

Welcome to the Research Methods Course

The Research Methods Course (RMC), convened and chaired by Dr Chantal Faust, has been developed specifically to prepare first-year MPhil and PhD students for research at a higher level and to explore cultures of research in art and design. The course is taught by research-active staff drawn from across the RCA Schools and is designed as a platform to promote high-level considerations of contemporary research issues, and as a supportive environment in which to explore these ideas. The RMC also aims to develop the transferable and career skills of postgraduate researchers at the RCA.

The RMC for 2015/16 is on Wednesdays

- the **autumn term** sessions are designed to enable discussion and exploration of key issues facing contemporary researchers in a college of art and design, including seminars and panel discussions, weekly readings, workshops and core training sessions
- the first block of the **spring term** sessions (4x weeks) allows for intensive programmes of research clusters. Students will form small groups sharing common interests to explore particular research themes and/or approaches with a dedicated tutor. Continuing in these groups for the second block of spring term sessions (4x weeks), each student will deliver a presentation on the nature of their research to their peers and supervisors.
- the **summer term** includes a series of research student-led public symposia and events, that have been developed from the spring term research clusters

RMC Autumn Term 2015

Eight sessions: alternating between half and full days

Venue: All morning session will take place in Humanities Seminar Room 1, Stevens Building, Kensington. See schedule below for afternoon session venues.

The weekly **morning sessions** are based around keywords, themes and issues that are central to the experience of being a research student, and that point towards specific attributes and conditions of the research degree. Rather than simply defining terms, each session aims to build a rigorous discussion around the weight and potential of these keywords, interrogating each concept and considering their implication on the work produced by research students at the RCA and beyond. Each session will be led by a panel of research active staff from across the college, allowing for art, design and theory-based approaches to be explored, discussed and debated.

The fortnightly **afternoon sessions** are geared around training resources and research specific questions, designed to help all first year MPhil and PhD students approach important need-to-know skills relating to issues of research and the research degree.

Week 1 30/9/15	9.30am Coffee and Croissants 10am – 12pm Introductions: Research, RMC, Supervision	2.15pm <i>Meeting for all research students, Lecture Theatre Three, Dyson Building, Battersea</i>
Week 2 7/10/15	10am – 1pm PechaKucha	2pm – 3pm Resources and Training for Research Students at the RCA 3:30 – 5pm Intellectual Property Workshop <i>Venue: Humanities Seminar Room 1, Kensington</i>
Week 3 14/10/15	10am – 1pm Investigations and Experiments	2pm Optional tour of the Kensington workshops <i>with Abid Qayum, Head of Technical Services.</i> Meeting point: Outside the library at 2pm
Week 4 21/10/15	10am – 1pm Originality	2pm-3pm Writing your Abstract 3-5pm Building your Literature Review <i>Venue: Lecture Theatre 2, Darwin Building, Kensington</i>
Week 5	<i>RMC mid-term break</i>	<i>(AcrossRCA week)</i>
Week 6 4/11/15	10am – 1pm Methods and Methodologies	
Week 7 11/11/15	10am – 1pm Ethics	2pm – 3pm Bibliographic Resources and Support / The RCA Research Repository / Copyright for Research Students 3:30pm – 5pm Using Archives <i>Venue: Lecture Theatre 2, Darwin Building, Kensington</i>
Week 8 18/11/15	10am-1pm Theory	
Week 9 25/11/15	10am-1pm Practice as Research	2pm – 4pm Living Research (followed by end of RMC autumn term drinks) <i>Venue: TBC</i>

Week 1 (half-day)

WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

9.30am: Coffee and Croissants

10am – 12pm

Introductions: Research, RMC, Supervision

Welcome to the RCA, the Research Methods Course and the Supervisory Experience. This introductory session will provide an outline of the RCA research experience and calendar and also details about the Research Methods Course and the RCA Student Union. Representatives from each School will deliver short presentations that offer a spotlight on active research cultures at the RCA, and discuss the supervisory experience and the matrix of responsibilities between research student, supervisor and School.

Dr Emma Wakelin, Director Research, Knowledge Exchange & Innovation

Dr Chantal Faust, RMC Convenor

Ritz Wu & Miloslav Vorlicek, Co-Presidents
RCA Student Union

Rama Gheerawo, The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design (TBC)

Professor Jane Pavitt, School of Humanities

Dr Adam Kaasa, Research Fellow, School of Architecture

Professor Teal Triggs, School of Communication

Professor Stephen Boyd Davis, School of Design

Dr Jaspar Joseph-Lester, School of Fine Art

Dr Claire Pajaczkowska, School of Material

2.15pm

*Meeting for all research students for presentations by the various student support services available at the College, **Lecture Theatre Three, Dyson Building, Battersea***

Week 2 (full-day)

