Reconfiguring the Natural in Visual Culture
VC3005

MODULE DESCRIPTOR

ECTS credits[1]	10	Programme	BA in Visual Culture
NQF level	8	School	School of Visual Culture
Stage	3	Module Co-ordinator	Dr Jye O'Sullivan
Trimester	Spring	Module Team	Dr Jye O'Sullivan and Visual Culture staff
Contact	Neasa Travers, Secretary of School Visual Culture: 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 – offered in the final year of the BA Visual Culture degree – presents a significant opportunity for students to engage with topical and changing perspectives on nature and the concept of the natural in diverse fields of Visual Culture. Designed to support students who, at this stage of their studies, may have developed a particular interest in a field of visual culture such as in performance art, film, fashion or photography, it presents an occasion to undertake a focused piece of research and analysis of their own choosing, testing the concepts and ideas that have been developed in class. Connecting closely to current concerns about the Anthropocene, students will develop an understanding of changing attitudes to nature and the natural in different historical periods and diverse geographies. As such, this final phase module in their studies may provide an opportunity for critical reappraisal of images, spaces and objects which they have already encountered at an earlier stage.

2. What will I learn?

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

1. UNDERSTAND current critical debates about notions of the natural and the post-natural.

2. APPLY key theoretical tools from Critical Ecology, Queer Theory and other fields in developing an analysis of an aspect of Visual Culture.

3. COMMUNICATE their ideas about the effects of ideas of the natural and post-natural on culture in an illustrated presentation and a written format.

Module content

This module unpacks the varying different ways that art, design and architecture have conceptualised, engaged with and reformed the "Natural". Drawing on a variety of discourses

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

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including, Posthumanism, New Materialism, Queer Theory, Feminist and Postcolonial critical theory, learners will engage with a range of different practices that have addressed questions of the Natural and its relation to the human. To achieve this, the module begins with an examination and problematisation of Nature/Culture dualism and how it has been recreated and critiqued in a variety of creative practices before introducing alternative constructions of the natural and post-natural in Modern and contemporary visual cultures.

By the end of the module, learners will be expected to identify different examples from visual cultures that engage with environmentalist, ecological and dualistic discourses and to analyse these using appropriate philosophical and theoretical texts. Furthermore, participants will be able to relate these discourses to their wider thinking and consider the eco-ethical implications of different models of culture and Nature.

3. How will I learn?

This module will be taught through weekly lectures, screenings and seminars. Students will be assigned key texts that they will analyse in class discussions. They will also prepare a work in progress presentation in which they scope out an approach to a topic of their own choosing using some of the critical tools that have been discussed in class. This will be the basis of a major essay submitted at the end of the module. In this way, students will have opportunities to share ideas and feedback prior to undertaking a major essay.

Learning tool	Hours
Lectures and seminars	30
Work in progress presentations	6
Specified Learning Activities	60
Autonomous Student Learning	104
Total Workload	**200**

4. What learning supports are provided?

Bibliographic sources, key texts and links to visual material will be provided through a dedicated Canvas Course.

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.

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Recommended	None

6. How will I be assessed?

In about week 8 of the trimester, students will need to present on their progress. While they need to achieve a Pass in this presentation, the module final grade will be solely on the final essay.

Assessment tool	% of final grade	Timing
3,000 word essay	100%	End of Trimester 2
Total	**100%**	

Assessment tool	Learning outcomes assessed
Essay	All learning outcomes

7. Feedback, results and grading

Feedback

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

Grading

Students' work will be assessed and 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 delivered in Trimester 2 (January to May), in School of Visual Culture seminar and lecture rooms at the 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.

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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**