

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Communication Design Studio 3A

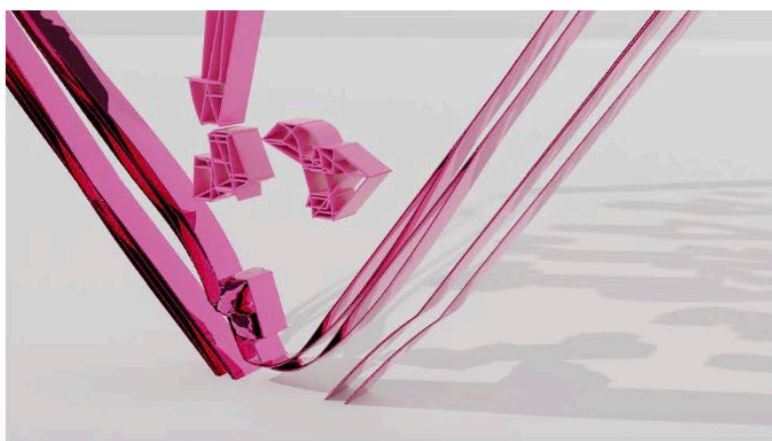
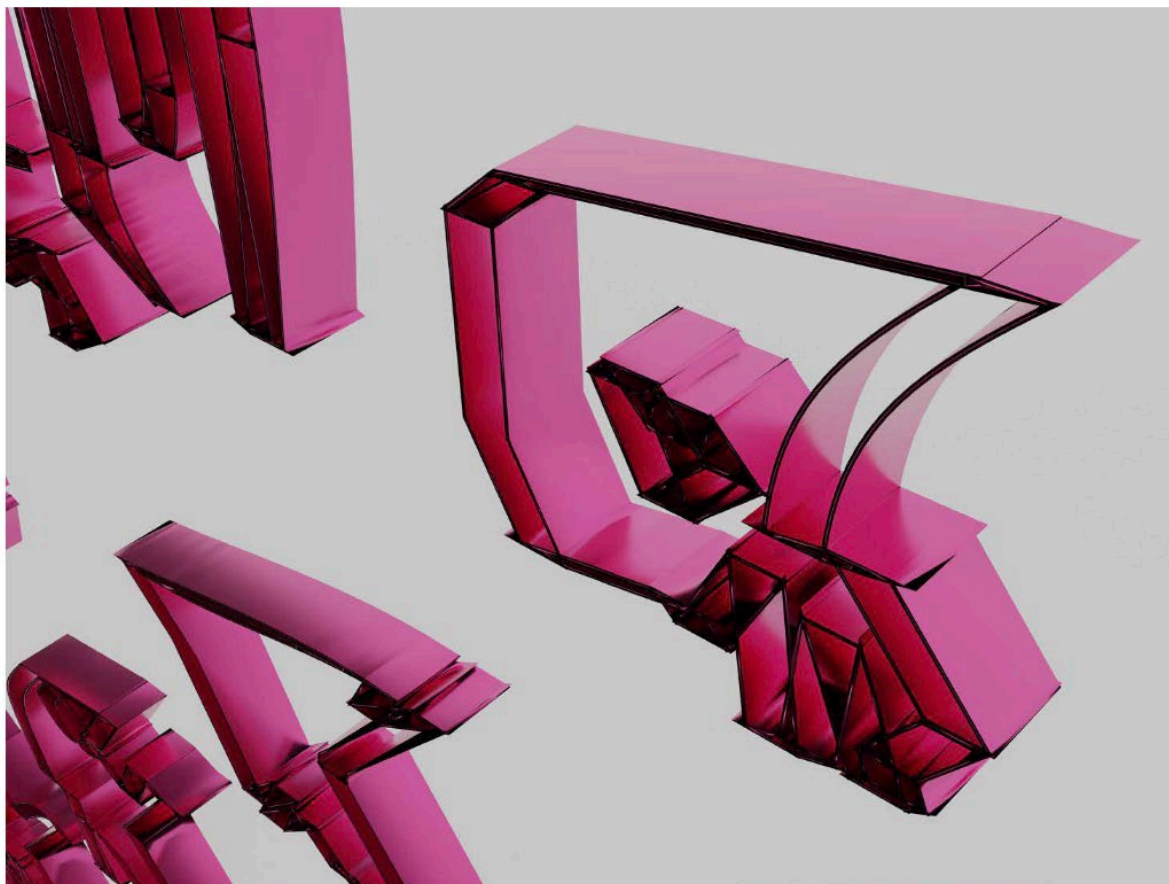


Image: Tania Rodriguez

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 2026-27 Academic Year.

