

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Practice as Research



Image: Kate Timney, *News About Clouds*, video research exposition, 2022

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
PCXS101		2026-27

Course Title	Practice as Research
Course Contact	Dr Jane Topping

Credits	20
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Stage 1, Semester 1

Associated Programmes	MLitt Art Writing, Master of Fine Art (MFA), MLitt Contemporary Art Practice, MLitt Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art),
Lead School	Fine Art
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	PACAAG August 2025

Course Introduction

'Practice as Research' enables students to understand and articulate how their practice can be a process of investigation shared with others. Engaging with debates concerning the relationship of practice and research, the course introduces methods by which knowledge and insight can be gained and shared from the interaction of artistic practice with the world. The course also outlines ways in which knowledge and understand are socially and politically constructed and ways in which artistic practice can decentre and decolonise established canons and orthodoxies. A key objective is to promote innovative, experimental, and ambitious work that relates to academic study and creative practice at the forefront of the field of contemporary art and related disciplines.

Course Aims

The course aims to:

- Introduce new ways of thinking about artistic practice as enquiry through engagement with a range of different research methods.
- Enable you to design and plan development of your research project or practice grounded in appropriate research methods relevant.
- Develop critical analysis and evaluation of appropriate research methods and methodologies.
- Support your rigorous understanding and application of ethics as relevant to your research and practice.
- Enable to the development of in-depth understanding and knowledge of how to undertake research within independent arts practice and study

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon full participation in and successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Critically evaluate and apply various research methods appropriate to contemporary art practice, demonstrating originality in using enquiry-based approaches.
- Design and plan a practice-led artistic research project, showing self-direction in identifying, selecting, and justifying appropriate methodological approaches.
- Understand the potential relevance and impact of practice-led artistic research to wider social, cultural, and other fields and audiences as relevant.
- Apply ethical principles with rigour and insight, evidencing awareness of professional, social, and cultural responsibilities within contemporary art research and practice.

Indicative Content

Lectures introduce core research strategies, present a range of research methods and methodologies, and explore key themes and debates surrounding Artistic Research. Students are encouraged to critically engage with these concerns as they begin to develop appropriate methods and methodologies for their own research project / object / practice. The second half of the course introduces group and one-to-one sessions where students test their methodologies for practice and gain critical feedback from staff and peers.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

Lectures, case studies and group work facilitate critical reflection on the relationships between forms of research and modes of practice to support a robust and innovative applications of existing methods. The course delivers to all SoFA PGT programmes and offers opportunities for cross-programme engagement and activity. A series of core lectures is followed by student-led presentations and group tutorial support.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
20	200

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Students present and receive feedback on their research proposal in development to a group of peers and staff at the mid-point of the course.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

The Summative assessment requirements for this course are:

Stage 2 Research-Proposal

You will develop a proposal for research and practice for Stage 2 responding to structured learning through a series of lectures, seminars and workshops. It will enable you to contextualise and evaluate their developing practice and enquiry. The proposal will strengthen the relationship between learning during the Research methods and Methodologies in Practice and course and your core disciplinary programme. You will be provided clear guidance on how to develop and complete the proposal through an assessment brief shared at the beginning of the course.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Research Proposal (3,500 words)	100%	Week 12 (Stage 1 Semester 1)

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?	N/A
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 resource list is accessible via Resource Lists . This list will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.