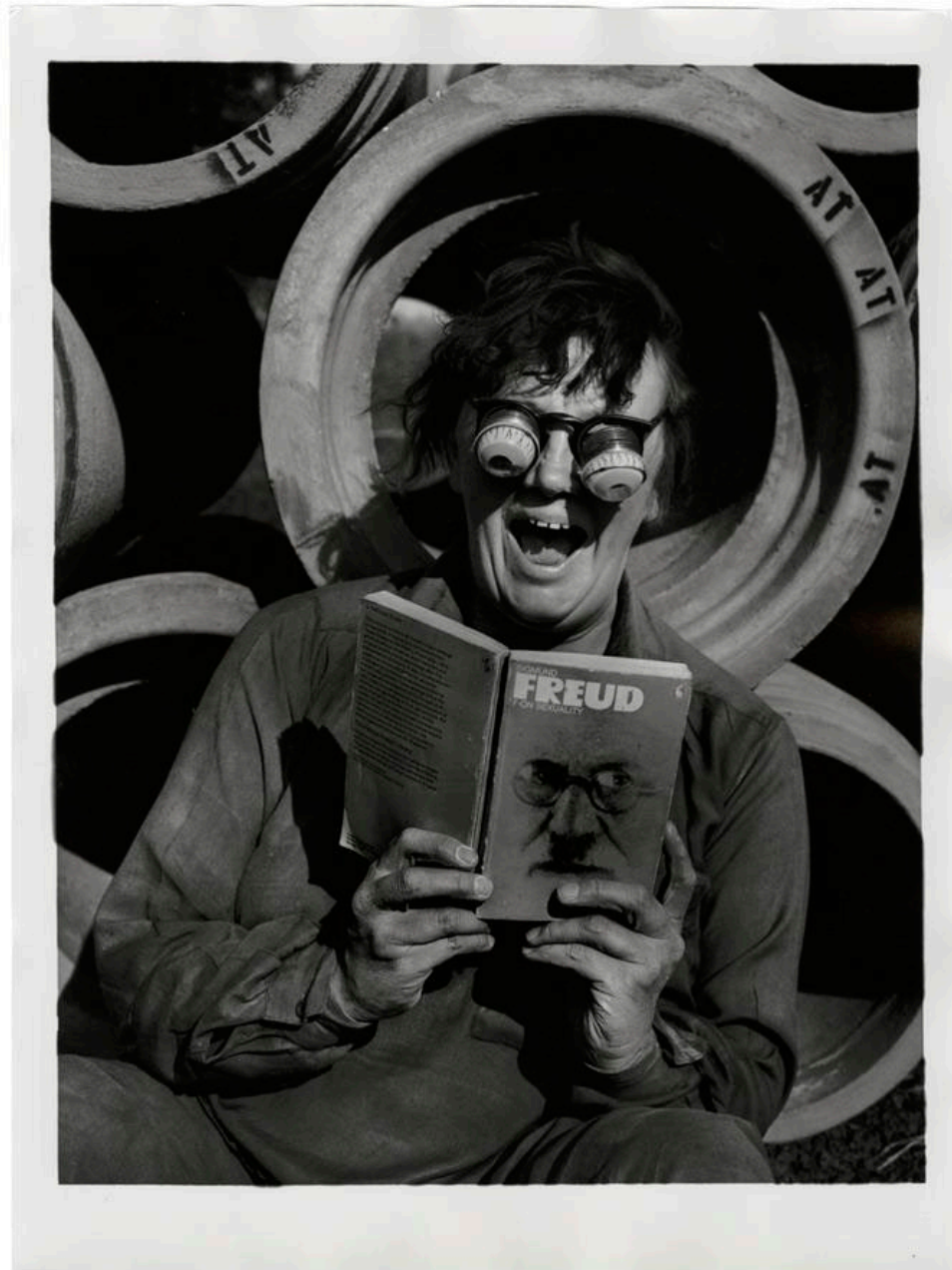


**Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
FACS1: Critical Thinking for Artistic Practices**



Jo Spence, *Remodelling Photo History* (1982)

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
UFACS		2026-27

Course Title	Critical Thinking for Artistic Practices
Course Contact	Margaret Salmon

Credits	20
SCQF Level	7
When Taught	Stage 1, Semester 2

Associated Programmes	BA (Hons) Fine Art
Lead School	School of Fine Art
Other Schools	
Date of Approval	Programme Approval March 2024

Course Introduction

This course is a gateway to four years of critical study, thinking and making in The School of Fine Art. You will be supported to articulate what critical thinking and making was, is and can be. It introduces you to ways to contextualise questions about who you think you are, what are you making in art school, what experiences and ideas influence what you do, how you think and what you see.

