CORE MODULES: FdA Digital Arts

You must take modules worth 120 credits at each level of the course. Each module is worth a specified number of credits.

Year one for full-time students (Level 4)

Graphic Design (30 credits)

- *This module serves as an introduction in to graphic design offering a practical understanding of the basic language, tools, principles, theories and practices of the graphic communication design process. Students will have the opportunity to investigate elements such as composition, colour, typography and layout in order to develop as a creative graphic designer. They will be required to problem solve and think creatively when designing with a specific target audience in mind. The delivery of this module will focus on how design students can develop ideas utilising a range of creative processes and students should be encouraged to experiment through both digital and traditional media. The module will include a mix of theory and workshop-based studio time with sessions dedicated to working with the design programmes such as Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign to craft final ideas in response to the graphic design brief. The process will also include group critique and peer review to encourage reflection during the design and development stages. Learners will be supported in the process of justifying their creative decisions and encouraged to evaluate their final outcomes with a view to developing as a graphic design practitioner.*

Photography (15 credits)

- *This module is an introduction to photography which presupposes no prior technical knowledge in the area. Students study and critically analyse the work of leading exponents of the art and practice of photography, exploring what makes a powerful and memorable image. Under the supervision of a professional photographer, students explore approaches to the planning required to take photographs practising and debating the most effective ways to capture memorable images. Using industry standard equipment, students produce a portfolio of images suitable for use across a range of media, including newspapers, magazines and the Web and covering subjects such as hard news, fashion and publicity. Students will be introduced to studio photography experimenting with flash and tungsten lighting, different format cameras and learning about props and sets. They will employ Photoshop software to manipulate their photographs appropriately for their target publications. They will be introduced to the ethical issues involved in working with images as well as a range of key legal concepts that regulate the use of images. This will enable students to adhere to these restrictions in their own practice, both within their work on the programme and in the workplace. Students will produce a personal journal charting the production of their practical work, from the development of initial ideas, research and application of knowledge acquired through research to production and completion of the practical task.*

Critical Theory in Art and Media (15 credits)

- *In this module students will explore the contemporary practices of art and design and the contextual factors that underpin them. They will be introduced to - and learn to recognise - the key theories underpinning contemporary art and design and start to apply these to their own practice. Modernist and Postmodernist approaches will be contrasted on the affective character and exemplarity of the work of art. They will be guided to begin the process of appraising and consolidating their own practical work through portfolio-based evidence, critical feedback and self-evaluation. Learners will engage in group critiques, and presentations reflecting critically on their own work, their peers, and that of other creative practitioners as a means to underpinning their progress through the course and other modules.*

Digital Animation (15 credits)

- *Animation is a key area of digital art and the adoption of animated elements within a wide range of media make this a growing and rapidly changing field in which it is essential for graduates to be prepared to enter. This module gives students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with digital animation tools that are commonly used in the industry. The module will be run as a combination of short lectures and supported workshops where each week the learner will be instructed in underlying principles of digital animation and how they are implemented by the chosen software. Students with be expected to complete a set of exercises to reinforce this learning. Students will develop skills in a range of digital animation techniques and learn how to effectively plan for and design creative animated sequences in a 2D context. In designing a variety of animations student will need to consider the needs and expectations of target audiences and the interpretation of a client brief. The use and manipulation of audio in regards to animations will be introduced and techniques explored to effectively integrate these assets into a creative work. The skills taught in this module are intended to provide a suitable foundation of skills and knowledge for learners to apply in later modules of the course.*

Introduction to the Creative Industries (15 credits)

- *This module provides a historic context to the contemporary creative sector, tracing its roots to ancient Chinese woodblock printing, Gutenberg's press, movable type and the power that mass printing afforded institutions including the Church and universities in the Western world. The power of the symbolic cue is explored through Thompson's interactional theory which differentiates between monologic and dialogic forms of communication and the disconnect in time and space that technical media introduce through their ability to fix, store, reproduce and transmit data. The internet is considered as a second media revolution, with Web 2.0 bringing new functionality which is harnessed by digital artists to creative immersive experiences. Thus the tensions between the digital media as an industry and digital media as a form of art are considered. The module maps current trends within the creative sector including the decline of the traditional audience and the move towards digital as a community platform. Linked with this is the challenge of securing revenue and the changing business models that are driving a move towards mobile technology and user-generated content, impacting on the type of work required of digital artists within industry in particular. The legal and ethical responsibilities of those working in digital arts are therefore discussed and debated in the context of a rapidly changing environment - one which is regulated by legislation that historically may have protected the rights of producers but now arguably constrains those who create and consume art.*

Digital Asset Development (15 credits)

- *Gaining a foundation in digital asset development and developing proficiency with the common tools required to create these assets is essential for a practitioner within the Digital Arts industry as it enables individuals to translate concepts to a digital medium and improve the quality of any assets developed for future projects. This module gives learners the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with digital asset creation tools that are commonly used in the Digital Arts community. The module will be run as a supervised workshop where each week the learner will be instructed in underlying principles and how they are implemented by the chosen software, and expected to complete a set of exercises. Learners will develop skills in vector and bitmap asset creation while developing an understanding of the benefits and limitations of each technique in order to justify any design decisions made. Students will develop a portfolio of digital assets along with a reflection on the design and development techniques and a critical evaluation of the process in the form of an online blog. The skills taught in this module are intended to provide a suitable foundation for learners to enhance the visual impact of digital artefacts developed both in their later studies and future career.*

Website Design and Authoring (15 credits)

