

DES304 Sensing Environments

School: School of Business and Creative Industries

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course will give you a strong ecocritical grounding, practical fieldwork experience and fundamental audio-visual documentation skills to create work that responds to a diversity of environments and ecosystems. Through interdisciplinary practice which intersects sound, photography and design, you will focus on creative technologies and emerging methods for understanding and sensing changing environments. This course will introduce you to the potential of new technologies for creative practice including spatial audio, XR, drone photography and locative media.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled face to face workshops.	2hrs	Week 1	10 times
Fieldwork – Scheduled face to face field trips	2hrs	Week 5	2 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled online workshops (recorded)/	2hrs	Week 1	10 times
Fieldwork – Scheduled virtual field trips (Recorded).	2hrs	Week 5	2 times

1.3. Course Topics

First Nations perspectives
Understanding landscapes
Seeing and listening in place
Oceans, rivers and rainforests
Photography and the environment
Sonic geography and field recording
Visualising place
Sensory ecology
Locative media
Environmental mapping and monitoring
The science of sound and photography
Shifting perspectives
Site-specific art and design
Audio-visual post production
Immersive environments

2. What level is this course?

300 Level (Graduate)

Demonstrating coherence and breadth or depth of knowledge and skills. Independent application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Meeting professional requirements and AQF descriptors for the degree. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory or developing knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally undertaken in the third or fourth full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES		GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1	Application of principles of environmental engagement and demonstrated ecological awareness	Sustainability-focussed
2	Demonstrated application of the principles of image and audio quality, creativity and technical skills within a creative project	Empowered
3	Recognise and reflect upon local, regional, and global perspectives in approaching creative practices.	Engaged
4	Analyse and apply the post-production pipeline to a complex project.	Empowered
5	Apply reflective practice, innovation and experimentation to design outcomes that are responsive and adaptable in diverse contexts to imagine, shape and navigate a future that is changing rapidly by design.	Empowered
6	Apply design thinking, ethical practice, and inclusive design methods to generate innovative creative projects and original ideas for diverse contexts locally and internationally.	Ethical
7	Apply design methods and creative thinking that respond to the SDGs including SDG 3 (health and well-being), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land)	Ethical Sustainability-focussed

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Formative feedback on Task 1 will be provided in Week 4 during tutorials. Formative feedback on Task 2 and Task 3 will occur during field work.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Individual	30%	3–5 minutes of audio, 6–8 images, 250-word critical reflection, and project documentation.	Week 6	Online Submission
All	2	Artefact - Creative	Individual	40%	5-6 minutes audio-visual work, with process documentation	Week 11	Online Submission
All	3	Journal	Individual	30%	2000 word journal, supporting images, audio and video	Exam Period	Online Submission

All - Assessment Task 1: Locative Media Project

GOAL:	The goal of this task is to create a geolocated digital map using original images and sound that demonstrate ecological awareness, an understanding of place and the application of design principles. Your project will respond to a selected field location and will be published in a accessible mobile application.		
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece		
FORMAT:	<p>You will select one field location and create 6–8 original images and 3–5 minutes of audio recordings for publication on an interactive geolocated digital map. The resulting work will be presented for public engagement, with the geolocated map accessible through a mobile application for locative media.</p> <p>Your submission will include project documentation, including original images, audio files, fieldwork reflections, production notes and a 250-word critical reflection on the final artefact. This documentation should demonstrate your field work, creative process, ecological engagement and connection to place.</p> <p>Please refer to the Assessment 1 folder on Canvas for the full project brief, relevant readings, links to mobile applications and production advice.</p>		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Demonstrate and apply an ecological awareness and understanding of place, environment and design principles.	1
	2	Application of the principles of image and audio quality, creativity and technical skills	2
	3	Demonstrated understanding and application of inclusive design, ethical practice and cultural awareness	5 6
	4	Application of innovation and experimentation in design outcomes and post-production.	4 5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Applying technologies		