The course will support you to recognise how information is processed through cognitive bias, in other words, filtered through personal experiences that are impacted by cultural ideas, values, and beliefs. It provides you with the skills to examine information and make an informed assessments based on critical analysis.

By introducing critical terms and discourses from Art Histories and Critical Theory the course supports you to develop critical thinking and writing practices. It demonstrates how thinking, writing, and art-making processes are shaped by external dynamics and personal histories including gender, social class, biography, and ethnicity. By examining these critical contexts, you will develop an awareness of how our understandings and perspectives are shaped and reshaped by them.

You will be introduced to critical tools for challenging and testing ideas and information, which may even include challenging perspectives and assumptions that have been relied on. Through close reading, seminars, lectures, and other activities you will be encouraged to apply critical thinking to what you have read, heard, seen, and made. By researching, reflecting, and writing you can apply your critical thinking, which involves examining information and assessing it to form and present your own informed views clearly.

Course Aims

This course aims to:

1. Introduce terms that situate art at the intersection of social, political, economic and experiential conditions

2. Develop the ability to consider how meaning is made through critical theories and artistic practices, and across contexts
3. Cultivate intellectual curiosity by engaging with ways to make connections between critical studies, art theories and artistic practices
4. Enable the selecting and integration of credible sources to effectively qualify and communicate the ideas presented, attributing the information ethically
5. Support the development of written, verbal and visual communication skills towards editing and presenting written work

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate informed knowledge and understanding of critical terms for exploring the complexities of meaning-making in art
2. Analyse selected critical terms that show how cultural meanings are generated, exchanged and in constant flux
3. Communicate a core understanding of how cultures, art histories and artistic practices are shaped
4. Use a range of academic and creative sources to develop and support the argument, paying attention to any ethical considerations that underpin them
5. Present a written argument to accepted academic standards that attributes the perspectives sources conveyed

Indicative Content

The course will introduce you to:

1. Theories and critical concepts relevant for exploring art and culture
2. Critical reading skills, including identifying the layers of meaning in texts, to determine the ways of thinking around art theory and practice
3. Historical and contemporary contexts, cultures and conditions from which art theory and practice emerges
4. Approaches to thinking about and conveying research in structured ways
5. Sustainable skills for developing critical thinking and writing

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

This course uses a range of learning and teaching methods to inspire ideas central to creative criticality and artistic practice. Differing points of entry into the material being delivered is encouraged through the individual approaches introduced by the FACS teaching staff. This supports you to learn actively and engage in an explorative and individual approach to learning.

You will engage in small and large groups as well as lecturer-supported self-directed study through:

- Lectures – employing a range of pedagogical techniques
- Seminars – these sessions take various forms including collective close-reading, artists film screenings, discussions, student-led provocations and/or presentations
- Field Research – conducted in small groups alongside a tutor (
- Essay Clinics – academic feedback on your writing led by the lecturer but facilitated through group sharing and reflection

- Group Feedback session - guides you on how best to improve and build upon their work to date through verbal feedback from lecturer and peers
- Drop-in Hour – Year Leader is available for one-on-one questions and discussion at this time

Digital resources and online workshops are signposted on Canvas to support student independent learning, engagement with the curriculum and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
20	200

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

You will be supported in your learning through a range of activities with staff and peers, such as workshops, reviews and tutorials offering ongoing formative feedback as you progress through the course. You will have the opportunity to present an essay plan for formative feedback to support developing and refining your written work towards submission for summative assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

The Summative Assessment brief is available on Canvas and provides guidelines for the Summative Assessment, which is a critical reflection and evaluation of one of the critical terms addressed in the course. (word count: 1,500 words). Summative Assessment is designed to support you to reflect on and communicate work produced in response to the assessment brief and learning and teaching activities associated with the course. Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment, which outlines reassessment opportunities where a student has not passed the course.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Essay: Critical reflection and evaluation of one of the critical terms addressed in the course (word count: 1,500words)	100	Week 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	

Reading and On-line Resources

The course indicative reading and online resources lists are accessible via [Resource Lists](#). The list is reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.