



Module Specification

Critical Manifesto

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Critical Manifesto

Module code: UBLL4C-15-M

Level: Level 7

For implementation from: 2026-27

UWE credit rating: 15

ECTS credit rating: 7.5

College: College of Arts, Technology and Environment

School: CATE School of Architecture and Environment

Partner institutions: None

Field: Architecture and the Built Environment

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: The Critical Manifesto module is designed to enable students to refine and articulate their professional and intellectual identity within the field of architecture, serving as a foundational precursor to the Design Thesis. This module encourages students to engage deeply with critical and theoretical debates, helping them to construct a personal perspective on their architectural specialism. Through a process of reflection, research, and analysis, students develop a framework for understanding their role within both the profession and the broader societal and

environmental contexts in which architecture operates. The module encourages students to examine a wide range of contemporary global challenges that intersect with architectural practice, which might include globalisation, climate change, social inequality, racism, identity, intersectionality, and decolonisation. By addressing these topics, students gain a holistic view of architecture's potential to shape and respond to societal shifts and ethical imperatives. This broader perspective supports students in understanding architecture not only as a technical discipline but as a cultural practice with deep societal impact.

A key component of this module is the exploration of historical and contemporary architectural precedents, which students critically evaluate in relation to current architectural challenges and opportunities. By investigating how past and present movements have shaped the field, students position themselves within ongoing architectural discourse, gaining a nuanced perspective on where they can innovate or challenge established norms. This approach enables students to see their work not just as isolated projects, but as contributions to a larger professional and cultural dialogue. Throughout the module, students are encouraged to engage with ethical, sustainable, and socially responsible practices, examining how these principles intersect with their specific area of expertise.

In parallel with their theoretical exploration, students conduct targeted research and analysis to examine how their developing expertise aligns with, or diverges from, prevailing architectural and societal trends. Through this analysis, students clarify their values and identify the unique perspectives they bring to the profession. This exercise not only informs their manifesto but also strengthens their ability to communicate complex ideas.

Students produce a Critical Manifesto, a document that serves as a personal declaration of their professional values, vision, and goals. This manifesto encapsulates the students' understanding of their architectural specialism, including its potential impact on the future of architecture. It articulates their aspirations and principles, grounding their future work in a clearly defined intellectual and ethical framework. The manifesto becomes a launching point for their Design Thesis.

This module supports RIBA's emphasis on professional ethics, personal integrity (E2) and historical context (E4). Students articulate a personal architectural philosophy that aligns with RIBA's standards, engaging with contemporary and historical discourses to establish their stance within the profession.

Features: Theoretical and Critical Exploration: Provides a structured environment for students to explore critical debates in architecture, building a foundation for their personal and professional development.

Personal Positioning and Manifesto Development: Guides students in defining their stance within their chosen specialism, preparing them to approach the Design Thesis with a clear, articulated vision.

Professional Reflection: Encourages students to consider how their architectural perspectives align with social and environmental responsibilities, enhancing their capacity for responsible innovation.

Educational aims: The Critical Manifesto module aims to equip students with the skills to analyse, articulate, and position their personal architectural philosophy within the context of their chosen specialism. By the end of the module, students will:

Develop a well-informed personal position in relation to key theoretical and critical debates in their specialism, grounding it in historical and contemporary architectural discourse.

Demonstrate an understanding of how diverse factors, from cultural to technological, influence architectural practices, particularly within their area of focus.

Communicate architectural concepts and values effectively, adapting style and medium to engage a variety of stakeholders and audiences.

Prepare for professional engagement with industry professionals and communities, aligning their architectural vision with ethical, inclusive, and sustainable practices.

Outline syllabus: The Critical Manifesto module is structured around key thematic explorations and skill-building sessions that guide students in formulating a personal

perspective within their chosen architectural specialism.

1. Introduction to Critical Architectural Debates

Students are introduced to a range of critical debates and theoretical frameworks in architecture, with a focus on aligning these with their specialisms. Through guided discussions and readings, students explore how architecture reflects and influences social, technological, and environmental contexts, preparing them to take a critical stance.

