Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Critical Studies in Sound for Image

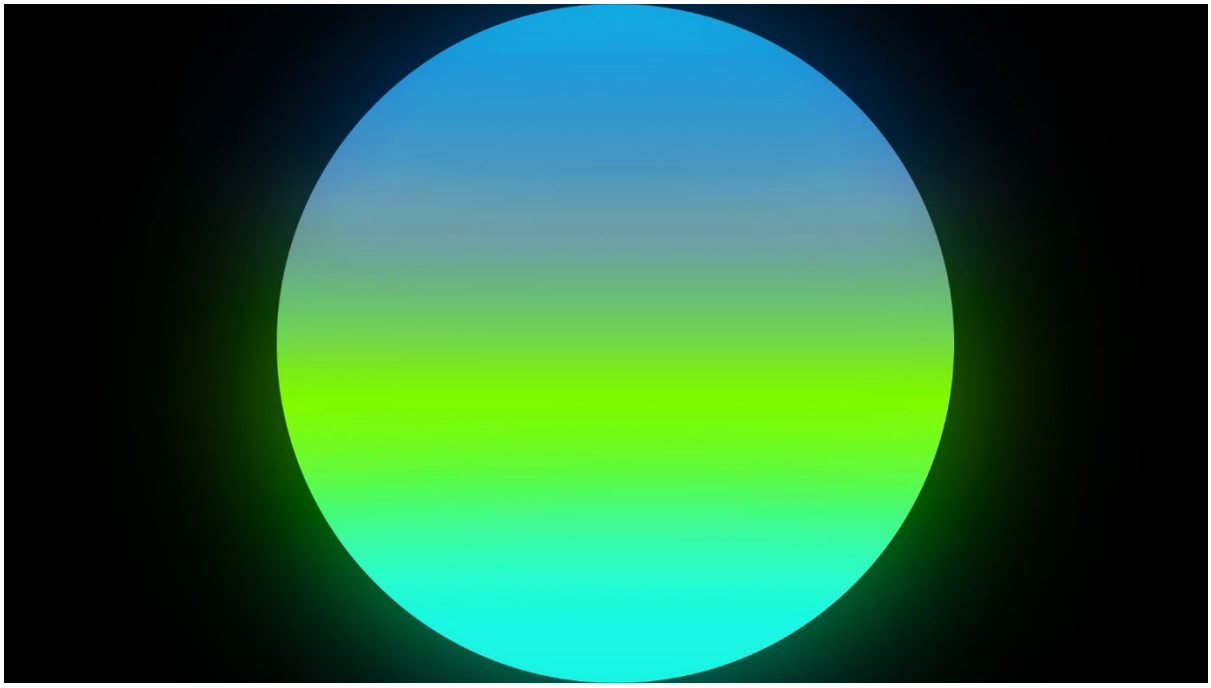


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Please note that this specification is correct on the date of publication but may be subject to amendment prior to the start of the academic year.

Course Code	HECOS Code	Academic Session
USMICRIT303		2027-28

Course Title	Critical Studies in Sound for Image
Course Contact	Dr. Jessica Argo

Credits	10
SCQF Level	9
When Taught	Stage 3, Semester 1

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

Course Introduction

This course is designed to inspire students to engage in academic and critical reading and writing research, to understand, evaluate and even react to established theories and practitioner perspectives.

This course presents a broad overview of a range of key subject areas, focusing on how world changing events, wars, revolutions, sociological movements and technological inventions shaped the forms and representations of sound and image (both in cinema, and the arts more widely) over the last century.

This bespoke sound-based critical studies offering teaches academic skills using sound, film and audio-visual culture as artefacts of the societal issues explored. Students are asked to investigate what these texts and audio-visual materials mean to the culture in which they were made, but students are also asked what they mean to themselves as practitioners – how might the students implement the techniques or theoretical positions into their own original work?

Course Aims

This course explores key themes and issues in sound and music for image in screen media, games, theatre and visual art, supporting students' growth as creative thinkers and learners. Its aims are for students to:

- Learn to conduct academic research using a range of sources and appropriate methods of academic investigation;
- As creative thinkers, learn how to apply a wide range of key terms, specialist terminology and knowledge and understanding in discussing sonic practices and key works, in group seminars and in independent project work;
- Communicate informed opinions on the cultural significance of texts and audio-visual works via critical interpretation, analysis and discussion of these texts;
- Apply analytical skills to present informed and structured arguments, ideas and information verbally, visually and in written form.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Demonstrate critical understanding of key theories and concepts related to sound and image.
- Conduct research using a range of sources and defined methods of academic enquiry.
- Analyse and discuss the cultural significance and impact of sound and image on a range of audiences

Indicative Content

This course will provide an insight into how sound and audio-visual practices are shaped by societal changes, providing an overview of historical and cultural contexts in which current audio-visual practices have emerged.

In this course, students will be introduced to key historical movements, societal changes and technological developments, which shape the way sounds are mediated and perceived by an audience or a population. Students will begin to understand both historical and contemporary contexts, as they make links between the world events, cultural movements, aesthetic styles and their impact on practical conventions in film sound, sonic art, immersive game sound and the changing nature of sounds experienced in everyday social spheres.

Students will learn about sound and audio-visual work through examples and texts summarising important themes and modes of analysis.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

This course is delivered using a flipped classroom learning model, supported by a series of questions to provoke class discussions and presentations.

Self-directed learning is key to this course and is supported by pre-recorded lecture videos, pre-reading or writing of short critical responses to texts.

Developments in theory and practice are also introduced to students through seminars, followed by group work.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
14	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
- Feedback from tutors on work in progress

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements
The assignment in this course is written submission (1800 words, not including references) in the form of an annotated bibliography/source review drawing together audiovisual sources and written works and evaluating their cultural impact. Where appropriate to its brief an essay may be defined as any form of text-rich submission (e.g. annotated timeline, catalogue entry, annotated visual essay, verbal presentation script). 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
Written submission (1800 words or equivalent)	100%	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.