

Course Code:

PELC244

Session:

2017/18

1. Course Title:

Click here to enter text. MATERIAL CULTURES in CREATIVE RESEARCH

2. Date of Production/Revision:

AC 7 December 2016

3. Level:

PGT

4. Credits:

15

5. Lead School/Board of Studies:

School of Design

6. Course Contact:

Frances Robertson

7. Course Aims:

- introduce students to a range of theories and practical applications of material culture studies;
- encourage the student to frame conceptual investigations in this area through verbal reasoning, practice, and empirical research;
- facilitate cross-disciplinary debate and practical connections, by bringing together students on different programmes of study;
- enable students to conduct and manage their own self-contained research projects;
- interrogate the relationships between material culture theory and methodologies and creative practices.
- examine and interrogate established western art and design assumptions and practices in the light of other contemporary fields of culture

8. Intended Learning Outcomes of Course:

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

- develop a rationale for applying selected material culture methods to art or design studio practices;
- debate and analyse a number of material culture approaches from a critical perspective;
- explore cross-disciplinary approaches within creative research;
- demonstrate how ideas, methods and practices interrelate in this area;
- develop and defend a practical/ theoretical research project proposal within the subject area based on independent research
- consider new approaches to creative practices beyond established western traditions
- evaluate the contribution made to art and design research and practice through the study of alternative non-textual sources

9. Indicative Content:

Contributors/ and proposed workshops/ practical activities
Frances Robertson: Material culture and creative practices
Helen McCormack: 'Designing ourselves'—curating a personal space
Frances Robertson: Sites, artefacts, and processes
Debi Banerjee: animating the past (in collaboration with GSA archives/ outside site visit)
David Sweeney: Receiving Material Culture: Fans, Readerships and Audiences
Elodie Roy: Affective materialities
Mairi McKenzie: Cultural biographies of scent (workshop—to develop methods of approaching multisensoriality in material culture)
Nicholas Oddy: Queer objects—a laboratory of 'things' (in collaboration with GSA archives/ outside site visit)
Katy West: Contemporary craft revivals—status and authority of craft skills
Nicholas Oddy: Objects and Things

10. Description of Summative Assessment:

No.	Assessment Method	Description of Assessment Method	Weight %	Submission week (assignments) or length (exam)
1	Written project proposal	200-word written final submission proposal (plus relevant Bibliography, sources and resources to be used)	10	Week 4
2	Final submission	1) 'assisted readymade' artefact within specialist studio area 2) written critical commentary on the research process and outcome 1200 words plus Bibliography, etc	90	Week 10

10.1 Please describe the Summative Assessment arrangements:

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Project proposal and final assignment to be submitted direct to course leader for marking and moderation (to be arranged within the course teaching team)

11. Formative Assessment:

Normal feedback will be provided on a weekly basis within the workshop/ presentation mode of student presentations and peer discussion, plus there will be formative commentary on the project proposal, and individual tutorial arrangements during the final draft stage of the assignment.

11.1 Please describe the Formative Assessment arrangements:

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12. Collaborative:

Yes

No

12.1 Teaching Institutions:

Click here to enter text.

13. Requirements of Entry:

none

14. Co-requisites:

none

15. Associated Programmes:

none

16. When Taught:

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17. Timetable:

weekly

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		
Seminar/Presentation	16	16
Tutorial	1	1
Workshop	4	4
Laboratory work		
Project work		
Professional Practice		
E-Learning / Distance Learning		
Placement		
Examination		
Essay		
Private Study	Not Applicable	129
Other (please specify below)		
TOTAL	21	150

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

Click here to enter text.

23. Additional Relevant Information:

Material culture studies is the examination of objects and artefacts left behind by human activities and culture; evaluating objects as traces of human relationships and beliefs. In the past, scholars in anthropology or archaeology started to collect objects in order to study societies without 'history' (no written records). More recently, 'material culture studies' has taken off in order to study our

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own hidden histories and everyday practices in ordinary contemporary societies that lie outside high or official cultural expression, such as those of dress, the domestic sphere, or sexuality. Given the imperial European roots of anthropology and archaeology, current material culture scholars have established contemporary and critical self-reflective debates that address a post-colonial present. This field offers clear avenues into re-thinking and diverting Western art school preoccupations into the study of other localised design and artistic practices, fields and discourses in the current global range of creative production.

