

**Glasgow School of Art Course Specification**

**Course Title: *Theorising Studio Practice***



Image courtesy of Monya Riachi

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 Academic Year.

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
PMFA304	100059	2026-27

Course Title	Theorising Studio Practice
Course Contact	Margaret Salmon

Credits	40
SCQF Level	11
When Taught	Stage 3, Semester 1 & 2

Associated Programmes	N/A
Lead School	School of Fine Art
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	PACAAG April 2026

#### Course Introduction

This course enables you to address the ideas and research interests which underpin your creative practice, and to consider these in relation to historical and theoretical discourse and contemporary contextual debates. Integral to the development of creative practice at this point is initiating a research project that will enable you to theoretically underpin your creative practice within a contemporary context, hence the title *Theorising Studio Practice*. The course introduces ways in which you can apply critical and theoretical research methods in and through practice to drive the development and contextualisation of your work, enabling you to produce a significant body of research. This research is evidenced through an 8,000 to 10,000 word written thesis or equivalent negotiated research project of corresponding complexity, depth and rigour equivalent to 40 credits. A negotiated research project will be agreed upon by your supervisor and Theorising Studio Practice Lead following a project proposal outlining how it will fulfil the course ILO's.

#### Course Aims

The course aims to:

- Encourage in-depth engagement with historical and theoretical discourse and context as part of a critically informed dialogue between research and creative practice.
- Enable you to acquire and apply enhanced critical, analytical, reflective and evaluative skills to a body of research.
- Facilitate the planning, development and execution of a critically informed substantial thesis.
- Support enhanced communication skills and build confidence in the presentation and sharing of ideas with peers.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Evidence in-depth engagement with historical and theoretical discourse and context as part of a critically informed dialogue between research and creative practice.
- Apply and synthesise critical, analytical, reflective and evaluative skills through a body of research articulating a critical position in relation to a subject or discourse, observing appropriate academic and research protocols.
- Plan, develop and execute a critically informed thesis by engaging with and articulating relationships between various perspectives relevant to your chosen critical debate and practice.
- Communicate effectively through enhanced presentation skills and the sharing of ideas with peers.

### Indicative Content

This course will enable you to further reflect upon and deepen your knowledge and understanding of a specific topic or field of investigation and conduct a sustained period of research on, and relevant to, your creative practice. This research will culminate in a written submission, or equivalent negotiated research project, on a chosen topic and critical discourse emerging from your creative practice. The research and development of this submission is supported by tutorials with an assigned supervisor. You will discuss and consider the various forms this research can take, such as a written thesis, film, graphic novel, script, collection of short stories or podcast, for instance. Through individual and group tutorials you will further explore and examine your research, informing creative practice and deepening your understanding of the theoretical foundations and context of your work.

### Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

A range of learning and teaching methods are used to support you to engage in an explorative and individual approach to the development of your learning. Individual and group tutorial support with your designated supervisor is central, and you will also share your research with peers in student-led presentations.

These include:

- Briefing
- Individual and group tutorials
- Student-led presentations
- Workshop sessions offered by the GSA Library

Independent learning skills will be developed and supported through workshops and digital online learning resources available on Canvas and GSA Library.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
40	400

### Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods

Throughout this course you will be given ongoing tutor and peer feedback to help you develop your research and writing. You will actively participate in this process of feedback through discussions with your tutor and peers, regular self-reflection and critical evaluation to encourage increasing self-direction.

You are supported in your learning through a range of activities with staff and peers, such as tutorials and presentations, which offer ongoing feedback as you progress through this course.

Formative assessment takes place at the mid-point of this two Semester course. For formative assessment you will submit a first draft of your thesis and receive verbal feedback through a tutorial with your supervisor. Taking notes during your feedback meeting is encouraged in order to aid your reflection on progress and plan your approach toward completing your research in the second half of the course.

### Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

In preparation for your Summative Assessment you should reflect upon feedback from formative assessment and tutorials in finalising your approach to submitting work at the end of the course. Guidance for summative assessment is designed to support you to review, collate, present and communicate your research in response to learning and teaching activities associated with the course.

In this course, you will submit an 8,000 to 10,000-word thesis or equivalent negotiated research project. The submission will be uploaded to Canvas alongside a Critical Self-Evaluation that reflects upon and evaluates the work submitted, it requires you to identify both strengths and weaknesses from your own perspective. These elements will be assessed holistically as a single submission accounting for 100% of the assessment.

Summative Assessment takes place in Week 2, Semester 2 and will allow for full integration of your thesis research into your final studio work in the lead up to your final studio assessment.

Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Thesis (8,000 to 10,000-words) or equivalent negotiated research project plus a critical self-evaluation	100%	Week 2 (Stage 3 Semester 2)

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**

**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.