

Programme specification

Master of Architectural Studies in History and Theory of the City

Please note that the full programme specification for this new programme for 2026 is currently undergoing validation and approvals and may be subject to amendment prior to the start of the 2026-27 Academic Year. The full programme specification is due to be published Autumn/Winter 2025.

The GSA's Master of Architectural Studies programmes are aimed at graduates of architecture and allied disciplines who, following the completion of their professional education, wish to extend knowledge and skills in undertaking further specialised study, either to develop existing professional and research interests or to move into new areas of practice.

Uniquely positioned within a wider community of artists and designers at The Glasgow School of Art, the Programmes offer students the opportunity to develop their creative practice in architecture while building their academic and professional networks.

This one-year (three semester) series of taught programmes combine individual specialist study, through an independent research project, with the opportunity to share knowledge and experience and to collaborate with fellow students in a cross-disciplinary context.

This specialist study on History and Theory of the City is designed to provide an understanding of the reasons for the forms of our cities, and of the theories that have been developed to explain them. Drawing from architectural history and theory as well as sociology, cultural studies, and urban planning, the teaching takes a broad range of approaches to the historical and theoretical study of the urban built environment. Through case studies and first-hand experiences, it will give students the skills to devise and carry out research on the history and theory of the urban form. The focus is in two parts, firstly exploring the past and present conceptions of space and how they influenced the formation of cities in their architectural, political and social contexts. Secondly students explore various research methods for developing new knowledge about city form, including visual analysis, bibliographic and archive research, and working with maps. Content covers major themes in the

history and theory of urban architecture, which may include power and its architectural representation in urban institutions, the roles of religious and memorial architecture in forming social identities, and environmental history of the city.