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2015

<p>10am – 1pm</p> <p>PechaKucha</p> <p><i>The RMC provides a unique opportunity for all first year MPhil and PhD students to come together on a weekly basis to discuss ideas and develop research skills. But firstly, it is important to know who we all are. Each new research student is invited to deliver a fast-paced and concise presentation that offers the chance for a very brief introduction and an idea of your research projects and interests.</i></p> <p>Format: <u>3 slides / 3 minutes</u> per presentation Please supply 3x images saved as jpegs</p> <p><u>Please label</u> your files with your name in this order: FIRSTNAME_SURNAME_PK1 FIRSTNAME_SURNAME_PK2 FIRSTNAME_SURNAME_PK3</p> <p><u>Please send</u> your file to Carla Bull (Research Office Administrator) carla.bull@rca.ac.uk by no later than Monday 5 October</p>	<p>2pm – 3pm</p> <p>Resources and Training for Research Students at the RCA</p> <p>with Abid Qayum, Head of Technical Services and Cathy Johns, Research Librarian</p> <p>3:30pm – 5pm</p> <p>Intellectual Property Workshop with Dr Nadia Danhash, Director InnovationRCA and Pauline Watkins, IP Programmes Manager, InnovationRCA</p>
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Week 3 (half-day / optional afternoon session)
WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2015

<p>10am – 1pm</p> <p>Investigations and Experiments</p> <p><i>What kind of a search is research? What kind of desire fuels such speculation? What are we trying to prove, or not prove, or show that it cannot be proven – and to whom? What kind of interest impels invention? What is the language of investigation and experiment? Is it science or fiction or a little bit of both? How does this laboratory translate to the studio, to history and theory, to words, objects, subjects, voices and actions? What does it mean to investigate and experiment in a college of art and design and how does what we do potentially offer new approaches to thinking about such terms?</i></p> <p>Professor David Crowley Head of Programme, Critical Writing in Art and Design</p> <p>Dr Harriet Harriss Senior Tutor, School of Architecture</p> <p>Dr Melanie Jordan Reader in Art and the Public Sphere / Senior Tutor, Sculpture (TBC)</p> <p>Dr Sarah Teasley Head of Programme, History of Design</p>	<p>2pm</p> <p><i>Optional tour of the Kensington workshops</i> <i>with Abid Qayum, Head of Technical Services. <u>Meeting point:</u> Outside the library at 2pm</i></p>
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Week 4 (full-day)

WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2015

10am – 1pm

Originality

There is one specific criterion that is used to define a PhD as distinct from other research degrees, and as the highest level of postgraduate academic qualification. The PhD candidate will have made: “an independent and original contribution to knowledge”. Should you choose to complete a PhD, this measure of originality will be used throughout your candidature, from transfer exam through to final viva, as a means to assess whether or not your work is ‘PhD-worthy’. But what can it mean to be original in art, design and art and design theory and history? Is it something to do with the currency of the contemporary, with newness, technology, or invention? Or within these frameworks, is originality found in the bringing together of things and ideas in new and uncharted associations? How do we qualify and defend our originality and why is it so important?

Barry Curtis

Tutor, Critical and Historical Studies

Dr Claire Pajczkowska

Senior Research Tutor Fashion and Textiles

Dr Aura Satz

Tutor, Moving Image

2pm – 3pm

Writing your Abstract

(TBC)

3.30 – 5pm

Building your Literature

Review with **Dr Lucy Soutter**, Senior Tutor, Critical and Historical Studies

Research Methods Course Autumn Term 2015

Week 5

WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER 2015

RMC mid-term break (AcrossRCA week)	
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Week 6 (half-day)

WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2015

10am – 1pm

Methods and Methodologies

What are the practicalities of research methodology? How do we discern which methods are most appropriate to consider in relation to our own thesis? How do we develop sufficient mastery to apply them? How can we provide a rationale for the use of not only conventional research methods and practices, but also those that are not completely pre-determined or fixed? How do we understand method in relation to approaches that are opportunistic and experimental? This session offers practical guidance to approaching and understanding research methods and methodologies within an art and design context.

Dr Roberto Bottazzi

Research Coordinator and ADS1 Tutor,
School of Architecture

Professor Ashley Hall

Deputy Head of Programme,
Innovation Design Engineering

Dr Ian Kiaer

Painting Research Tutor

Professor Teal Triggs

Associate Dean,
School of Communication

Week 7 (full-day)

WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2015

10am – 1pm

Ethics

Every research project undertaken within an academic institution is the subject of ethical scrutiny, but what do we mean by ethics? Is it a philosophical stance? An incrimination? A defence? What kinds of ethical considerations come into play in research projects at the RCA? What are the ethical concerns with the use of oral history and interviews, personal information, access to data, authorship, willing deception, unwilling subjects, user-centred research, ethnography and the public? The speakers in this session will address a broad spectrum of approaches to thinking about ethics in art and design research. Presenters will also offer propositions for students to discuss in relation to their own research.