2. Historical and Contemporary Analysis

Students examine historical precedents alongside emerging trends within their field, developing the skills to critically evaluate architectural discourse. This includes analysing case studies and current projects within their specialism, highlighting how each trend contributes to, or challenges, the trajectory of architecture. Emphasis is placed on understanding architecture's societal role, with students exploring how architecture can address social value, inclusivity, and community needs within a contemporary professional context.

3. Research Techniques for Critical Inquiry

Students develop research skills to locate, evaluate, and synthesise diverse sources, learning to address contradictions and knowledge gaps critically. This section focuses on methods for navigating architectural literature, digital resources, and primary research, helping students build a well-rounded perspective within their specialism. This phase encourages students to interrogate their sources rigorously, identifying quality, relevance, and the broader implications for architectural practice and innovation.

4. Developing the Personal Manifesto

With guidance, students begin to construct a critical manifesto that articulates their architectural vision and professional stance. This manifesto includes a personal

assessment of how their specialism contributes to or critiques broader trends, grounded in values such as social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and ethical practice. The manifesto also serves as a strategic framework for their Design Thesis, providing them with a clear direction for addressing societal and professional challenges.

5. Communicating Architectural Values and Vision

Students learn to communicate complex architectural concepts effectively to varied audiences, practicing skills in visual, written, and oral communication. Workshops focus on adapting communication styles to diverse stakeholders, ensuring that students are prepared to present their manifesto and future thesis work clearly and professionally. The module includes sessions on digital presentation tools and other media that support clear and compelling storytelling, helping students translate abstract ideas into accessible, impactful formats.

Alignment to ARB Competency Outcomes

In this module the following ARB Academic Competency Outcomes are met and assessed to passing standard:

CK1: How diverse global, cultural, social, technological, economic factors and building technology influence aspects of architecture and urban design.

CK3: The principles and relevance of social sustainability, social value and inclusive design.

RE5: Locate and evaluate evidence that may be incomplete or contradictory, critically evaluating the quality of knowledge sources, making judgements and drawing appropriate conclusions that can inform architectural practice.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: The module uses a mix of seminars, workshops, and independent research to support the development of a critical, reflective architectural manifesto:

Seminars: Facilitated discussions introduce students to key critical debates and theoretical frameworks, encouraging them to consider their specialism within broader architectural contexts.

Workshops: Focused sessions help students develop their manifesto, providing guidance on structuring arguments, developing research, and articulating values effectively.

Independent Study: Students conduct independent research to explore historical precedents and current trends in their specialism, building the foundation for their critical manifesto.

Presentation Skills Development: Students practice communicating their architectural values clearly and persuasively, preparing for public and professional engagement.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Formulate a well-informed, personal position within a critical area of architectural practice, demonstrating alignment with ethical and professional values.

MO2 Critically analyse historical precedents and contemporary trends, applying insights to frame a unique stance.

MO3 Demonstrate an understanding of how ethical, social, and cultural values inform architectural discourse, applying these insights to develop a future design research direction.

Hours to be allocated: 150

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 114 hours

Face-to-face learning = 36 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link

<https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/16CD7DEF-1270-FC7B-6713-84A8740289C4.html>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Personal Critical Manifesto (100%)

The assessment requires students to submit an illustrated manifesto that articulates their critical position within their specialism, including reflections on theoretical underpinnings, historical and contemporary trends, and ethical considerations. The manifesto should demonstrate a well-researched, reflective stance that prepares students to approach their Design Thesis with a clear professional vision.

Objectives: This assessment evaluates students' ability to develop research, critically engage with architectural discourse, and communicate a coherent personal stance that aligns with ethical and professional values.

Formative Feedback: Students receive feedback during seminars and workshops, allowing for iterative development and refinement of their critical manifesto.

Resit Assessment: For resit assessments, students will have the opportunity to refine and resubmit their original manifesto, following the same brief and submission guidelines as the main assessment to fully meet the established objectives.

Assessment tasks:

Project (First Sit)

Description: Personal Critical Manifesto

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

Project (Resit)

Description: Personal Critical Manifesto

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Architecture [Frenchay] MArch 2025-26

Architecture [Frenchay] MArch 2025-26

Architecture {Apprenticeship-UWE}[Frenchay] MArch 2025-26