

DESN 3001 CONTEXTUAL DESIGN STUDIES

Credit Points 10

Legacy Code 102275

Coordinator Alison Gill ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Alison Gill/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Alison%20Gill/))

Description Contextual design studies is the study of what happens around design practice - before, during and after - to explain its meaning and effect. Successful communication design has always depended on the connection between form, content, audience and context, and the designer's abilities to analyse, understand and clarify the contexts of communication have become more important to creative practice. In this subject students will learn to apply the theoretical frameworks of semiotic, thematic and rhetorical analysis used by the interdisciplinary field of Design Studies to interpret design's potential as cultural expression and communication. Students will analyse visual signs and conventions as both targeted and tacit responses to a range of contexts revealing design's interests in marketplaces, society and identity. Students will analyse various graphic examples, and design literature, as they investigate the significance and agency of design interactions, media artefacts and systems.

School Humanities & Comm Arts

Discipline Graphic Design Studies

Student Contribution Band HECS Band 2 10cp

Check your fees via the Fees (https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/) page.

Level Undergraduate Level 3 subject

Pre-requisite(s) DESN 2014

Equivalent Subjects DESN 2003 - Design Issues

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. Apply terminology and theoretical frameworks used in design studies to analyse what design means and does.
2. Research and investigate the social, economic and/or political contexts that inform visual design in explicit and tacit ways;
3. Critically evaluate examples of contemporary design practice that respond to these contexts.
4. Reconceptualise codes and conventions or redirect visual concepts to address an audience and construct a context for visual design including enriching social diversity and environmental sustainability.
5. Demonstrate advanced visual and text-based literacy skills in effective written and visual communication.

Subject Content

1. An investigation of the political, social, cultural, and place-based contexts informing communication design practice using the theories and methods used in the interdisciplinary field of design studies.
2. An investigation of the interplay between form, content, and audience, and designers' abilities to analyse, understand and clarify

these connections as critical to the contexts of communication and creative practice.

3. Analysis of visual languages employed in these contexts to enhance the student's own practice and understanding of the importance of graphic expression, message, execution, and audience interaction.

Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Critical Review	Images + 800 words	30	N	Individual	N
Essay	1800 words + images	40	N	Individual	N
Applied Project	Visual outcome + reflection up to 500 words	30	N	Individual	N

Prescribed Texts

- N/A

Teaching Periods

Autumn (2025)

Parramatta - Victoria Rd

On-site

Subject Contact Alison Gill ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Alison Gill/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Alison%20Gill/))

View timetable (https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=DESN3001_25-AUT_PS_1#subjects)