

Key Concepts and Sources DHPG1

MODULE DESCRIPTOR

ECTS credits¹	10	Programme	MA Design History and Material Culture
NQF level	9	School	Visual Culture
Stage	1	Module Co-ordinator	Dr Lisa Godson
Trimester	spring	Module Team	Dr Lisa Godson and Dr Rachel O Dwyer
Contact	Neasa Travers, Secretary School of Visual Culture: visualculture@staff.ncad.ie		
Responsibility	NCAD Academic Council / School of Visual Culture		

Introduction

This module offers a full introduction to the practice of object analysis, a key aspect of the MA programme and a key approach in the field of study. It examines the diverse ways in which material objects can be understood and interpreted by means of analytical conceptual 'tools' developed in Design History and Material Culture studies as well as in Cultural Studies, Anthropology and other adjacent fields. Such 'tools' include concepts of memorialisation, waste, gifting, gender, etc.

With a focus on mundane or commonplace as well as 'authored' objects, the module provides an introduction into the ways in which the seemingly 'mute' material world can be made to speak through the use of supporting foundational texts. It also stresses the idea that objects have what some scholars call biographies, i.e., that meanings attached to things as well as their functions change over time. Particular emphasis is placed on identifying and interpreting primary research materials (textual and visual) in order to develop key research skills as well as an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of original research in the later phases of the MA. They include the generation of appropriate and productive research 'questions'; the generation of a bibliography; the construction of arguments; etc.

What will I learn?

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

- i. conduct RESEARCH into the history of design and material culture using a range of primary sources;
- ii. ASSESS critically the merits of different approaches to the study of design and material culture in different academic disciplines;
- iii. PLAN, structure and deliver a long-format text based on original research;
- iv. develop and COMMUNICATE a sophisticated argument about an object and/or approach to the History of Design and Material Culture.

Module content

How will I learn?

The 3 hour, 10 week class is taught by a combination of seminar discussions of key texts, student-led presentations and visits to archives and collections in Dublin including the National Museum of Ireland, Irish Folklore Collection, etc. This module is taught in conjunction with an identified institutional partner (archive or collection). These arrangements may change on an annual basis but will be announced before the programme commences. This reflects a long-standing practice on the programme. Typically, the institutional partner will facilitate access to objects and documents in their collections as well as the

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expertise of their staff. The institution will benefit from the original research conducted by the DHMC MA students. In 2019-20, the institutional partner will be the National Museum of Ireland collection of Decorative Arts and History at Collins Barracks.

Learning Tool / Hours

Lectures	30
Site visit	6
Specified Learning Activities	24
Autonomous Student Learning	140
Total Workload	200

What learning supports are provided?

Bibliographic sources and models of writing / research practice will be supplied. Students will also have access to the expertise of the institutional partner, as well as access to their collections and, where appropriate, archival materials.

Indicative bibliography

- Appadurai, A. (1986) *The Social Life of Things*
 Backwell, M. (ed) (2014) *The Secret Life of Things. Animals, Objects, and It-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*
 Candlin, F. and Guins, R. (eds) (2009). *The Object Reader*
 Turkle, S. (2007). *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*

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

How will I be assessed?

Assessment comes in two phases:

1. students are required to lead a seminar discussion of a concept and/or theory which relates to the object which they have selected for analysis. Formative feedback is given after the presentation. 2. At the end of the module, students submit a 5-7000 word essay on a single object of their own choice. Typically, the object will be in a Dublin institution such as a museum or archive to require engagement with the ways in which material culture has been conserved, displayed and interpreted by others. The object will date from the 19thC and / or 20thC to ensure that the students embrace the challenges of historical research. Otherwise, students will have considerable freedom in terms of the nature / type of object selected to allow individuals to develop particular specialists interests within the field of Design History and Material Culture. This essay is subject to a formative assessment after the module is completed. This takes the form of a written report.

Assessment tool	% of final grade	Timing
Essay	100%%	End of spring trimester
Total	100%	

Feedback, results and grading

The work will be assessed employing the College’s Grade Assessment criteria (see the programme handbook).

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

What happens if I fail?

Resit Opportunities

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.

When and where is this module offered?

This module is taught at various times on Thursdays in Teaching block 1 (spring trimester). Classes take place in a range of locations at NCAD.

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 trimester, 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. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

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

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