Dr Jo-Anne Bichard

Senior Research Fellow, The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design

Yve Lomax

Senior Research Tutor, School of Fine Art

Dr Peter Oakley

Research Leader, School of Material

Dr Shehnaz Suterwalla

Tutor History of Design

2pm – 3pm

Bibliographic Resources and Support / The RCA Research Repository / Copyright for Research Students

with **Cathy Johns** (RCA Library)

Cathy Johns, Research Liaison Librarian at the RCA, will present and demonstrate the key resources available for research from the RCA Library, focusing on the online research resources that the Library offers to help students identify and locate material in their field. She will outline the support available for bibliographic referencing and research strategy advice in the Library and will advise on the range of academic resources outside the RCA that are available to Research students, and how to make the most of these.

Cathy will describe the role and function of the RCA Research Repository in relation to student research, and offer advice about copyright in the context of digital thesis submission. Please come with your questions for discussion!

3:30pm – 5pm

Using Archives

with **Neil Parkinson**, Archives & Collections Manager and **Dr Adrian Shaughnessy**, (TBC) Senior Tutor School of Communication

Week 8 (half-day)

WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2015

10am-1pm

Theory

“A theorist is one who has been undone by theory. Rather than the accumulation of theoretical tools and materials, models of analysis, perspectives and positions, the work of theory is to unravel the very ground on which it stands. To introduce questions and uncertainties in those places where formerly there was some seeming consensus about what one did and how one went about it.”

– Irit Rogoff, *What is a Theorist* (2004)

What is theory? How do we use theory and why is it so useful? What is the power of theory and what is its current status? What is the relationship of theory to practice and of theory to theory? What does it mean to ‘do’ theory and can theory be undone?

Professor Susannah Hagan

Professor of Architectural Research,
School of Architecture

Dr Adam Kaasa

Research Fellow, School of Architecture

Jonathan Miles

Tutor, Critical and Historical Studies

Grant Watson

Tutor, Curatorial Theory,
Curating Contemporary Art

Week 9 (full-day)

WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2015

10am-1pm

Practice as Research

Thesis-led or practice-based, every research student at the RCA is undertaking a form of practice. Every research project, whether it be in the fields of design, art, writing, performing, or curating, demonstrates a practice of thinking and making and presentation that is not transparent, but applied. What kind of knowledge production occurs in the making of art and design and what is the value of these kinds of processes of enquiry? What kind of relationship takes place between the practical and the written component of a thesis? What is the potential for writing in a college of art and design? This session offers a focus on some of the current practices of research at the RCA and also considers what they could be in the future.

Dr Jaspar Joseph-Lester
Sculpture Research Tutor

Professor Olivier Richon
Head of Programme, Photography

Dr Kevin Walker
Head of Programme,
Information Experience Design

Professor Victoria Walsh
Head of Programme,
Curating Contemporary Art

2pm – 4pm

Living Research

What does an MPhil or PhD project look like? How have previous research students at the RCA elected to design, structure, build and eventually fulfil the requirements of their degrees? In this final session for the autumn term, we will be joined by a panel of past students and students near completion who will be invited to talk over the life of their projects.

This session will be co-chaired by **Professor Jane Pavitt** (Dean, School of Humanities) and **Dr Chantal Faust** (RMC Convenor)

To be followed by:
End of RMC Autumn Term Drinks

RMC Spring Term

4x half-day sessions / 4x full day sessions

The first four weeks of the spring term are dedicated to small group seminars and workshops based on focused research problems and themes that cut across different disciplinary boundaries. Students will elect to sign up for one of these groups led by a single tutor. These half-day sessions will include reading groups, technical training and student presentations. Students will remain in these small groups (c. 10 students) to deliver their research presentations to each other and the tutor who has led the group.

Week 1 13/1/16	Group Workshop Half-day session in nominated cluster
Week 2 20/1/16	Group Workshop Half-day session in nominated cluster
Week 3 27/1/16	Group Workshop Half-day session in nominated cluster
Week 4 3/2/16	Group Workshop Half-day session in nominated cluster
Week 5	<i>RMC mid-term break</i>
Week 6 17/2/16	Student Research Presentations
Week 7 24/2/16	Student Research Presentations
Week 8 2/3/16	Student Research Presentations
Week 9 9/3/16	Student Research Presentations

RMC Summer Term

The summer term is dedicated to student-led initiatives. Each of the spring term groups will be allocated an “events budget” to put towards an event to be held in the summer term, in consultation with the RMC convenor. Events might include a one-day symposium with invited speakers, fieldtrips, guest lectures or exhibitions.