildings in remote and climatically challenging environments. Emphasis is placed on material selection, building performance, and environmental simulation as integral to the design process. Students explore how architecture can mediate relationships between people, ecosystems, and the landscapes that support them, including consideration of non-human life and ecological impact.

Studio Work 3B Environmental Architecture reinforces the programme's core ethos that design and environmental evaluation must be fully integrated. Students use advanced tools such as energy and daylight simulation, and lifecycle assessment to iteratively test and refine proposals. These tools support the creation of architecture that is environmentally literate, technically rigorous, and spatially rich.

Course Aims

The aims of the course are to:

professional: reinforce students' ability to apply legal, regulatory, and statutory frameworks in the development of environmentally responsible architectural proposals

design/create: reinforce a student's capacity to generate architectural designs that respond creatively and critically to environmental, socio-economic, cultural, and ecological conditions.

research: reinforce a student's use of design-led research methodologies that integrate environmental simulation, lifecycle assessment, and performance-based evaluation, to produce of architecture that is safe, efficient, sustainable, and ecologically aware.

communication: reinforce a student's' ability to articulate architectural intent visually and verbally through a range of analogue and digital media, supporting collaborative and interdisciplinary discourse within complex design contexts.

skills: reinforce a student's ability to use analogue and digital tools, such as energy modelling, daylight simulation, and material analysis essential for the iterative testing, refinement, and realisation of environmentally responsive architecture

knowledge: reinforce a student's understanding and application of design strategies, tactics, and techniques that support the integration of environmental and building performance, architectural proposals

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to **test, apply, and demonstrate:**

professional: professional behaviours and ethics through collaborative, inclusive, and environmentally responsible design practices in the production of coherent architectural design proposals in relation to a rural landscape

design/create: the ability to develop architectural proposals that address environmental, and ecological conditions through creative and critical design processes in relation to rural settings

research: the use of design-led research methods, including environmental simulation, lifecycle assessment, and performance-based evaluation to analyse and develop architectural proposals that are safe, efficient, sustainable, in relation to a rural landscape

communication: the ability to effectively communicate architectural intent, spatial strategies, and environmental performance through a range of analogue and digital media, including the capacity to engage in interdisciplinary and collaborative dialogue in response to complex design challenges

skills: the application of technical and methodological skills in both analogue and digital tools, such as energy modelling, daylight analysis, and material simulation to test and refine environmentally responsive architecture

knowledge: an integrated understanding of architectural theories, concepts, and techniques, including environmental building performance, and regenerative design strategies that support the development of architectural proposals related to rural and ecologically diverse environments

Indicative Content

Through a comprehensive design project, students develop their knowledge and understanding of the contemporary challenges and opportunities of designing in rural settings, with an emphasis on environmental responsibility, spatial innovation, and technical performance in remote and climatically demanding conditions.

Students explore environmental and ecological challenges within a rural landscape context, making informed value judgements to support the development of regenerative design proposals. These proposals aim to strengthen the relationships between human activities, other species, and the ecological systems that support them.

The course engages with the socio-ecological complexity of rural life, both specific to the selected town and in relation to broader rural conditions, encouraging students to integrate professional, ethical, and interdisciplinary perspectives in their design work.

During the course, students will:

- engage in fieldwork and desktop research to record, analyse, and evaluate rural towns and their wider ecological and landscape settings, supporting research and knowledge outcomes.
- develop a comprehensive design project situated in a remote rural environment that demonstrates professional ethics, environmental literacy, and design innovation.
- develop spatial and planning strategies in response to site-specific challenges, programmatic requirements, and available low-carbon or context-responsive technologies.
- explore regenerative design approaches using techniques such as prefabrication, passive design strategies, and locally sourced materials, including consideration of building performance and ecological impact.
- collaborate with peers across disciplines and within studio groups to foster interdisciplinary awareness, professional conduct, and communication skills.
- use digital tools, such as energy modelling, daylight simulation, and lifecycle assessment, to iteratively test and evaluate the environmental performance of proposed buildings, supporting both skills and research.

- present their proposals at various stages of development to various audiences in a range of settings.

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 reinforce students' development of iterative and reflective design practices while reinforcing their critical, ethical and professional position as an architect and designer. Student learning is developed by enabling 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. Part-time 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 delivery 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 and 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

30

Notional Learning Hours

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
Students are required to submit their studio work for assessment through presentation of selected visual and physical artefacts such as drawings, text and/or models, supported by a digital portfolio with both submissions assessed together against the course ILO's with one final course grade awarded.	100%	Week 12

Exchange/Study Abroad

Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	No
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Are all the students on the course taught wholly by distance learning?	No
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Does this course represent a work placement or a year of study abroad?	No
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Is this course collaborative with any other institutions?	No
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If yes, then please provide the names of the other teaching institutions	
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Reading and On-line Resources

A supporting course indicative Reading and online 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.