

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification

Course Title: MLitt Contemporary Art Practice Studio Core One: Investigation



Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
PLIT102	100059	2026-27

Course Title	Studio Core One: Investigation
Course Contact	Mick McGraw

Credits	40
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Stage 1

Associated Programmes	Master of Letters (MLitt) in Contemporary Art Practice
Lead School	School of Fine Art
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval February 2025

Course Introduction

The *Studio Core One: Investigation* unit takes place over the first 15-week semester of the programme.

The curriculum for this course has several key objectives: to establish a community of practice; to initiate discussions within the pathways; to foster a dynamic and productive studio culture; and to identify the questions you will investigate individually and/or collectively throughout the MLitt Contemporary Art Practice Programme.

The initial weeks of the course are designed to orient you to the programme, the School of Fine Art, the GSA, and the city of Glasgow. This introduction will enable you to maximise the opportunities available to you during your time on the programme. A significant focus of this phase is to build a community of practice with your peers. As part of your application, you will have identified which of the two pathways aligns with your practice. You will share your ideas and work with others in your pathway, engaging in constructive, critical dialogue to develop a supportive network of artists that will aid your practice during the programme and beyond. To help establish this community, a series of external visits will provide insights into the context of contemporary art in Glasgow and Scotland.

The MLitt Contemporary Art Practice Programme brings together artists from a diverse range of cultures, experiences, and educational backgrounds. While some may have recently completed undergraduate study, others may have followed different routes to application. This diversity enriches the community, fostering a unique mix of perspectives, opinions, ideas, and approaches to art-making that evolve throughout the programme.

This course runs alongside the 20-credit *Practice as Research* course, which supports your developing awareness of the role of research in, around, and through your practice. Together, the two courses help to establish your practice and research within the programme and provide you with the momentum and confidence to develop into the second semester and beyond.

Course Aims

The course aims to:

- Develop your ability to formulate and express critical positions through a variety of appropriate forms.

Introduce the principles and rationale for re-evaluating your previous work and encourage you to critically review and evaluate your practice.

- Introduce you to fundamental principles of, and the rationale for, research in relation to your studio practice.
 - Introduce you to the variety and complexity of strategies used in communicating and engaging Contemporary Art audiences.
- Support you to build critically engaged communities of practice on the programme.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Articulate and evaluate how your artistic practice engages with societal challenges, proposing strategies to integrate these considerations meaningfully into your work.
- Develop and refine a body of work that extends the potential of your practice by employing experimental methods and critically reflecting on the skills and techniques required.
- Utilise relevant research methodologies that critically integrates multiple dimensions of your artistic learning and inquiry.
- Communicate your ideas, concepts, and approaches effectively to establish and contribute to a critically supportive artistic community, laying the foundation for professional collaboration.

Indicative Content

Early in the course, you will organise an experimental exhibition of new work to introduce your practice and ideas to your peers. This exhibition will also spark discussions about starting points for your studio practice in relation to the kind of work you want to make while on the course.

The curriculum is structured around a series of Dialogue Sessions, held in pathway groups and facilitated by a tutor. The indicative list of themes and questions that will be covered in the dialogue sessions includes:

- 'What is a Studio?'
- 'From Studio and Situation'
- Communicating Contemporary Art
- What is an art school?
- Evidencing and extending research
- What is an exhibition?
- Writing as, and about, practice
- Collective practice and collaboration

A core value of the programme is independence. The tutor-led sessions, including the dialogue sessions, will support you to confidently articulate your ideas and describe your interests and working practices to your peers. This is intended to support you to gain confidence in your practice and to develop independently, whilst also acknowledging the importance of being part of a creative learning community.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

Dialogue Sessions, Group and 1:1 tutorials:

You will be assigned a tutor for this course. Your tutor will lead the Dialogue Sessions. In addition, there will be a timetable of 1:1 and group tutorials designed to address your learning needs and requirements, the context of your work, practical skills, theoretical enquiry, or any other topic you wish to investigate.

Collective practice and collaboration will be encouraged and supported through the dialogue you build within the Dialogue Sessions. In addition, you will work together to mount displays and exhibitions in the studio spaces, building strong relationships with your peers.

Practical Consultancies and Workshops

Group Practical Consultancies are sessions designed to support you to identify the practical needs for realising your work. These sessions will enable you to discuss the practical ambitions for your work. In addition, workshop inductions will enable you to access and navigate the technical facilities that you will draw on to develop your practices. Key Skills sessions, which include presentation skills, IT, and audio-visual skills will also be a feature of this course's timetable to prepare you for the presentations that you will make during formative and summative assessments.

Friday Events:

The cross-school Friday events are a significant component of the curriculum for all School of Fine Art students. Friday Events feature lectures and discussions from a range of high-profile visiting artists, writers and curators. They take place throughout semesters one and two.

Studio Practice

The timetabled group and one-to-one sessions, Dialogue Sessions and group tutorials will help to inform your approach in the independent study time. The studios and workshops are facilities that you are expected to make full use of to develop your learning and extend your practice. Independent study in the studios, workshops or library facilities is an essential component of your experience on the Contemporary Art Practice programme.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
40	400

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Formative assessment takes place at the midway point of the course. It is an opportunity to assess your progress on the course, identifying areas that may require action or further development. You will present your work so far to your peers and tutors and receive verbal feedback on your progress. You will also complete a Formative Assessment form, which will ask you to identify where and how effectively your work is meeting the course Intended Learning Outcomes. Based on this critical reflection, following discussion with your tutor, you will identify a set of actions that will help you develop your work so that you can more effectively provide evidence of having met the learning outcomes. The Formative Assessment form will be signed off by your tutor acknowledging the actions set for the remainder of the course.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

Summative assessment is an opportunity to provide evidence that you have met all the learning outcomes for the course through the submission of the following assessment methods:

- A verbal presentation to your peers in which you identify how your work addresses the material and conceptual concerns of your pathway.
- A self-evaluation form in which you reflect on the work you have made and how it relates to the practice of others within and/or beyond Contemporary Art.
- A body of work presented in the studio.

The work you submit will be assessed holistically against the course Intended Learning Outcomes. As such, each assessment method should be seen as an opportunity to demonstrate how effectively you have met the course Intended Learning Outcomes. You will receive verbal and written feedback accompanied with a single overall grade for the course.

Reassessment opportunities, where a student has not passed the course, are outlined in the Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight%	Submission week
A verbal presentation to your peers in which you identify how your work addresses the material and conceptual concerns of your pathway.	100% - The work you submit will be assessed holistically against the course Intended Learning Outcomes.	Week 12
A self-evaluation form in which you reflect on the work you have made and how it relates to the practice of others within and/or beyond Contemporary Art.		Week 12
A body of work presented in the studio.		week 13

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 resource list is accessible via [Resource Lists](#). This list will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.