

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



Image: Alia Mobarik

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.

i

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
UCMD301B		2026-27

Course Title	Communication Design Studio 3B
Course Contact	Steve Rigley

Credits	40
SCQF Level	9
When Taught	Stage 3, Semester 2

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

Course Introduction

Studio 3B supports students in extending specialist skills, knowledge, and critical approaches within their specialist pathway through studio learning, including a range of workshops, seminars, and projects. The course consolidates understanding within the three specialist pathways of Photography (including Lens-based practice), Graphic Design, and Illustration from a broad, holistic perspective, articulating and further exploring the diversity and the interconnected nature of Communication Design practice.

The course enables students to build a solid platform for their emerging practice by instilling critical research skills and resources. The course encourages students to continue to develop approaches informed by curiosity and risk-taking in the generation and execution of ideas while also developing the technical, critical, and project-management skills that are requisite to industry.

Tutorials and group presentations provide a valuable opportunity to present ideas, engage with feedback, and offer critical and supportive input to peers, and provide a supportive space to discuss ethical, societal, and environmental issues that emerge from practice. As the course progresses, it supports students in identifying individual themes and forms of practice that they may explore in Stage 4 and helps support the transition to the next stage of increasingly independent learning.

Course Aims

The aims of this course are to:

1. instil research knowledge and skills within a specialist pathway
2. encourage continuing risk-taking and exploration in the generation of ideas
3. consolidate key technical skills and critical approaches within a specialist pathway
4. further develop project and learning management skills within the context of a specialist pathway
5. develop presentation and engagement skills within a specialist pathway

6. identify and articulate the roles and responsibilities of communication designers working within a specialist pathway when facing ethical, societal and environmental challenges

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. inform their studio practice through research skills and resources appropriate to their specialist pathway
2. experiment and generate ideas through a range of familiar and unfamiliar materials and processes appropriate to their specialist pathway
3. employ a range of technical skills and critical approaches appropriate to their specialist pathway
4. complete a broad range of individual and collaborative projects within a specialist pathway, engaging with peers and staff
5. communicate their ideas, both visually and verbally, to peers and staff within their specialist pathway, and critically engage with feedback
6. identify and explore 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
- professional presentation skills, both verbal and visual, 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,	100%	Semester 2 Week 13

which is assessed holistically against the intended learning outcomes for this course.		
--	--	--

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>