

Research Design

PGVC1027

MODULE DESCRIPTOR

ECTS credits ¹	5	Programme	MA Design History & Material Culture
NQF level	0	School	Visual Culture
Stage	1	Module Co-ordinator	Hilary O’Kelly
Trimester	Spring	Module Team	Dr Lisa Godson, Dr Anna Moran, Hilary O’Kelly, David Crowley
Contact	Neasa Travers, School of Visual Culture Secretary: visualculture@staff.ncad.ie		
Responsibility	The NCAD Academic Council and the School of Visual Culture Board have responsibility for this module.		

1. Introduction

This module is offered to provide support in the early phase of designing a thesis. It will support students in the process of designing a long term research project to meet the required levels of challenge but also feasibility. Students will be introduced to key skills required in the production of a long-format academic text including classes on the uses of theory; oral history, and the practice of interviewing; and visual analysis.

2. What will I learn?

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

1. Make informed JUDGEMENTs about the methods and skills required to conduct a particular research task.
2. GENERATE sophisticated research questions in relation to sources and existing scholarship.
3. PLAN a long-term research project and SCOPE a viable thesis.

Module content

All of the classes in this module are seminar and workshop format. They encourage understanding of research in the field of Design History and Material Culture studies as a practice that involves developing a range of skills. Classes will develop this understanding by engaging with research materials in class such as primary documents, as well as case studies coming from current research practices of the tutors and invited speakers.

These classes will typically include:

- **Workshop on the Use of Primary Sources** such as archival documents as well as historical artefacts in museum collections.

¹ European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, where 60 ECTS credits equate to the workload of a full-time academic year (two trimesters)

- **Workshop on Research Ethics.** As well as investigating commonly understood and formal definitions of research ethics which include principles such as voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential for harm, and results communication, this workshop will equip participants with knowledge of key ethical debates within research and practice, and enable them to reflect on the ethos and ethics of their own work and that of others.
- **Seminar on Photography and other forms of Visual Evidence** – taught in conjunction with the National Museum of Ireland, this workshop will explore the potential and limits of photographic documentation as historical evidence.
- **Seminar Exhibitions as Research.** This workshop will consider the exhibition as a means not only for publicising research but also in generating it.
- **Workshop on Oral History as a Research Method.** This workshop will explore the value of the interview as a research method in the study of design and material culture. The class will consider not only its great value but also its nuanced and partial nature. With this in mind, this seminar will consider both practical and theoretical issues surrounding interviewing methods, the possible pitfalls present within oral history material and analytical strategies for interpreting memories.
- **Seminar on Ethnographic Methods.** This class will examine the value of ethnography to design historians, considering in particular the techniques of observation and recording which have been developed by anthropologists.
- **Workshop on Employing Theory.** In this workshop – based on keywords – selected by the students, students will explore the importance of concepts in the development of research questions.

Supported these classes, students will undertake the writing of a research proposal through which they will acquire understanding the dynamic relationship of research question/s, literature reviews and sources, and also the capacity to scope long-term research projects.

3. How will I learn?

This module will be taught through workshops and seminars, as well as one-to-one tutorials that will focus on a research proposal that is developed by the student. At a mid-point in the trimester, students will submit a thesis proposal which will outline research questions, and offer a literature review and a provisional thesis structure. At the end of the trimester, students will be required to make a ‘work in progress’ presentation which reflects on their own research plans in light of the ideas, models and issues raised in the module.

Learning tool	Hours
Workshops and seminars	18
Tutorials	2
Work in progress presentations	4
Specified Learning Activities	16
Autonomous Student Learning	60

Total Workload **100**

4. What learning supports are provided?

Bibliographic sources and indicative models of writing and research practice will be supplied for seminar and workshop discussion. Students will be presented with models of practice for analysis and discussion in class.

Indicative bibliography

- Burke, P (2015) Eyewitnessing. The use of images as historical evidence
- Jordanova, L (2012) The Look of the Past. Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice
- Rogoff, I (2006) From Criticism to Critique to Criticality
- Sandino, L. Partington, M., (eds.) (2013) Oral History in the Visual Arts
- Steedman, C., (2001) Dust
- Spradley, J. (2016) Participant Observation

5. Am I eligible to take this module?

Module Requisites and Incompatibles

Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Incompatibles	None
Prior learning	Where a student can demonstrate that they have achieved at least 80% of the learning outcomes of this module, by academic certified achievement, or through quantifiable and documented experience, they can apply to the School for that prior learning to be recognised. Applications must be received prior to the commencement of delivery of the module.
Recommended	None

6. How will I be assessed?

The assessment will be based on the presentation (see below).

The earlier proposal stage is not graded but must be passed. In other words, the proposal will be judged as the viable basis for the thesis which is undertaken in module PGVC1024. Proposals which are not viable or do not fall within the field of study (Design History and Material Culture) can be rejected by the MA team and students will be asked to resubmit.

Assessment tool	% of final grade	Timing
Proposal	Pass/Fail, not graded, not part of overall grade	Midway through the trimester (about week 5)
Presentation	100%	At the end of the trimester
Total	100%	

Assessment tool	Learning outcomes assessed
Presentation	All learning outcomes

7. Feedback, results and grading

Feedback

Written feedback will be given at the end of the module.

Grading

Students' assessments will be graded using the [NCAD Grade Descriptors](#).

8. What happens if I fail?

Opportunities will be provided to students who do not complete all assessments, but students will not be able to qualify for the award on completion of this programme until the learning outcomes of this module have been met.

9. When and where is this module offered?

The module is offered during Trimester 2, in School of Visual Cultures seminar rooms at NCAD campus.

10. How will I have the chance to evaluate the module?

It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at NCAD. We encourage all students to communicate their concerns and their observations about their study to members of staff so that any changes can be made in a timely manner.

About two-thirds of the way through the year, a student forum will be convened to gather students' comments about their study and the delivery of the programme. In addition, at the end of Trimester 2, students have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation of their study and experience at NCAD. Students are also encouraged to complete the Irish Student Survey of Engagement. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

In addition, students are invited to discuss their experience on the module with their lecturers at any point during the year. Students can also relay your comments to the class student representative who will communicate their comments to the staff.

**For further details on the content of your module and teaching arrangements,
consult your Programme or Module Handbook**