

**Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Design Studio: Human-Centred Narratives**



Credit: Riccardo Cossu, Iestyn Howarth, Julia Kubiak 2023

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
UPRD210		2026-27

Course Title	Design Studio: Human-Centred Narratives
Course Contact	Mil Stricevic

Credits	40
SCQF Level	8
When Taught	Stage 2, Semester 1

Associated Programmes	BDEs/MEDes Product Design
Lead School	School of Innovation & Technology
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2024

Course Introduction

This course provides an opportunity to apply the design process within the context of the near future as a means of developing concepts for innovative new products and services. This way of thinking – referred to as ‘speculative design’ - uses design to explore possible visions of the future: not to predict what *will* be, but rather to imagine what *might* be.

Using a blend of research & ideation methods as the catalyst for creative and imaginative exploration, students will explore the meaning and value of *design narratives* as a communication technique, developing speculative scenarios which bring together People + Product + Place as a means of illustrating possible new ways of living and being.

Undertaken with a spirit of material resourcefulness and semantic discernment, the course introduces students to the design and fabrication of concept prototypes as ‘props’ within imagined designed narratives; the resulting speculative scenarios captured in visual form as ‘snapshots’ from the future.

Course Aims

This course aims to:

- Engage with emerging/predicted social, cultural, environmental, technological and political phenomena through the practice of ‘speculative design’
- Explore the use of design catalysts in the ideation process.
- Construct personas and extreme users as a means of developing innovative, human-centred design concepts.
- Develop core design communication skills (2, 3 & 4d) within the construction of design narratives as a means of manifesting speculative visions of the future.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Develop speculative design narratives by blending research insights/methods.

- Demonstrate divergent thinking in the generation of multiple design concepts in response to speculative design opportunities.
- Identify and define a clear rationale to inform the selection, development and refinement of design concepts.
- Demonstrate material resourcefulness and semantic control in the materialisation of artefacts within a design narrative.
- Communicate speculative design proposals using a combination of visual narrative techniques.

Indicative Content

This course covers the following content:

- Concepts around near future
- Speculative Design
- Research and Ideation methods
- Design and fabrication of concept prototypes

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

In this course, students will be expected to increasingly take significant responsibility for the management of their learning. Emphasis will be placed on the gradual encouraging of self-reliance and personal academic development.

This course is designed as a practice-based experience which supports students in their introduction to studio-based learning and practice. This is further supported by TSD (Technical Services Department), who provide workshop and material-based learning.

The principal teaching strategies employed on this course are:

Tutorial (group and individual) - 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.

Review (group and individual) - enables the development of key presentation skills and encourages students to receive and 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.

Presentation (visual and verbal) - 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 when relevant through appropriate visual and verbal means (including: models or mock-ups, portfolios, videos, slideshows, etc.).

Lecture - often used to introduce key knowledge to support practical work project development

Self-Directed Learning - self-directed study emphasises the importance of autonomy, reflection upon personal learning and project work within an individual and/or a collaborative environment.

Guest Speaker sessions (when relevant) – include input from visiting lecturers/guests from industry and academic staff enabling students access to, and understanding of, relevant contemporary practice, research and commercial context. Talks arranged at the School of Innovation and Technology are often open to all students regardless of year group or programme.

This course is supported by a virtual learning environment tool (Canvas) 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
40	400

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Students are supported in their learning through a range of formative assessment activities that enable students to reflect on their learning as they progress through the course. This includes:

- Regular feedback from tutors through engagement in individual and group tutorials, reviews and presentations
- Class discussion and peer input

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

Summative assessment is designed to support students to reflect upon their learning on completion of a course. It provides an evaluation of progress made and the level of achievement identifiable in the work submitted.

Following an assessment presentation, students will submit a body of work for assessment. Grades will be awarded using the GSA marking scheme following/adhering to the assessment regulations in the Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Annotated portfolio: Students are required to submit an annotated portfolio of work (2D & 3D) that responds to a given project and that includes the prescribed deliverables	100%	Week 12

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	N/A

Reading and On-line Resources

An on-line resource list will be provided to students at the start of the course. This will be reviewed annually to remain relevant and current for the course and subject specialism. An indicative list of resources is accessible via [Resource Lists](#).