

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Decolonising Strategies in the Arts

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:
PELC269	TBC	2026-27

1. Course Title:
Decolonising Strategies in the Arts

2. Date of Approval:	3. Lead School:	4. Other Schools:
PACAAG August 2022	School of Fine Art	This course is available to students on PGT programmes which include a Stage 2 elective.

5. Credits:	6. SCQF Level:	7. Course Leader:
20	11	TBC

8. Associated Programmes:
This course is available to students on PGT programmes which include a Stage 2 elective.

9. When Taught:
Stage 2

10. Course Aims:
The overarching aims of the stage 2 electives are as follows: • Encourage interdisciplinary, critical reflexivity from within an open set of choices; • Foster deep investigative approaches to new or unfamiliar areas of practice and theory; • Cultivate self-directed leadership and initiative-taking in both applied and abstract modes of practice/ study not necessarily associated with a student's particular creative specialism; • Enable flexible, ethical exploration and connection of diverse knowledge and understanding within a specialist programme of study. The course aims to: • Outline a series of philosophical and artistic examples that convey principals of decolonisation and their urgency within contemporary thinking, making, storying and archiving. • Discuss and explore intersectional approaches to positionality. • Reflect on the use of a range of media to communicate critical positions and knowledge concerning decolonisation.

- Discuss how to forge intersectional solidarities that centre and empower historically or presently colonised and disempowered communities, as opposed to silencing them in the pursuit of extracting commodifiable knowledge.

11. Intended Learning Outcomes of Course:

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

- Exemplify an understanding of current debates on decolonial, anti-colonial and antiracist practices and theories
- Demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical frameworks, concepts and issues of decolonisation in the context of the creative disciplines.
- Evaluate complex ethical issues and make informed judgements on issues addressed within a range of interdisciplinary creative practices relating to the student's own discipline.
- Assess the importance of addressing issues of positionality and ethics in their research.

12. Indicative Content:

Postcolonial studies can be defined as the critical analysis of the history, culture, literature and discourse of imperial power (though definitions differ). It counters the colonial self-ascribed ideology of 'an extension of civilisation' that claims the racial and cultural superiority of the Western world over the non-Western world. Postcolonial theories critique the means by which the coloniser is constantly re-empowered through the subjugation of some racial groups and the extraction of any 'resource' within colonised territories. This course will introduce you to a range of contemporary debates on decolonial, anti-colonial, postcolonial and anti-racist theories, practices and strategies as they intersect with the arts. It will be run as a series of close readings, writings, viewings (of relevant artworks and films) alongside discussion. In accordance with its subject area, these sessions will be run as though within an experimental lab, with all voices encouraged to contribute with equal weight. The course aims to provide students with a basis for informed experimentation in relation to their own research practices and integrates theory with practice throughout.

As it is central to all decolonial and postcolonial debates, a focus will first be placed on positionality (i.e. who is empowered to speak and from within what context, in order to scrutinise structures of power and means to challenge them. Amongst perspectives explored will be Kimberle Crenshaw's concept of 'intersectionality' (the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender and sexual orientation as they apply to a given individual or group); Christina Sharpe's unique approach to the writing of trauma in the aftermath of slavery (*In the Wake*) and Fred Moten & Stefano Harney's social poesis of life in *'The Undercommons'*. Methods sourced from Afrofuturisms (Octavia E. Butler, Ellen Gallagher), Saidiya Hartman's concept of 'critical fabulation' and Tuck and Yang's 'research of refusal' will also be discussed alongside Gayatri Spivak's idea of 'subaltern'.

Postcolonial feminism, decolonial Ecology and anti-colonial approaches to protest will feature throughout the course in a broad, but focused exploration of reparative, resilient and resistant practices and concepts. Students will be encouraged to embed a critical perspective within their working methods that acknowledges these debates on decolonisation. Whether building imaginaries, forming resistant pathways or creating structural frameworks towards new forms of positioning, worlding and being, decolonial debates and challenges will inform and reform students' methods of thinking and making. On successful completion of the course, students will

benefit from the development of a critical framework that addresses the ethical repercussions of making work in a world where colonialism continues to exert its influence and where redress and an urgency for action and change remains a prominent issue.

13. Description of Summative Assessment Methods:

Assessment Method	Description of Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week (assignments)
1. Essay	A 3500 word written essay or creative writing (this should include visual material where appropriate, as well as a bibliography)	100	End of Stage 2, Week 11
OR			
2. Portfolio	An annotated portfolio of practice-based material, including a 1000 word contextualising statement	100	End of Stage 2, Week 11

13.1 Please describe the Summative Assessment arrangements:

Assessment takes place at the end of Stage 2. For this course, assessment of student work will consist of either:

- A 3500 word essay or creative writing, correctly presented and referenced, relating to a topic pertaining to the course. Students intending to write an essay should have the topic approved in advance by the course tutor. The text may include such aspects as outlining the student's motivations, theoretical perspective, findings as appropriate, as well as a critical reflection on the value and outcome of the research.
- A portfolio of creative practice relating to a topic pertaining to the course, which must be agreed in advance by the course tutor. Creative submissions should be accompanied by a 1000 word contextualising statement, outlining the student's motivations, theoretical perspective, findings as appropriate, as well as a critical reflection on the value and outcome of the creative practice.

14. Description of Formative Assessment Methods:

Formative appraisal will take place in week 5.

Engagement with formative assessment is a mandatory requirement.

14.1 Please describe the Formative Assessment arrangements:

The student led presentations (week 5) will enable you to present and discuss your ideas in preparation for final assessment. This is an opportunity to gain formative feedback from your tutor and your peers.

15. Learning and Teaching Methods:

Formal Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
20	200
15.1 Description of Teaching and Learning Methods:	
This course consists of ten two hour seminars, one session per week (over 10 weeks), delivered in Stage 2. This course is led by a specialist tutor and includes formal presentation, reading directed extracts from primary and secondary texts, student led seminar presentations and group discussion, independent learning, one to one tutorial support, library research/ resources.	
Timetable: TBC	
2 hours weekly for 10 weeks, taught on Wednesdays or Fridays.	

16. Pre-requisites:
Successful completion of Stage 1

17. Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	Yes
18. Are all the students on the course taught wholly by distance learning?	No
19. Does this course represent a work placement or a year of study abroad?	No
20. Is this course collaborative with any other institutions?	No
20.1 If yes, then please enter the names of the other teaching institutions:	

21. Additional Relevant Information:
N/A

22. Indicative Bibliography:
• Key Texts/ directed extracts from: • Archibald, Jo-Ann (EDT); Lee-morgan, Jenny Bol Jun (EDT); De Santolo, Jason (EDT); Smith, Linda Tuhiwai (FRW) (2019) Decolonizing Research : Indigenous Storywork As Methodology • Butler, Octavia (1979) Kindred • Crenshaw, Kimberle (2022) On Intersectionality: Essential Writings • Hartman, Saidya (2019) Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women and Queer Radicals • Fanon, Frantz (1961) The Wretched of the Earth • Frieze, Decolonial: Documents (https://www.frieze.com/tags/decolonial-documents) • Mignola, Walter D. & Catherine Walsh (2018) On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis • Harvey, Stefano; Moten, Fred (2013) The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study • hooks, bell (1999) All About Love • Oluo, Ijeoma (2019) So You Want To Talk About Race? • Sharpe, Christina (2016) In the Wake: On Blackness and being • Smith, Linda; Tuck, Eve; Yang, K. Wayne; (2019) Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View • Spivak, Gayatri, (1990) <i>The Post-Colonial Critic</i>

- Yusoff, Kathryn (2018) A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None