Glasgow School of Art Course Specification
Studio 2: Sound in Context and Studio



Image Credit: Connor Kyle (2024). *Tokyo on Film*

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	Studio 2: Sound in Context and Studio
Course Contact	Adam Scott

Credits	40
SCQF Level	8
When Taught	Semester 2 (Week 1-12)

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

Course Introduction

Studio 2: Sound in Context and Studio explores the impact of mediating technology as a method of sound capture and reproduction, where students explore the possibilities of microphones and loudspeakers in creative practice. In this course, students work on two projects to ethically construct an archive of sounds from a chosen environment, and then edit and transform those sounds.

The first project asks students to creatively record, edit and construct a collection of sounds informed by theory on sound and community environment contexts.

The second project asks students to creatively build a sound design output, referring to theory on sound and listener experiences in a chosen spatial playback context.

Students will explore the impact of capturing and categorising sounds with careful metadata and sampling. Students will apply and evaluate various conventional and experimental microphone approaches, arranging these sounds using a diverse range of playback systems.

This course deepens students' awareness of:

- how creative microphone practices for capturing sound can shape the raw material for creative practice (even before it is edited)
- how bringing microphones into carefully considered environments/habitats can communicate stories from diverse communities, immerse a listener in a place, or document a situation – perhaps for theatre, radio, or installation art
- how spatial practices for loudspeaker playback of complex sound (cinematic/broadcast/experimental/sculptural) can construct a *world* of sound around the listener, eliciting a heightened embodied experience of your chosen sounds.

Course Aims

This course aims to equip students with the ability to:

1. Apply and evaluate technical procedures for sound and audio-visual production from capture/generation through to final output, adhering to professional standards and ethical guidelines.
2. Experiment with and analyse sound capture and playback (e.g. microphones and speakers) to develop an informed and reflective creative practice in both studio and real-world environments.
3. Design and produce sound and audio-visual work that demonstrates critical awareness of, and sensitivity to, community, environment, and context.
4. Work effectively with others demonstrating effective communication, organisation and pragmatic planning, and inclusive engagement with diverse perspectives.
5. Present and reflect critically on a portfolio of sound work, clearly explaining creative intentions and curating material to communicate meaning for diverse audiences.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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

1. Apply and evaluate a range of methods for sound recording, production and post-production in individual and collaborative workflows within sound-based creative practice.
2. Analyse and apply sensitive microphone practices to produce sound that demonstrates critical awareness of community, environment and diverse contexts.
3. Analyse and apply spatial practices for the playback of sound, evaluating how these practices shape a listener experience for specified contexts.
4. Apply professional and ethical approaches while developing audio-visual production work, showing awareness of best practices.
5. Communicate project processes and outcomes clearly and effectively through structured and accessible formats for diverse audiences and a range of stakeholders.

Indicative Content

This course will demystify microphone technologies – to explore how sounds are captured, shaped, or collected into a digital audio signal/storage (to become a material to be edited). The connotations/meanings/genre contexts and industry applications of playback technologies will also be explored, demystified and made accessible to students. This will equip graduates for employability and increased creative virtuosity in Year 3 and 4, as spatialisation of sound is a growing discipline: previously it was mostly in cinematic contexts, now it is spreading into to the home, art galleries, video games and even streamed popular music.

Students will learn how to create metadata for sample creation and discover the creativity and reverence of archiving audio and sound samples for others to access, and communicate stories about the people, beings and places featured in the recordings.

Students will learn nuanced understandings of how the quality of the microphone and storage container can alter the perspective or shape of the sound. Students will learn how the number of loudspeakers and the mapping of the audio throughout them can align an output to genre expectations for specified contexts, audiences and a range of stakeholders. For example, science-fiction or fantasy genres can require a dense soundtrack of dynamically panned ambient sounds to place the audience in another world; or realist psychological thrillers may require the focus of a static ambience that feels familiar to enhance the audience's imagination.

Description of Learning and Teaching Methods
This course is primarily studio-based, supported by lectures, tutorials and practical lab/workshop sessions. Students will be required to engage with a range of key texts and papers to provide a deeper contextual and theoretical underpinning for the practical techniques and methods developed in studio practice and through practical tutorials, workshops and fieldwork. **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 working with a range of audio-visual equipment, software and workflows. These sessions usually follow or relate to lectures and take place in computer laboratories as practical classes. 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. Interactive sessions to enhance presentation skills are part of these workshops. Students will be encouraged to communicate their processes and outcomes, as presentation skills are taught in addition to the studio techniques and creative ideation. Students will be supported to create group work by setting out key agreements and responsibilities, given guidance on communication/planning learning technologies to schedule collaborative working sessions and create/share materials to implement in the project. 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
40	400

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 scheduled peer review sessions where students can present work in progress for feedback from peers and tutors • Regular feedback from tutors through in-class discussion and verbal feedback from tutors on work in progress

Description of Summative Assessment arrangements
This course has two summative projects with three deliverables each – a group project and an individual project. **Project 1 (GROUP + INDIVIDUAL): "Sound in Context – Microphones Capture…"** with three deliverables:

1. *(group)* ***Collection of Sounds output,*** curated as an archive or a sound library. Approximately 3 minutes long

2. *(group)* ***Reflective Workflow Evaluation Video*** *(3-6 minutes),* including individual contributions, evaluations of microphone technology and the ethics associated to the work context and site. Submission formats can vary from voice over videos to narrated slides.

3. *(individual)* ***Conceptual Statement*** (audience-directed), 700 words text demonstrating knowledge of microphone technologies applied to capture raw sonic material and communicate stories from the project contexts, indicating influential theories and practitioners.

Project 2 (INDIVIDUAL): "Sound in Studio – …Speakers Playback" with three deliverables:

1. ***Sound Design Creative Practice output,*** around a chosen spatial array from an existing clip of video/gameplay, or sound alone.

2. ***Written Statement*** (audience-directed) to support the choice of methods used in the ***Sound Design Creative Practice output***, reflecting on the listener experience for a specified context, indicating influential practitioners and relevant critical theory.

3. ***Concept and Process Evaluation video***, is a reflective account of project process and outcomes, including decisions made, influences, challenges, and successes. Submission formats can vary from voice over videos to narrated slides.

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
Project 1 - GROUP portfolio of work including: - **Collection of Sounds** output (approx. 3 min.) - **Reflective Workflow Evaluation video** (3-6 min.)	30%	6
Project 1 - INDIVIDUAL deliverable: - **Conceptual Statement** (700 words)	20%	6
Project 2 - INDIVIDUAL portfolio of work including: - **Sound Design Creative Practice Output** (3 min.) - **Written Statement** (700 words) - **Concept and Process Evaluation video** (3-6 min.)	50%	12

Exchange/Study Abroad	
Can this course be taken by Exchange/Study Abroad students?	No
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 online Resource List is accessible via Resource Lists (see section “Studio 2: Sound in Context and Studio”. This List will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect course content and subject developments.