

**Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Design Innovation Studio Project 2**



Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
PDIN227		2026-27

Course Title	Design Innovation Studio Project 2
Course Contact	Dr Michael Pierre Johnson (GSA)

Credits	40
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Stage 2

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 supports students to design, develop and deliver a 12-week group research project, aligned with an allocated brief co-produced with live partner(s) and stakeholder networks that connects to global societal challenges. It is about addressing real issues that affect real people, by understanding them from each stakeholder's point of view in an evidence-led and purpose-driven process that makes a positive contribution to society.

The course foregrounds the role of organisations and networks of organisations for addressing global societal challenges through Design Innovation within the context of International Management. This involves learning about a range of innovative projects, approaches, research, frameworks, enterprise models, ecosystems and regional clusters from industry aligned to *beyond* economic development. Students will enhance their ethical and reflexive practices to support group project work through an academic journey of establishing design innovation knowledge and skills in the context of international management.

Supported by the course tutors, guest lectures and peer reviews, students will pursue their research project as a team that will allow them to **enhance** and demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding of the field of Design Innovation and their chosen **specialism**.

The brief-directed group project should be carried out in association with provided or identified institutions/organisations *or* a set of contextual experts as a 'live' piece of work that allows the practical evidencing of skills and the theoretical knowledge acquired during Semester 1.

Course Aims

The course aims to:

1. Develop students' critical understanding and sustained engagement with the theory and practice of Design Innovation, in the context of economic development locally and globally, as an approach to contemporary issues related to people and planet, through a design project. In preparation to Stage 3 Masters Research Project, this course provides a platform to increase the students' ability to contribute to the contemporary debates related to industry and research in global societal challenges;
2. Expand students' skills to conceive, manage, and deliver a collaborative design project in the context of economic development locally and globally; and demonstrate

the value of the methods of people- and planet-led approaches in Design Innovation applied to specified project context(s).

3. Extend the students understanding of contemporary design practice to encompass non-object-based activities, and creatively explore Design Innovation of artefacts, systems, services, strategies, organisations, enterprise ecosystems and the experiences and impacts these can deliver and have for people.

4. Provide opportunities for students to develop reflective and collaborative dialogue with a variety of stakeholders, including cross-discipline work and collaborations or interactions with contextual partners (i.e. experts, communities, organisations and other relevant parties) to explore professional practices in the context of economic development locally and globally.

5. Equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver and critically discuss design-led innovation using the professional standards, and the verbal and visual language of Design Innovation, through inclusive and appropriate media to project contexts and audiences.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Critically analyse contextual challenges, project opportunities and unmet needs identified through applying theoretical concepts in your design research, and their impact on key project actors (human, non-human) and global design/management practice.
- Apply contextually and ethically appropriate secondary and primary research methods from Design, Management and Social Sciences to explore and identify opportunities for leadership and design innovation practice.
- Synthesise and iterate innovative concepts towards an appropriate proposal, applying design-led processes in a team setting, with creative and analytical skills in varying degrees of resolution, to address identified contextual challenges and engage with practical issues.
- Critically reflect on a design-led process with people and things to address real world problems in relation to an identified conceptual area of focus, its ethics and its validity.
- Communicate visually, orally and in writing with competent storytelling a design-led innovation project, the development of its findings and their wider impact in a given context using appropriate media to evidence your proposal and your conceptual thinking.

Indicative Content

This course extends student engagement with the methods, tools and theories of design innovation (DI) as contemporary practice. It provides an emphasis upon the role of organisations in response to global societal challenges and the application of DI tools and methods. In general, the following areas will be considered:

- Design Innovation as a project process applied in the context of economic and organisational development locally and globally;
- Relationship of design theory to practice as a tool for innovation;
- Collaborate effectively with peers and external groups/individuals to move from ambiguity in a context to preferable proposals for positive impact.
- Exploration of Design Innovation as a form of “applied ethics” and of storytelling futures;
- Investigation of the context of practice as research within Design Innovation approach;
- Project management and delivery of Design Innovation project(s).

Studio Project 2 should be viewed in context within the whole programme. It builds on work in Stage One in which students have been introduced to, and practiced, several key innovation methods and approaches and have worked in groups to research a challenge through given brief to develop and present evidenced proposals. In turn, Studio Project 2 provides an enhanced foundation for their choice in Stage Three, which can take the form of an independent Design Innovation project.

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.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
48	400

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.	40	12
Project Document (individual): 3,000 word visual document offering a reflective, evidenced and critical narrative of project process, decisions and outcomes. There should be a clearly identified response to the context within the brief based on research and analysis applying theoretical concepts. This document should include text-based and visual elements including sketchbook-evidence of a creative and analytical process.	60	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.