

Course Code:

PCRS110

Session

2017/18

1. Course Title:

Core Research Skills in the Sociological Imagination

2. Date of Production/Revision:

3 February 2015

3. Level:

SCQF 11

4. Credits:

15

5. Lead School/Board of Studies:

Graduate School

6. Course Contact:

Dr William Clark

7. Course Aims:

- The course **'The Sociological Imagination'** introduces the students to the classic tradition in social theory and combines this with an analysis of mostly 20th century avant-garde art practice. Through seminars, discussion and practical demonstrations it aims to show the connections and inter-relations between what are effectively small groups of thinkers and identify the underlying themes and ideas that run through and define the period. On completion of the course the Student should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the classic tradition in social theory, convey knowledge of a range of peer-reviewed journal articles, and have achieved a high level of analytical thinking and the ability to work independently. The course will cover the following broad areas:
 - Defining the relevance of the classic tradition in social theory as the basis for thinking on what art is, or its connection to social movements, ways of living and the legitimisation or de-legitimisation of authority.
 - Social Theory across the disciplinary boundaries of Cultural Studies, Sociology and the Philosophy of Social Science.

- Understanding the history of ideas.

The course encompasses: Philosophical, Sociological (extending into Social Psychology, the Sociology of Knowledge and Phenomenology), Aesthetics, and Comparative Analysis element (but the emphasis is on breaking down barriers to learning, even if these are academic specialties), including developing, structuring and managing a project. The course will explore some of the following topics:

- **Walter Lippmann's** concept of the stereotype and the formation of public opinion and relates Henri Bergson's Phenomenology to the development of 'Cubism.'
- **Emile Durkheim** in terms of Social Facts, Anomie, Consciousness Collectives and Representation Collectives, examining his influence on Bataille, Mauss and Surrealism.
- **Karl Marx** as a social philosopher, the Frankfurt School and Walter Benjamin, Realism and the Paris Commune
- **Max Weber's** work on Bureaucracy and Rationality, the cultural analysis of the Heidelberg Circle and German Expressionism.
- **Karl Mannheim** in terms of Generations, Utopia and Ideology and Picasso's 'Lost Generation'.
- **Giambattista Vico** and the beginning of comparative cultural history touching on Isaiah Berlin and the history of ideas and the Sturm and Drang movement.
- **C. Wright Mills' 'The Cultural Apparatus'** and the development of Modern Art in America.
- **Cornelius Castoriadis' 'The Crisis of Art and the State'** that gathers together the general themes of the course.

This course aims to:

- 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;
- Enable students to conduct and manage their own self-contained research projects;
- Interrogate the relationships between forms of research and modes of practice.

8. Intended Learning Outcomes of Course:

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Use appropriate 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.

9. Indicative Content:

- Introducing research skills for postgraduate students
- Conceptualising a research question
- Understanding research resources
- Finding and managing information
- Mapping the context
- Developing and managing a project of research
- Practice as research
- Disseminating research outcomes

10. Description of Summative Assessment:

Full attendance at lectures, seminars and group discussions is expected. In addition to this, students will be required to submit an assignment and/or presentation that presents an analysis of an idea or concept, artwork, practitioner, or debate which they consider to be at the cutting edge of their field of enquiry. This final assessment submission consists of the following:

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, and a bibliography)	100%	End of Stage 1

10.1 Please describe the Summative Assessment arrangements:

- The student will be required to produce a well-conceived, empirically researched, theoretical argument in the form of an essay of 2500 words complete with bibliography using the Harvard Referencing System. Students should have the topic approved in advance by the course tutor. The assignment should demonstrate the learning outcomes outlined above.

On completion of the course the student should be able to demonstrate a deep understanding of the classic tradition in social theory, based on knowledge of a range of peer-reviewed journal articles, and achieve a high level of analytical thinking and the ability to work independently.

Assessment Criteria

Students on this course will be assessed on their ability to:

- conceptualise and present a research problem;
- utilize appropriate methods and tools when conducting a research project;
- situate their projects of research within a research context;
- critically reflect on the success and effectiveness of their own projects of practice and research;
- demonstrate a level of depth in the analysis of works, practitioners, ideas and/or debates appropriate to postgraduate level.

Please also refer to the course handbook for further specific guidance about the assessment criteria.

11. Formative Assessment:

Formative Assessment takes place in week 5/6.

11.1 Please describe the Formative Assessment arrangements:

Please refer to course handbook for details about the formative assessment arrangements.

12. Collaborative:

Yes

No

12.1 Teaching Institutions:

13. Requirements of Entry:

None

14. Co-requisites:

None

15. Associated Programmes:

All Postgraduate Taught Programmes

16. When Taught:

Stage 1

17. Timetable:

2 hours, Wednesday mornings between 9 – 1 pm.

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	20	20
Tutorial		
Workshop		
Laboratory work		
Project work		
Professional Practice		
E-Learning / Distance Learning		
Placement		
Examination		
Essay		
Private Study	Not Applicable	130
Other (please specify below)		
TOTAL	20	150

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

This course will be delivered through a series of lectures, seminars, and group discussions drawing from a range of provided material. Rather than a prepared reading list key texts are interpreted and *discussed* with a view to increasing the student's understanding and promoting future research. All of the necessary reading is provided for the student and the course also includes elements involving research methodologies and essay writing, largely in terms of heuristics, forms of analysis and structure to assist the student with their essay writing.

23. Additional Relevant Information:

This course introduces students taking taught postgraduate programmes at the Glasgow School of Art to a range of core research skills, from formulating research questions to methods of utilizing visual and written sources. The ways in which postgraduate study differs from undergraduate – and the significance of research to this distinction – will be explored. Central to the course is the importance of research for practitioners, and the notion of practice as a form of research.

The Core Research Skills courses taught in Stage 1 may include the following:

- **Academic Skills for Masters Research**
- **Archives and Historical Resources**
- **Business Skills and Creative Entrepreneurship**
- **Writing in Art, Design and Architecture**
- **Drawing as Research**
- **The Sociological Imagination**
- **Popular Culture and Creative Practice**
- **Philosophy and Creative Practice**
- **Analysis and Self Analysis**
- **Design Ethnography in Practice: applying the ethnographic perspective**
- **Visual Mapping: Analysis and Presentation through Graphics**

24. Indicative Bibliography:

Aaron, Daniel (1951) Men of Good Hope, New York, Oxford University Press.

Berlin, Isaiah (1965) The Roots of Romanticism, Henry Hardy (ed.), London, Chatto and Windus.

Castoriadis, Cornelius (1991) 'The Crisis of Culture and the State,' in Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy, David Ames Curtis (ed.), New York, Oxford University Press.

Cohen, Margaret (1993) Profane Illumination Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution, University of California

Press. http://alycenritchie.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/margaret_cohen_profane_illumination.pdf

Gerth, Hans, H. & Mills, C. Wright (eds) (1948) From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Lippmann, Walter (1922) Public Opinion, New York, MacMillan Co.

Lukes, Steven (1973) Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work. A Historical and Critical Study, London, Penguin Books.

Wolff, Kurt H. (ed.) (1950) The Sociology of Georg Simmel, New York, The Free Press