Course Specification
MA Worldbuilding with Creature Design

1. General information

Course Title	MA Worldbuilding with Creature Design
Awarding University	Leeds Arts University
University at which course is delivered	Leeds Arts University
Relevant QAA benchmark(s)	Master's Degree Characteristics (2020), Sector Recognised Standards
Date of most recent review	20 April 2023
Date of next review	2027-28

Awards	Credits	Duration	Mode of study
MA Worldbuilding with Creature Design	180 (90 ECT)	1 year 2 years	Full time Part time
PGDip in Worldbuilding with Creature Design *	120		Full time Part time
PGCert in Worldbuilding with Creature Design *	60		Full time Part time
*Exit Award only			

2. Course Aims

This course aims to:

This course aims to create a thought-provoking and inspiring environment in which worldbuilding and/or creature design practice is informed by research and advanced scholarship and underpinned by the university's research culture.

The course aims to advance your creativity by supporting the development of your conceptual understanding. This will be encouraged by the exchange of ideas grounded in practice research, and theoretical/design industry material, which is related to sustained, high-level design practice. This may be expressed in visual/object-based/oral/aural or written work which draws on, informs and/or responds to employability in the creative and cultural industries.

Students on the course will become part of a practice research community which engages in evaluation, and the imaginative exchange of ideas. The course will engender experimentation in critical thinking, critical reading/ literature reviews, critical debate, and creative engagement within the context of the subject. Through project management and research, you will acquire self-motivation, self-direction and an awareness of the complex issues that impact upon employability in design practice and the creative industries.

You will develop, and consistently sustain the application of critical, analytical judgements, informed by theoretical material and self-directed practice research. This will lead to the production of a body of investigative work.

The course will support and promote an independent, analytical, proactive and negotiated approach to design practice and professional development, by promoting socially, environmentally, culturally and globally aware design-led practices.

It will support you to explore ethical, sustainable, and independent approaches to worldbuilding and creature design practice in production and representation; facilitate the development of advanced specialist skills and a comprehensive understanding of appropriate techniques, processes and materials, and advance worldbuilding and/or creature design as a distinct design subject which encompasses digital and analogue mediums and processes for storytelling.

The course will assist you to develop transferrable and employability skills which enable progression and encourage the development and application of a sustained approach that results in the creative use of concepts and practice research in coherent and sophisticated visual/ object-based/ oral/ aural/ written work.

3. Distinctive Features of the Course

The MA Worldbuilding with Creature Design course will assist you to advance, widen and deepen your existing design practices. It will help you to define your career aspirations through a series of modules designed to enable progress through practice research. Dialogic exchange is an important element of this course of study, which utilises dynamic group work supported by individual tuition. MA Worldbuilding with Creature Design brings together practitioners that want to create narratives, concept art and immersive worlds, across a range of professional contexts, production methods, and industries, and you will have the opportunity to develop design skills, alongside research skills.

You will explore cultural, historical and futuristic worlds and creatures through drawing, iterative design, and 3D prototyping. This course uses a wide range of theoretical and practice led conceptual frameworks to consider the role of the imagination, the viewer, user engagement and the interface and experience which may extend for example, from realism through to speculative archaeology and zoology.

You will be encouraged to critically evaluate current advanced scholarship within your subject and you will be introduced to approaches which reflect on and evaluate critical debate. You will be encouraged to develop a practice research methodology that builds on and re-interprets theoretical concepts embracing ethical, moral, sustainable and global themes. These may bring together cross-disciplinary contemporary influences from architectural visualisation, psychogeography, animal anatomy and behaviour in fields, zooarchaeology and ethnography, for example.

You will have the opportunity to research, develop and demonstrate advanced knowledge, understanding, and high-level practice research skills. You will also be able to exercise initiative and personal responsibility, as you undertake complex decision-making, sometimes within the context of independent learning.

Design work may contain paleo reconstruction (visualising prehistoric life) or speculative biology (visualising possible future evolution or life on other planets), archaeological architecture or contemporary cityscapes, environs ranging from the savannah to the metropolis, outer space or deep-sea vistas.

The course aims to help you to visualise projects and explore and test narrative iterations of your ideas and concepts, to explore character/ creature interactions and behaviours within created worlds.

It encourages you to explore your individual creative ambitions in the context of employability, developing strong practitioner research in both knowledge and market-led fields.

