

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Course Title: Introduction to Graphic Design

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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
	100061	2026/27

Course Title	Introduction to Graphic Design
Course Contact	Gordon Webb, Head of Continuing Education

Credits	10
SCQF Level	7
When Taught	Open Studio programmes throughout the year.

Associated Programmes	None
Lead School	School of Design
Other Schools	None
Date of Approval	PACAAG August 2026

Course Introduction

This is a 10-credit, level 7 course that introduces the basic concepts and techniques of Graphic Design.

This course introduces students to the theories, strategies, context and hands-on craft of graphic design and visual communication. Students will create a portfolio of work in response to short exercises and design briefs, and will be encouraged to develop ideas and document their process in a sketchbook or research journal. A range of traditional and digital media will be introduced in order to develop fundamental making skills and students will be encouraged to use experimental methods and materials.

Course Aims

The aims of this course are to:

- Understand and use design terminology.
- Develop ability to understand and fulfil a design brief.
- Develop understanding of the critical and practical processes employed in graphic design.
- Develop awareness of the historical and contemporary practices associated with graphic design and the manner in which it has evolved.
- Create a body of work across several projects to an appropriate standard that will demonstrate that the above aims have been achieved.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Use developmental processes like sketchbooks, research and experiments to enhance final design outcomes.
- Apply a range of practical skills and techniques in their projects.
- Understand how design history, contemporary issues and critical contexts influence design outcomes.
- Interpret and appropriately respond to a design brief.
- Present and evaluate a project, using design terminology.

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Indicative Content

Topics include but are not limited to: design history, pattern, colour, illustration, typography, composition, symbols and book media. Students are encouraged to draw upon and relate the course content to their own personal and academic interests. Over the course students' progress will be supported by the course tutor. Teaching will include demonstrations, presentations, museum and gallery visits, one to one tuition, group discussions and critiques.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

Students will work collaboratively in small group and receive one-to-one tuition within the studio. Group crits allow students the opportunity to assess their own work in relation to their peers. Students start to develop their sketchbook practice outside the timetabled class.

Indicative Contact Hours**33****Notional Learning Hours****100****Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods**

Engagement with formative assessment is a mandatory requirement. Formative assessment occurs during regular contact with the tutor, including informal tutorials and discussion within the studio. Throughout the course students are supported in assessing their developing work and encouraged to make adjustments where necessary. Although it takes place in every class with individual critiques, over time they are able to evaluate their work in progress and learn to modify its development.

Feedback is provided via on-to-one tutorials enabling students to note feedback and critique remarks.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements

The course will be internally assessed by studio work. Finalised collection of work and completed self-evaluation form will be assessed by the tutor and another member of staff and an assessment checklist will be completed. Submitted work will be assessed and moderated in accordance with the GSA Code of Assessment.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Portfolio of project brief work	60%	12
Development work including sketchbooks and experiments	30%	12
Completed Self-Evaluation Form	10%	12

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
Albers, Josef. 2013. <i>Interaction of Colour</i>. Yale University Press. Calver, Amelia. 2025. <i>The V&A Sourcebook of Pattern and Ornament</i>. London: Thames & Hudson. Hauffe, Thomas. 1996. <i>Design: An Illustrated Historical Overview</i>. New York: Barron's. Lupton, Ellen. 2010. <i>Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students</i>. Princeton Architectural Press. Mendelsund, Peter. 2021. <i>Cover</i>. Powerhouse Books. Muller, Jens & Remington, Roger. 2015. <i>Logo Modernism</i>. Taschen. Pater, Ruben. 2016. <i>The Politics of Design: A (Not So) Global Design Manual for Visual Communication</i>. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.