THE GLASGOW SCHOOL: ℃ ARt

Course Specification

Course Code:	Session:
PCRS111	2017/18

1. Course Title:

User Centred Research for Design: an Introduction to Design Ethnography (ADM)

2. Date of production / revision:

09/03/2016

3. Level:

PGT Level 11

4. Credits:

15

5. Lead School/Board of Studies:

Design School

6. Course Contact:

Brian Loranger

7. Course Aims:

This course aims to cover the content provided in the 15 credit CRS – Intro to Design Ethnography course, but delivers teaching input in a compressed format (2 week intense). This includes:

- Provide students with a variety of core research tools that are equally useful across a range of fields of postgraduate study;
- Facilitate cross-disciplinary thought and practical connections, by bringing together students on different programmes of study;
- Enabling students to conduct and manage their own self-contained ethnographic research projects;
- Interrogating the relationships between forms of research and modes of practice in Design Ethnography.

As a CRS menu-option User-centred Research introduces creative practitioners to the main concepts of design ethnography (applied in a variety of disciplinary contexts), as a postmodern variation upon the Anthropological tradition, and looks at the theoretical and historical foundations of user centred research and how it relates to societies, cultures, and design. Students in this course will apply these theoretical tools in practice through short field exercises focused on key research skills within the larger context of cultural engagement and develop a nuanced appreciation of social, cultural and subjective manifestations of difference.

The Course aims to:

- Introduce an understanding of the fundamentals of ethnographic research as part of an Anthropological disciplinary tradition;
- Highlight the core principles, history, and terminology of cultural, ethnographic, and user-centred research, and their historical and theoretical derivation;
- Convey the value and use of qualitative and quantitative data when referencing epistemological frames of reference, and how these are applied to user centred research into specific socio-cultural phenomena;
- Offer an introduction to the design ethnography process and its constituent techniques;
- Communicate the importance of reflective practice as an ethical standpoint within the field of ethnographic research, and the techniques and skills used by a reflective practitioner.

8. Intended Learning Outcomes of Course:

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

Use a range of research resources and methods effectively;
- Understand the principles underpinning research at postgraduate level;
- Demonstrate understanding of the relationships between research and practice;
- Organise and conduct research projects effectively and efficiently.

As a mirror of the CRS menu-option, User-centred Research DE course, this course enables students to:

1. Knowledge and Understanding:
- Apply an understanding of core research terms within the framework of design anthropology and ethnographic fieldwork;
- Convey a theoretical understanding of the tools, techniques, and methods required to apply ethnographic research practices.

2. Subject Specific Skills:
- Communicate the development and production of "data" or findings in response to a specific set of divergent and convergent research techniques and methods;
- Utilise the practical skills to generate, develop, and refine focused research goals and apply research-centred tools through an engagement with project work;
- Evidence the value of research decisions in relation to a given research challenge and its cultural context;
- Understand the role of the reflective practitioner (how to manage bias and acknowledge difference) in user centred research;
- Apply appropriate research techniques to a given research task to generate appropriate user centred data;
- Communicate research data in an effective and professional manner.

3. Transferable skills:

• Communicate the value of user-centred research practices and processes as an analytical skill.

9. Indicative Content:

The course content is designed to develop an understanding of the core research skills used in user experience design and design ethnography through engagement with a user-centred research project and supported by related seminars and specific expertise.

The course will cover:

- Techniques used within the field of "design ethnography" by creative practitioners;
- Approaches for working as a user-centred researcher within a creative project or specific milieu;
- The application of specific research tools and processes in research fieldwork and the generation of research findings;
- Identifying and deploying appropriate methods of communication both within fieldwork and to a diverse range of stakeholders;
- The role of ethics, empathy, humility, difference and respect when conducting design research.

10. Description of Summative Assessment:

No.	Assessment Method	Description of Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week (assignments) or length (exam)
1	Research Project	Research project with written reflective PPJ (Project Process Journal) with bibliography and references	80%	End of Stage
2	Presentation	Final Presentation	20%	End of Stage

Or

No.	Assessment Method	Description of Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week (assignments) or length (exam)
1	Essay	2500 word written essay (this should include examples of visual work, where appropriate, with a bibliography)	100%	End of Stage

User-centred Research will examine the student's ability to:

- Communicate verbally the results of a user-centred researcher engagement within a specific research initiative and socio-political or theoretical context;
- Communicate in written and/or visual format the process and outcomes of their research;
- Produce documentation of a professional level reflecting on their process, intent and learning through engagement with the course (including an understanding of the cultural differences amongst the "users" engaged with).