4. Course Structure

4a. Module Framework

Level 7	Credit points	ECTS	Learning hours
Speculative Life	30	15	300
Immersive Storytelling	30	15	300
End Game	30	15	300
Research Methods	15	7.5	150
Business Planning	15	7.5	150
Visualising Research	15	7.5	150
Digital Marketing	15	7.5	150
The Dissertation	30	15	300

4b. Course Map / Structure

Full Time Mode				
Trimester 1 (September – December)		**Trimester 2 (January – April)**		**Trimester 3 (April – July)**
Speculative Life (30 credits)		The Dissertation (30 credits)		Immersive Storytelling (30 credits)
Visualising Research (15 credits)	Business Planning (15 credits)	Research Methods (15 credits)	Digital Marketing (15 credits)	End Game (30 credits)

180 Credits

Part Time Mode					
	Trimester 1 (September – Dec)	**Trimester 2 (January – April)**		**Trimester 3 (April – July)**	
Y1	Speculative Life (30 credits)	Research Methods (15 credits)	Digital Marketing (15 credits)	Immersive Storytelling (30 credits)	90 Credits
Y2	Visualising Research (15credits)	Business Planning (15 credits)	The Dissertation (30 credits)		End Game (30 credits)	90 Credits

5. Course Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the following learning outcomes, the student will be eligible for the award of MA World Building with Creature Design.

CLO 1 **Research**	Create specialised work outputs, which are informed by current practice, research and scholarship	Speculative Life (30) The Dissertation (30) Immersive Storytelling (30) Research Methods (15) Visualising Research (15)

CLO 2 **Analysis**	Use, analyse, critique and evaluate a range of research methods, as you develop your specialist, subject and professional knowledge and practice.	Speculative Life (30) Immersive Storytelling (30) Research Methods (15) Visualising Research (15)
CLO 3 **Subject Knowledge and Understanding**	Evidence an in-depth knowledge and understanding of your specialist, subject and professional practice, including that of contemporary critical and conceptual debate, and practical developments.	The Dissertation (30) Research Methods (15) Visualising Research (15) Business Planning (15) Digital Marketing (15) End Game (30)
CLO 4 **Experimentation**	Experiment with techniques, ideas and approaches to advance your specialist, subject and professional practice.	Speculative Life (30) Immersive Storytelling (30) End Game (30)
CLO 5 **Techniques and Processes**	Choose, apply and evaluate a range of techniques and processes appropriate to your practice.	Speculative Life (30) Immersive Storytelling (30) Research Methods (15) Visualising Research (15) Business Planning (15) Digital Marketing (15)
CLO 6 **Personal and Professional Development**	Work with autonomy, initiative and professionalism as you evaluate, revise and disseminate your practice.	The Dissertation (30) End Game (30) Research Methods (15) Visualising Research (15) Business Planning (15) Digital Marketing (15)

6. Learning and Teaching Strategies

The learning and teaching methods and strategies included in this course are aligned to the descriptor for master's degrees as defined by the Office for Students in the *Sector Recognised Standards* document (February 2018). Further information is available by following this link: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/.

The *Characteristics Statement [for] Master's Degrees* (February 2020) has also informed the design of the award. In particular, the document notes the following:

… all master's degree graduates have in-depth and advanced knowledge and understanding of their subject and/or profession, informed by current practice, scholarship and research. This will include a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject and/or profession; critical skills; knowledge of professional responsibility, integrity and ethics; and the ability to reflect on their own progress as a learner. Further information is available here: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/master's-degree-characteristics-statement.pdf

Therefore, the learning, teaching and assessment strategies on this course have been designed to enable the student to become effective practitioners and researchers; to develop critical and analytical skills and to develop and evidence in-depth knowledge and understanding of their subject area. They also encourage and facilitate an experimental approach to practice and research and allow the student to extend their specialist technical knowledge. They are designed

to support and facilitate personal and professional development and allow the student to work with initiative and autonomy.

Teaching and Learning:
Teaching and learning strategies include the following approaches:
- Lectures and presentations
- Seminars and discussion groups
- Independent research and self-directed study
- Demonstrations including technical demonstrations and workshop inductions
- Peer group presentations and collaborative practice
- One to one tutorials
- Group tutorials and 'crits'
- Individual presentations
- Live projects

Assessment:
Assignment submissions are made in response to set briefs. The content of the submission is usually negotiated with your tutor, and related to, or derived from, your research interests.

The briefs and assignment requirements are informed by the module content and may include for example, subject specialist art-based practice work, written submissions, presentations, business and research plans, research books, sketch books and/or work books.