Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Research Project

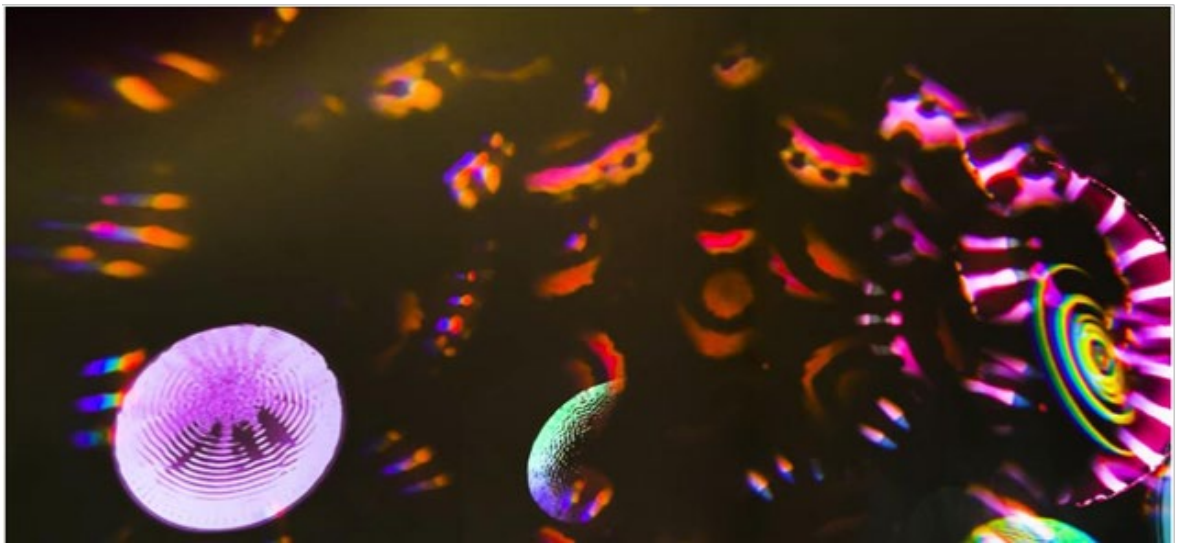


Image credit: Alexandra Bell (2023) The Wave is not the Water II (BDes Sound for Moving Image 2024)

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	Research Project
Course Contact	Dr Jessica Argo

Credits	40
SCQF Level	10
When Taught	Stage 4, Semester 1 & 2

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

Course Introduction

In this course, students will develop a substantive self-determined individual research project by engaging with a subject matter related to their chosen field in sound or audio-visual practice, through conducting practice-led research. This is a year-long course where students develop a research and practice plan with dedicated supervisors towards in-depth exploration of a relevant and domain specific topic through practical development and practice.

Course Aims

The aim of the course is to allow students to undertake a substantial piece of individual research work relevant to their chosen creative field of sound or audio-visual practice encountered on their programme. The course aims to encourage students to engage actively with source materials, literature, and practices according to individual research interests and specific contemporary context. This will further develop the students' disciplinary discourse aligned with their chosen field.

By guiding students through a self-determined practice-based research project, the course aims to further develop the students' confidence and criticality over self-driven work and advance their domain-based skills and knowledge.

The research project is the student's deepest work on the programme, allowing them to more fully explore their creative practice in a chosen specialist area, demonstrating their creative learning and communication skills across research, development, implementation, documentation and presentation.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

- Plan and develop a substantial piece of critical and creative research work relevant to their practice.
- Apply and justify appropriate research methods according to individual research interests and thematic contexts.
- Apply the core principles of critical academic writing and verbal presentation

- Present and/or discuss specialist information to diverse audience using appropriate media
- Critically apply the core theories, concepts and programme-specific practices on a substantial piece of creative work

Indicative Content

Students will be conducting and managing their individual projects of research under the guidance of their supervisors and with the support of their peers: from project design and development, to gaining theoretical knowledge through diverse research methods.

Students can choose to develop project ideas suggested by tutors or to develop their own concepts and ideas. Students will be responsible for developing and delivering the final project goals and desired outcomes, for conducting any required literature review, research activity, and related practical work and evaluation. Additionally, there will be introductory sessions to research/dissertation project process.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods

This programme is designed to gradually increase the responsibility of students for the management of their learning over the duration of the programme, with emphasis placed on developing and achieving self-reliance over the progression of the degree. Students will focus upon a chosen field or programme related theme and are expected to reflect upon personal learning (especially in this Research Project) within a collaborative environment. With a stronger emphasis in self-directed work and independent research supported through meetings with supervisors, the programme is delivered via a range of lectures, labs, tutorials, workshops, practical sessions, and guest lectures.

Teaching on the programme 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.

Input from visiting lecturers and guest speakers enable students access to, and understanding of, relevant contemporary practice, research and commercial contexts, practices and expectations. This input presents itself as curricular device to aid students in development of their own professional practice and preparation for employment.

Additional and voluntary supervised extra-curricular activities provide students with thematic technology focussed exercises where students work in groups to engage intensively in game, film, media or interactive technology development.

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.

Students will be encouraged to communicate their processes and outcomes, as presentation skills are taught in addition to the research methods and theoretical, contextual and historical knowledge workshop materials.

Indicative Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours
24	400

Description of Formative Assessment and Feedback Methods
Formative feedback is an ongoing process undertaken through reviews and tutorial sessions. Project supervisors provide regular feedback through discussion around project planning, development, reading, and through comments on drafts of the student's project dissertation. Students and supervisors to arrange a schedule of regular meetings. It is recommended that students and supervisors meet once every two to four weeks. Student/supervisor meetings may be individual or in small groups. Students record notes from supervisory meetings, to devise actions and stepping-stone-tasks to bring to the next meeting, advancing their research in a scaffolded way.

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements
Students submit a piece of practice-led research comprised by three elements: a significant practical project, a piece of academic writing and an assessed presentation. A programme specific brief will detail a standard format for all components of the submission. Alternative formats may be submitted in accordance with GSA's Code of Assessment and in agreement with the programme leader. 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. Some students may follow a scientific approach, with a relevant literature review, description of the development of the practical project and its evaluation using appropriate methods. Alternatively a more critical-theory based and discursive approach to the dissertation may be taken, with either of these approaches being detailed in a dissertation of 8-10,000 words. An alternative option is to undertake a practice-based research approach, submitting an extended practical project with a supporting essay of 4,500-5,500 words. The practical project for students undertaking this option is expected to demonstrate a more significant amount of development time and effort, with evidence of how the practice-based research approach has shaped the final outcomes. Presentations should be 5 to 10 minutes (maximum) duration.

Description of Summative Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week
Written dissertation (8,000-10,000 words), and practical project	90	Week 12 Semester 2
Presentation (5-10 minutes)	10	Week 12 Semester 2
OR		

Essay (4,500-5,500 words) and practical project	90	Week 12 Semester 2
Presentation (5-10 minutes)	10	Week 12 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
Students will identify with supervisors' relevant literature based on their research project.