- *This module builds upon the knowledge already gained at level 4 when working with wire frames, user testing and user experience and user interface design. It also draws on the writing skills developed in Critical Theory of Arts & Media. The module focusses on website design and writing for the web. It investigates the ways in which we interact with the web and the differences between website design and app design. Students will design a website (including written content) using specialist software such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and XD, to set up design files, colour modes, hex codes, grid systems, resolution. They will use file formats such as ai, png, jpeg and psd. They will also learn to write professional content for the website writing in a clear and succinct style. Design ideas will be developed as wire frames first before moving on to the testing stage and students will be encouraged to develop a wide range of ideas and concepts before choosing a concept design to take forward. Assessment will take the form of a portfolio of visual screen designs, the writing of the content for one of the pages and a journal that explains their working processes and project from start to finish.*

Final year for full-time students (Level 5)

Critical Practices of Art and Media (15 credits)

- *This module compliments the knowledge and reflective processes developed in Critical Theory in Arts & Media module at level 4. Students will have the opportunity to explore the theories and discourses informing contemporary art and design in more depth, discovering how professional practitioners arrive at solutions to problems and resolve cultural and ethical issues. Students will be encourage to explore the length and breadth of creative practice while at the same time learning to articulate their own practice in terms of this practice. It will enable learners to formulate their own research question, allowing them to frame their work within the contemporary creative environment. Learners will generate an extended piece of writing that formulates connections to other creative practitioners, whilst articulating the purpose of their current practice and the direction it will take upon entering a professional environment.*

Computer Games Design (30 credits)

- *The UK gaming industry is a rapidly growing field in which Digital Artists are sought after. This module builds on skills developed previously in the design and development of digital assets and introduces the student to the game design process. The aim of this module is to provide graduates with a deep understanding of the requirements of the games design process and their roles as Digital Artists within the industry. Students will work in small groups to design a game, producing a Game Design Document to outline the requirements, including gameplay features such as narrative, setting, mechanics, challenges and rules. This process will then underpin the production of a series of creative assets for the design of a prototype, such as storyboards or animatics, as well as static and animated graphical elements such as environments, characters or other gameplay and interface objects. Students will identify and select appropriate visual styles to ensure a consistent theme within the work produced. They will develop skills in designing an effective user experience for a computer game and develop knowledge of the underlying psychological motivators that drive effective gameplay. Communication skills will be developed in pitching creative concepts to a panel or client and justifying decisions made with reference to supporting theory. The module will combine various learning activities including tutor led lectures and student led seminars on game design theory and underpinning principles, along with supported workshops in which students will be expected to complete a series of creative activities which will culminate in the production of design documentation, a portfolio of assets and an individual reflection on their contribution to the group.*

App Design (15 credits)

- *This module serves as an introduction in to App design which includes a strong focus on User Experience and User Interface design which will allow the students to gain the fundamentals of designing apps for mobile devices. They will learn how to create wire frames and prototype their designs and improve them through testing and creating a final outcome by working to a brief for a specific target audience. Students will be introduced to UX design principles and research their target audience and brief in order to produce an interactive prototype. The module includes a mixture of delivery types including lectures, seminars and discussions relating to the theory behind app design and usability as well as technical workshops relating to gaining relevant skills in using design programmes such as Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop for asset creation and Adobe XD for creating the wire frames and prototyping. Emphasis will be placed on user-testing and design development to ensure that the final outcome meets the user needs.*

Integrated Advertising (15 credits)

- *This module will explore creative advertising and give an overview of above-the-line, below-the-line and through-the-line advertising. It will function as a capstone module enabling the students to showcase the skills and competencies developed in the course. Students will be introduced to techniques that enable them to develop design concepts for adverts. They will be shown how to adapt their ideas for use in an integrated advertising campaigns, exploring the proposition and strategy of their concepts and how to develop their lateral thinking through literal ideas generation. Students will reflect upon successful advertising to better understand how concepts can work across a variety of mediums and outputs. The module will be delivered via a mix of theoretical lectures, group discussion, critique, reflection and studio based working. This module allows for group work and learners can choose to work together in teams of two or individually. The final advertising campaign can feature a mix of above and below-the-line advertising which could include but not limited to Press, Poster, TV, Radio, Direct Mail, Adshell, Ambient and Online. The students should consider target audience and how best to communicate to them and the channels they use should reflect this. For assessment students will submit a portfolio including background and research and materials produced for the campaign. Students will also pitch their ideas (presentation) to industry experts in an end of module capstone event'.*

Professional Practice (30 credits)

- *In this module, students are presented with the opportunity to acquire essential work placements within the digital industries; either in a formal placement of three weeks (120 hours) within an organisation or fifteen working days (120 hours) from working as a freelancer. Students will be instructed to put into practice the skills they have developed throughout the course thus far and to extend their knowledge of working practices. They will be encouraged to identify placements and opportunities that link to their future career goals; for example, a design hopeful, should consider a placement or work opportunity within this specialism. Recognising that organisations are frequently contacted with requests for work placements, this module will also develop the approach to which learners engage in this practice. For example, the nature of a modern CV will be discussed, as will the inherent need for the right tone and structure when producing a covering letter. Further practices for self-marketing in a digital environment will also be addressed, such as a social media presence, portfolio building and the creation or updating of personal websites. Discussions will be held during the teaching weeks on the world of work and potential business planning to assist those who wish to create their own businesses in the future. Students also complete a commentary and evaluation that addresses the need for work experience, as well as reflecting critically on their own in-work experiences. They will also produce a coherent career plan that addresses their future goals and aspirations in a real-world setting. By the end of the course, learners will have a solid grasp of the skills required in both the industry and the workplace.*