THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Critical Studies: Ethical and Professional Issues



Image credit: Veliko Ivanov, BSc Immersive Systems Design (2022)

Please note that this 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
		2027-28

Course Title	Critical Studies: Ethical and Professional Issues
Course Contact	Dr Daniel Livingstone

Credits	10
SCQF Level	10
When Taught	Semester 2

Associated Programmes	BSc Immersive Systems Design BDes Sound
Lead School	School of Innovation and Technology
Other Schools	N/A
Date of Approval	Programme Approval October 2026

Course Introduction

This course introduces students to a range of professional and ethical issues in contemporary and historical media and digital technologies. Students will critically engage with current ethical issues and questions surrounding professional attitudes and behaviours within and beyond their discipline and chosen study pathway through readings, discussion and writing. Student engagement with the course content includes identifying, discussing and reflecting on the ethical nature of their work, their industry and the world in which they practice and develop.

Course Aims

This course aims to support students in the exploration of critical and ethical insights that will be relevant to their future professional careers and prepare students for employment/personal practice in professional creative media and technology disciplines.
Students will also engage with other professional issues around professional networking, communications and recruitment and professional portfolio development.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify and communicate their professional skills, experience and attributes to external audiences through written and visual components
- Identify, discuss and critically evaluate relevant professional, societal and ethical issues relating to creative practice in digital media, computing and immersive systems.
- Communicate to professional standards using written materials, relevant debates and practical aspects of creative practice

Indicative Content
The course discusses a range of interconnected topics to contribute to the development of criticality in students. Examples of topics related to ethical and professional issues can include: • Current ethical issues in digital media, computing and immersive systems • Ethics in Computing, Business and Creative Arts • Media, digital technologies and their uses and abuses • Data, privacy, law, hackers, user safety and security • Trademark, copyright, fair use, open source and the Creative Commons • Professional development and personal practice in creative industries • Portfolio presentation, CVs, and recruitment • Freelancing, contract work, and networking

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods
This course and its associated programmes are situated within a contemporary Art School environment and self-directed studio activities and initiatives. These have a strong component of **individual student learning** contributing to the discovery and development of self and the discipline of study. As such briefs tend to be opened to interpretation and require students to critically reflect on the nature of their creative response and individual learning. Teaching and learning includes live synchronous on-site workshops, supported by asynchronous learning activities and formative tasks. **Lectures and seminars** are used to disseminate theoretical, contextual and historical knowledge and address specific issues underpinning practical work. Lectures also have the broad aim of generating further debate in seminars, tutorials or further enquiry in self-directed learning or research. **Labs, Tutorials, Workshops, and Practical sessions** provide students with hands-on experience. These sessions usually follow or relate to lectures and take place in computer laboratories as practical classes. Lecturers/Demonstrators will be on-hand during the sessions to help students and answer their questions. Tutorials vary between individual student-tutor tutorials, group tutorials and workshops. These provide opportunities for scaffolded problem solving and discussion, and for broader discussion of the programme themes and topics. Input from **visiting lecturers and guest speakers** enable students access to, and understanding of, relevant contemporary practice, research and commercial contexts, practices and expectations. These curricular activities contribute to aid students in developing their own professional practice and prepare for employment. This course is supported by a virtual learning environment tool (Canvas) for the dissemination, discussion and access to relevant course information, and signpost to other relevant teaching and learning platforms used by GSA.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
15	100

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods
Students are supported in their learning through a range of formative assessment activities as they progress through the course. These include: • Engagement in a range of peer review activities

- Regular feedback from tutors through in-class discussion and question and answer activities
- Written or verbal feedback from tutors on work in progress
- Formal Review point halfway through the course

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements
Summative assessment aims to align with the learning outcomes of the course and is directly applicable to the student's individual and chosen pathway of study. Assessment is designed to support students to reflect upon their digital art practice, allowing them to not only demonstrate their learning through assessment, but also meaningfully apply their learning to their practice and developing their creative-practitioner identity. Summative assessment has two components as set out below: – The first summative assessment will assess the students' online public portfolio site including a public CV. – The second will assess a short academic essay (using Harvard referencing) on ethical/critical studies exploring a topic agreed with the tutor. Submissions will be assessed and moderated in line with the Code of Assessment. 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**
CV & Online Portfolio	20	Week 6
1800-2000 words essay or use-case on Professional & Ethical Issues	80	Week 10

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 on-line resource list is accessible via Resource Lists. This list will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.