



Module Definition Form (MDF)

Module code: MOD011463	Version: 3 Date Amended: 03/Sep/2026
-------------------------------	--

1. Module Title
Critical and Contextual Studies 1: Think, Play, Learn

2a. Module Leader
Elizabeth Johnson

2b. School
Cambridge School of Art

2c. Faculty
Faculty of Arts, Humanities, Education and Social Sciences

3a. Level
4

3b. Module Type
Standard (fine graded)

4a. Credits
30

4b. Study Hours
300

5. Restrictions			
Type	Module Code	Module Name	Condition
Pre-requisites:	None		
Co-requisites:	None		
Exclusions:	None		
Courses to which this module is restricted:	Undergraduate courses in Cambridge School of Art		

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

6a. Module Description

In this module, you will be introduced to critical thinking in art and design, and you will develop essential study skills in communication, research, critical analysis, and subject-specific knowledge.

Through lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials, and field trips, you will explore and get to know Cambridge as a place for research and investigation into art and design practices. You will also begin to consider the wider cultural context of your creative work by engaging with the city's histories, buildings, and material cultures.

The module examines how the histories and theories of art and design influence the ways we understand and create today. You will be introduced to key ideas and movements that have shaped how art and design are interpreted in your subject area.

By the end of this module, you will have begun to understand and contextualise your own creative practice as both a researcher and practitioner. You will also develop confidence in applying critical thinking, research, and communication skills in your work.

6b. Outline Content

- Histories of visual communications, and art and design subjects
- Key contextual ideas in visual communications, and art and design subjects
- Analysis of creative practice
- Academic integrity
- Museum collections in Cambridge, in person or online
- Foundational academic study skills in research and communication

6c. Key Texts/Literature

The reading list to support this module is available at: <https://readinglists.aru.ac.uk/>

6d. Specialist Learning Resources

Public Domain Image Archive

WGSN: Trend Forecasting and Analysis

Vogue Archive

a-n: The Artists Information Company

In person or online access to Cambridge museums and galleries

7. Learning Outcomes (threshold standards)		
No.	Type	On successful completion of this module the student will be expected to be able to:
1	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Demonstrate an understanding and the application of foundational academic skills, including referencing, citation and the principles of academic integrity.
2	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Select and apply appropriate resources from libraries, exhibitions, galleries, databases and online collections to produce your work.
3	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Identify ideas, themes and values that influence your individual creative practice.
4	Knowledge and Understanding	Demonstrate an ability to critically analyse the work of creative practitioners in your subject.
5	Knowledge and Understanding	Describe contexts, ideas and themes important to historical and contemporary art and design practice.
6	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Demonstrate professional and responsible engagement in learning activities, contributing appropriately to class or online discussions and collaborative tasks.

8a. Module Occurrence to which this MDF Refers				
Year	Occurrence	Period	Location	Mode of Delivery
2026/7	ZZF	Template For Face To Face Learning Delivery		Face to Face

8b. Learning Activities for the above Module Occurrence			
Learning Activities	Hours	Learning Outcomes	Details of Duration, frequency and other comments
Lectures	36	1-6	Active learning lectures and group seminars.
Other teacher managed learning	36	1-6	Workshops, group tutorials, and field trips.
Student managed learning	228	1-6	Seminar preparation, reading and research, assignment work.
TOTAL:	300		

9. Assessment for the above Module Occurrence

The assessment for some modules includes a presentation (see below for details on how this particular module is assessed). We recognise that presenting, especially to a large group, can cause significant anxiety or distress for some students. If this may affect you, please contact your Module Leader or the Disability and Neurodiversity Service as early as possible. We will work with you to consider appropriate reasonable adjustments. Depending on your individual needs, these might include, for example, presenting to a smaller group or presenting only to a member of academic staff.

Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
010	Coursework	1, 2, 6	0 (%)	Pass/Fail	100 (%)

Portfolio of coursework with evidence of research, analysis and reflection, comprising visual essays and written texts. 2,000 words equivalent

Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
011	Coursework	1-6	0 (%)	Pass/Fail	100 (%)

Portfolio of coursework with evidence of research, analysis and reflection comprising a curated selection of images and written texts. 2,500 words equivalent

In order to pass this module, students are required to achieve an overall mark of 40% (for modules at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (for modules at level 7*).

In addition, students are required to:

- (a) achieve the qualifying mark for each element of fine graded assessment as specified above**
- (b) pass any pass/fail elements**

[* the pass mark of 50% applies for all module occurrences from the academic year 2024/25 – see Section 3a of this MDF to check the level of the module and Section 8a of this MDF to check the academic year]