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
UCMD301A		2026-27

Course Title	Communication Design Studio 3A
Course Contact	Steve Rigley

Credits	40
SCQF Level	9
When Taught	Stage 3, Semester 1

Associated Programmes	BA (Hons) Communication Design
Lead School	Design
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2024

Course Introduction

Students begin their specialist pathway for Stages 3 and 4 with Studio 3A. The course introduces students to approaches, skills, and resources within their chosen pathway through studio learning, including a range of workshops, seminars, and projects. The course considers the three specialist pathways - which include Photography (including Lens-based practice), Graphic Design, and Illustration - from a broad, holistic perspective, acknowledging the diversity and the interconnected nature of Communication Design.

Students gain a grounding in the specialist knowledge and terminologies appropriate to their pathway, and they consider and develop the technical skills and critical approaches that will help equip them to enter industry as a creative practitioner. The course encourages approaches informed by curiosity, exploration, and risk-taking, and it supports students in acquiring the skills necessary to manage projects and learning.

Group tutorials and presentations provide a valuable opportunity for students to present their work to peers and tutors to receive and engage with critical feedback. The course also explores the roles and responsibilities of designers working within the specialist pathway, including ethical, societal, and environmental themes, allowing the students to consider their practice from a critical perspective.

Course Aims

The aims of this course are to:

1. introduce a range of research skills and resources within a specialist pathway
2. present a range of experimental approaches to studio projects within a specialist pathway
3. introduce key technical skills and critical approaches within a specialist pathway
4. develop project and learning management skills within the context of a specialist pathway
5. develop presentation skills within a specialist pathway
6. consider the roles and responsibilities of communication designers working from within a specialist pathway

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. identify research skills and resources appropriate to their specialist pathway
2. experiment and generate ideas through a limited range of familiar and unfamiliar materials and processes appropriate to their specialist pathway
3. employ a limited range of technical skills and critical approaches appropriate to their specialist pathway
4. complete a range of individual and collaborative projects within their specialist pathway
5. communicate their ideas to peers and staff, both visually and verbally, to peers and staff within a specialist pathway
6. identify potential opportunities to engage with ethical, societal and environmental challenges within their specialist pathway

Indicative Content

This course will introduce students to:

- approaches to primary and secondary research within their specialised pathway
- strategies for experimentation and idea generation within their specialised pathway
- practical skills and critical approaches appropriate to their specialised pathway
- methods to collate, document and present work to audiences appropriate to their specialist pathway
- external networks and resources appropriate to their specialist pathway
- ethical, societal and environmental challenges specific to Communication Designers working within their specialised pathway

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

This studio course is designed as a project-based course. Project briefs encourage an independent, tutor-supported approach to directed and self-directed study.

A range of learning and teaching methods are used to support students to engage in an explorative and individual approach to learning. These include:

- briefings
- inductions and demonstrations
- technical workshops
- studio activities
- individual and group tutorials
- talks, lectures, seminars, and study visits
- group critiques and reviews, peer review, and presentations
- presentations and writing
- reflection and self-evaluation

Skills, including digital, material and technical resources, are introduced through inductions, demonstrations, and workshops.

Independent learning skills will be developed and supported through guided activities and digital online learning resources available on Canvas.

A variety of teaching and learning approaches, including in person, blended and online learning and delivery, are employed to support student engagement with the curriculum and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
40	400

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Students are supported in their learning through a range of activities with staff and peers, such as workshops, reviews and tutorials offering ongoing formative feedback as they progress through the course.

Formative feedback supports students in developing and refining their project work towards submission for summative assessment.

Formative feedback offers students the opportunity to present the progress of their project work to staff and or peers, receiving feedback to support the development and refinement of their project work towards submission for summative assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Arrangements

Summative assessment is designed to support students in reviewing, collating, and communicating work produced in response to project briefs and the various learning and teaching activities associated with the course.

Submissions are expected to include an annotated digital portfolio of work produced during the course, along with supporting physical artefacts – such as research and development work, prototypes and final outcomes – and a reflective self-assessment. In place of written annotations, students may opt to submit a short film and/or an audio recording.

Submissions are assessed against the Intended Learning Outcomes and the GSA Undergraduate Marking Scheme by the relevant staff teams and then moderated in line with the Code of Assessment, which outlines reassessment opportunities where a student has not passed the course. Written feedback is provided online. The assessment is supportive and constructive, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and offering guidance to inform future learning and direction.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Students are required to submit a body of work produced in response to project brief/s and learning and teaching activities, which is assessed holistically against the intended learning outcomes for this course.	100%	Semester 1 Week 13

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
<p>The course indicative reading and online resource lists (per specialist pathway) are accessible via Resource Lists. These lists will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.</p> <p>Graphic Design Illustration Photography + Lens-based</p>