The percentage breakdown of the assessment will be as follows:

- Research project with written reflective PPJ (Project Process Journal) with bibliography and references. 80%
- Final presentation. 20%

OR

- A 2500 word written essay (this should include examples of visual work, where appropriate, with a bibliography)

Summative assessment occurs at the conclusion of the PGT Stage, and after both the intensive teaching delivery and time allotted for student learning.

10.1 Please describe the Summative Assessment arrangements:

For this course, assessment of student work will consist of:
- An assessment of the project content and evidenced value of the research conducted (seen through tutorial sessions, research data collected, and final oral or written presentations);

• An assessment of the presentation itself, its level of communication and its appropriateness to stakeholders in question	
• An assessment of the use of user-centred research skills demonstrated through the PPJ (Project Process Journal), to engage with the course material and field assignments.	

11. Formative Assessment:

Formative assessment and feedback will be provided through defined tutorial discussion and feedback throughout the course delivery.

11.1 Please describe the Formative Assessment arrangements:

- Students will receive supervisory support in the form of group tutorials. In addition, students will be required to attend group sessions (peer-assisted learning (PAL) groups.
- Tutorial notes will be recorded by a tutorial buddy for review and discussion between the students involved in the tutorial.
- Peer review and feedback will also be used during presentations to provide additional formative feedback and to encourage discussion concerning the development of critical sensibilities relating to the practice of user-centred and ethnographic research.
- Formative feedback occurs at the conclusion of each intensive teaching block.

12. Collaborative:

Yes ☐   No ☒

12.1 Teaching Institutions:

3T

13. Requirements of Entry:

None

14. Co-requisites:

PGT Stage 1

15. Associated Programmes:

Non-Glasgow based School of Design PGT Programmes

16. When Taught:

PGT Stage 1

17. Timetable:

Teaching sessions follow the pattern:
• Project definition (seminars, brief writing and tutorials)
• Project enactment (Interim presentations and tutorials)
• Project presentation (Tutor and peer feedback)
• PPJ writing (Seminars)

18. Available to Visiting Students:

Yes ☒   No ☐

19. Distance Learning:

Yes ☐   No ☒

20. Placement:	
Yes ☐	No ☒

21. Learning and Teaching Methods:

Method	Formal Contact Hours	Notional Learning Hours (Including formal contact hours)
Lecture		
Studio	5	40
Seminar/Presentation	5	5
Tutorial	5	15
Workshop		15
Laboratory work		
Project work		75
Professional Practice		
E-Learning / Distance Learning		
Placement		
Examination		
Essay		
Private Study	Not Applicable	
Other (please specify below)		
TOTAL	**15**	**150**

22. Description of "Other" Teaching and Learning Methods:

23. Additional Relevant Information:

GSA operates a Research-based ethics approval policy and guidelines for PGR – that is, PhD research and M.Res degrees. However, increasingly PGT – postgraduate taught programmes – oblige students to work within areas of practice that necessitate an acquaintance with the Institutional and Professional application of research ethics. This course develops the application of an ethical research practice through a dialogue with the GSA Research Office and its Ethical Guidelines for students. In addition to a Research Seminar upon Ethical Practice students will be enabled to conduct a research project developed within the auspices of the current GSA Research Ethics guidelines.

24. Indicative Bibliography:

• Barnard, A. (2000), *History and Theory in Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
• Wilson, W. J. & Chaddh, A. (2008), *The Role of Theory in Ethnographic Research*, Harvard: Harvard University Press.
• Kuniavsky, M. (2003), *Observing the User Experience*, London: Morgan Kaufmann.
• Illich, I. (2001), *Tools for Conviviality*, London: Marion Boyars.
• Emerson, R. M., Fretx, R. I. & Shaw, L. L. (1995), *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.