This cross-disciplinary open elective course aims to develop research strategies, approaches and methods in order to interrogate 'the meanings of things represented in artefacts'. It will explore alternative routes into 'things', especially those objects, interventions and artefacts within, or produced by, art school studio practices. One central belief of this course is that meaning is ceaselessly tested out and reinvented 'in the making', with the additional recognition that objects of art and design often escape or resist linear interpretation. While the term and the concept 'Material culture' is familiar in an everyday sense to art and design students as they are embedded in the world of artefacts, what this course seeks is to bring these ideas to consciousness and offer various theoretical avenues to unpack and unpick objects and cultural discourses with development of critical awareness—respecting the views both of themselves and others. This course aims to address this postgraduate phase of creative self-development, by literally putting things into words. Contemporary art school preoccupations offer a useful conduit through which to expand upon studio practices and ideas—from the investigation of bodily practices of display and self-presentation, through to rituals of death and commemoration (to take just two examples). Thus, in the art school context, material cultural studies can offer creative and conceptually rich insights for thinking through theory and practice in action.

Established academic approaches to material cultures in other disciplines have not yet engaged fully with the multi-materiality and flexibility of works of art and design, or the role of the senses in this field. This course addresses these gaps and will examine the object as a site of complex (and often simultaneous) sensual/emotional negotiation, in relation to gender, sexuality and age. It will examine the material meanings of specific sites of production (e.g. studio, street, print room) and the material cultures of audiences, readers, and users of artefacts. The course curriculum content is intercultural, reflecting different social and cultural perspectives of students, with negotiated self-directed research outcomes that include personal comment and insight, but that also builds awareness of this rich academic field of practice and debate through supported readings and hands-on learning. Material culture enquiries are by nature interdisciplinary and exploratory, and can deliver unexpected and nuanced insights even into the most stereotyped areas.

This course draws upon wide and established multi-disciplinary expertise and theoretical enquiry at GSA, both informally and as recently evidenced by the 2015 GSA conference Material Culture in Action. The course will be delivered through a mixture of workshops and presentations (with both student- and tutor-led activities), visits to sites and archives and other studio-based investigations within each individual student's specialist area. It will be assessed through the final negotiated submission. This happens in stages, with a short formal written proposal submitted one third of the way through the course with formative discussion/ feedback. The final submission is open-ended and studio-centred, respecting the intensive nature of the masters' programme and is in two parts: 1) a negotiated practice-based artefact in the spirit of the 'assisted readymade'. This artefact can include any kind of objet trouvé (found object) including sound recordings, film, etc and can thus be truly open to all areas of masters study and 2) a written critical commentary of 1200 words on the final research outcome, drawing on readings and activities encountered during the course.

24. Indicative Bibliography: *Please ensure that this aligns with the Harvard Referencing System*

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Appadurai, Arjun, ed (1986) *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Attfield, Judy (2000) *Wild things: the material culture of everyday life* Oxford: Berg

Bennett, Tony and Patrick Joyce, eds (2010) *Material powers: cultural studies, history and the material turn* London: Routledge

Brown, Bill (2001) 'Thing theory' *Critical inquiry* 28 (1): 1-22

Buchli, Victor, ed (2002) *The Material Culture Reader*, Oxford

Candlin, Fiona and Raiford Guins, eds (2009) *The object reader* London and New York: Routledge

Harman, G. (2009) 'Technology, objects and things in Heidegger' *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (online)

Harvey, Karen, ed (2009) *History and material culture: a student's guide to approaching alternative sources* London and New York: Routledge

Hicks, Dan and Mary C. Beaudry (2010) *The Oxford handbook of material culture studies* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Highmore, Ben (2002) *Everyday life and cultural theory: an introduction* London: Routledge

Margolin 2009

Kingery, W. David, 1995, *Learning from Things: Method and Theory of Material Cultural Studies*, Washington and London, Smithsonian Institute Press

Kwint, Marius, Christopher Breward and Jeremy Aynsley, eds (1999) *Material memories* Oxford: Berg

Miller, Daniel (1987) *Material culture and mass consumption* Oxford: Blackwell

Miller, Daniel, ed. (2001) *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*, Oxford

Moles, Abraham A. and David W. Jacobus (1988) 'Design and immateriality: what of it in a post-industrial society?' *Design issues* 4 (1/2): 25-32

Simondon, Gilbert (2010) 'The Genesis of the Technical Object: the Process of Concretization', from '*Du Mode d'Existence Des Objets Techniques*' by Gilbert Simondon in *The Craft Reader*, edited by Glenn Adamson, Berg, Oxford and New York, 2010, pp. 354-359.

Tilley, Christopher (1999) *Metaphor and material culture* Oxford: Blackwell

Tilley, Christopher, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuchler, Mike Rowlands and Patricia Spyer, eds *Handbook of material culture* London: Sage