

**Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Exploring Design Identities**



Credit: Emma Defty 2021

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
		2026-27

Course Title	Exploring Design Identities
Course Contact	Janet Kelly

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

Associated Programmes	BDes Product Design
Lead School	School of Innovation and Technology
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2024

Course Introduction

This course focuses on broadening the students understanding of the landscape of design and what constitutes design practice, encouraging students to develop their own distinct design voice. It asks students to combine research driven approaches with creative experimentation, and challenge what design practice can be. The course will focus on giving students an opportunity to frame their own project brief, as well as defining the process approach and the design methods and tools they will apply.

Course Aims

This course provides students with the opportunity to:

- Reinforce methods and approaches previously applied and to experiment with new approaches.
- Encourage the development of distinct individual approaches to design practice.
- Enable students to explore an area of design practice that is of interest to them.
- Develop the capacity to select appropriate design methods and tools
- Plan and manage a design project from conception to conclusion.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Apply appropriate research methods in response to a specific context and practice.
- Apply divergent thinking and iterative processes in the development of a design proposal.
- Identify and apply appropriate design practice methods in the development of a design proposal.
- Materialise a design proposal which responds appropriately to your specific context and practice.
- Demonstrate reflection in the communication of your design process and practice.

Indicative Content

This course covers the following content:

- Design research methods
- Graphic design/visual communication techniques
- Modelmaking and prototyping techniques
- Project management
- Professional Practice talks

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.).

Workshops - are practice-based sessions aimed at supporting students to develop key skills for project development.

Lectures - 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](#).