

**Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Design Innovation Studio Project 1**



Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
PDIN106		2026-27

Course Title	Design Innovation Studio Project 1
Course Contact	Dr Michael Pierre Johnson (GSA)

Credits	20
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Stage 1

Associated Programmes	M.Sc International Management and Design Innovation
Lead School	School of Innovation & Technology
Other Schools	Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow
Date of Approval	PACAAG April 2025

Course Introduction

This course provides an introduction to the theories, practices and mindsets associated with Design Innovation contributing to the development of core disciplinary knowledge and skills. The complexity of contemporary society is explored in this course through the design-led development of future-oriented proposals that can contribute to the meaningful change/creation of future experience.

Students from a broad range of academic and professional backgrounds will engage with key texts and disciplinary discussions and core elements of Design research processes, including engagement with people and contexts associated with a particular project brief. Students will also be introduced to ethics and reflective practices to support group project work through an academic journey of developing Design Innovation knowledge and skills in the context of international management.

This course lays the foundation for the Stage 2 course Design Innovation Studio Project 2, and preparing students to select their Stage 3 project or dissertation in either Management or Design Innovation.

Course Aims

This course aims to:

1. Introduce the theory and practice of Design Innovation, in the context of economic and organisational development locally and globally, as an approach to thinking about the world we live in and developing responses to complex contexts where we wish to implement positive change for future experience.
2. Introduce skills to conceive, manage, and deliver a collaborative design project, in the context of economic and organisational development locally and globally, and understand the value of the methods of people- and planet-led approaches in Design Innovation applied to specified project context(s);
3. Convey the value of the tools, methods and mindset of Design Innovation within knowledge and practice domains, in the context of economic and organisational development locally and globally, through project work, discussion, workshops, seminars and other studio-based activity.

4. Foster critical debate regarding contemporary design practice and its theoretical and ethical basis through critical reflection upon the practice of others, in the context of economic and organisational development locally and globally.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Analyse a contextual challenge, project opportunity or unmet need for key project actors (human and non-human), with reference to a theoretical concept in your design research.
- Document an appropriate secondary and primary research method from Design and Social Sciences to identify insights and explore an opportunity for leadership and design innovation practice.
- Synthesise novel concepts towards a proposal, applying a design-led process in a team setting, with creative and analytical skills in an appropriate degree of resolution, that responds to an identified contextual challenge and practical issues arising.
- Reflect on a design-led process to address a real world context in relation to a conceptual area of focus for innovation.
- Outline visually, orally and in writing with coherent storytelling a design-led innovation project and its findings in a given context using appropriate media to evidence your proposal.

Indicative Content

This course introduces the methods, tools and theories of design innovation as contemporary practice. It marries the practical application of a design innovation project work with management and leadership skills within the contextual framework of contemporary society and the complexities and demands that arise there.

- Design Innovation as a project process applied to various contexts.
- Relationship of design theory to practice.
- Reflexive approaches to co-design practices of engagement and making
- Project management, team working, leadership and delivery.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

The principal teaching strategies employed in this practice-based course are:

Lectures and seminars - used to disseminate theoretical, methodological, contextual and historical knowledge and address specific issues related to each course which can be used to underpin practical studio work. Lectures also have the broad aim of generating further debate in seminars, tutorials, studio sessions or further enquiry in self-directed learning or research.

Critiques/Presentations - an important learning device used to generate peer debate regarding the generation, development or overall success of concepts, and their practical realisation within

the context of a project brief or proposal. Students present work to their peers, tutors and stakeholders or contextual partners through appropriate visual and verbal means (including: models or mock-ups, portfolios, videos, slideshows, etc.). The crit enables the development of key presentation skills, and encourages students to give constructive feedback regarding each other's work, and an opportunity to debate project input. These may be tutor-led, tutor-facilitated, or peer-led allowing students to fully explore all aspects of practical submissions within a reflective discursive framework.

Tutorials - designed to provide academic support through individual or group meetings with staff to discuss the different directions and aspects of projects or course-based activities as well as progress on the programme/course overall.

Self-Directed Learning and Research - in line with other taught postgraduate programmes at GSA, significant emphasis in the Design Innovation programme is placed on self-directed study, from project design and development, to gaining theoretical knowledge through traditional research methods. This emphasises autonomy, reflection upon personal learning and self-directed project work within an individual and a collaborative environment.

Guest Speaker sessions (when relevant) – include input from visiting lecturers, guests from industry and research staff enabling students access to, and understanding of, relevant contemporary practice, research and commercial context. Guest will contribute with expert knowledge to the course through the sharing of knowledge, case studies and projects, and where practical and applicable will offer critical input to ongoing project work
The course uses Canvas, a virtual learning environment tool, for the dissemination, discussion and access to relevant course information, and signpost to other relevant teaching and learning platforms used by GSA.

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The less iterative methods like lectures and seminars intend to help students initiate their own investigation of topics to support both the core project brief, and their personal interests which, in turn, may be used as the basis for their self-initiated Stage Three project.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
24	200

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Formative feedback is an ongoing process undertaken through reviews and group tutorial sessions, and appointment-based tutorials with staff.

At a mid-way point in the course, students submit a formal group presentation of their work in progress. Tutors offer oral feedback on how best to improve and build upon existing work to date with the support of peer notetaking to expand upon and consolidate the received feedback.

Due to the nature of the innovation process, formative assessment does not result in a predicted grade. However, students who appear to be at risk of failure will be offered individual tutorials as appropriate to provide targeted support.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Presentation of project Outcome (group): presentation to faculty and peers of a project outcome, its rationale and expected impact in the explored context, with selected supporting materials from the design research process and contributions across the team, when applicable.	60	12
Project Document (individual): 1,500 word visual document offering a reflective and evidenced narrative of a contextual challenge, an applied design research method and use of theoretical concept in key decisions and outcome. There should be a clearly identified response to the context within the brief based on research and analysis. This document should include text-based and visual elements including sketchbook-evidence of a creative process.	40	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	N/A

Reading and On-line Resources
The course indicative Reading and on-line resource list is accessible via Resource Lists . This list will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.