All - Assessment Task 2: Sensing Environments Audio-Visual Project

GOAL:	Select one field location and create a series of images, audio recordings and video that you will compose into an audio-visual experience exploring your connection to place and the temporal qualities of the environment. Your work should respond to subtle and dynamic shifts in the environment, including light, sound and sensory experience, using creative and ecological methods to interpret the site through an audio-visual experience.																			
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative																			
FORMAT:	<p>You will select one field location (this may be a site explored in the course or a location of your choice) and record a series of images, audio and video that respond to your sensory and ecological connection to place. This could include drone videography, underwater photography or 3D sound recording. You will then compose these recordings into an audio-visual experience of 5-6 minutes, using the editing techniques introduced in this course. The final work should be suitable for large-scale projection and will be presented in a public showcase.</p> <p>Your creative artefact may draw on sensory photography and acoustic ecology to interpret subtle and dynamic environmental shifts, responding to qualities of light, sound, movement and atmospheric change. The images and recordings should remain focused on sensing the environment, offering multiple perspectives that reveal the temporal qualities of the site.</p> <p>Your submission will also include your process documentation, including field documentation and a 500-word report reflecting on your production processes, field experience and creative interpretation of place. Please refer to the Assessment 2 folder on Canvas for the full project brief, relevant readings, links and examples.</p>																			
CRITERIA:	<table> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th><th></th><th>Learning Outcome assessed</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Ability to describe, engage and reflect on the ecological, social and cultural contexts of the environment with a strong visual and auditory awareness.</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Application of principles of image and audio quality, creativity, and technical implementation of the audio-visual transitions.</td><td>2 3</td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>Application of technical skills and ability to manage digital assets in post production environments.</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>Application of environmental knowledge and cultural understanding in generating original ideas for diverse applications</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr> <td>5</td><td>Application of SGDs in creative outcomes</td><td>7</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Ability to describe, engage and reflect on the ecological, social and cultural contexts of the environment with a strong visual and auditory awareness.	1	2	Application of principles of image and audio quality, creativity, and technical implementation of the audio-visual transitions.	2 3	3	Application of technical skills and ability to manage digital assets in post production environments.	4	4	Application of environmental knowledge and cultural understanding in generating original ideas for diverse applications	6	5	Application of SGDs in creative outcomes	7	
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5	Application of SGDs in creative outcomes	7																		
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies																			

All - Assessment Task 3: Field Journal

GOAL:	The goal of this task is to create an immersive field journal that reflects on the field experiences and documents the development of key ideas and concepts in text, images, video and sound.		
PRODUCT:	Journal		
FORMAT:	<p>The field journal will document your personal responses and critical reflections on fieldwork, audio-visual artefacts and post-production activities. It should record the process of creating audio-visual material in the field and provide thoughtful reflection on the ecological, social and cultural contexts of the sites you engage with. Your journal should demonstrate how your sensory observations, creative decisions and ecological methods informed your understanding of place.</p> <p>The 2000-word journal will be presented online via ArcGIS StoryMaps and will include documentation from Task 1 and Task 2, integrating the development of your locative media and audio-visual work. The journal may include images, sounds, maps, reflective field notes and other relevant documentation, and should also include images of you in the field with the creative technology you use during your field work. Your journal must reference at least three course readings or project examples and draw meaningful connections between theory, field practice and creative interpretation.</p> <p>You will receive formative feedback on your journal in Week 12 prior to final submission.</p>		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Demonstrated ecological awareness and understanding of place, environment and design principles	1 2
	2	Ability to recognise and reflect upon local, regional, and global perspectives in approaching creative practices with environmental concerns	3
	3	Demonstrated application of reflective practice, experimentation and critical thinking in field journal and design outcomes	5 6
	4	Communication and professional presentation	1 2
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Applying technologies		

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

Not applicable

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Risk assessments have been performed for all field activities and low to moderate levels of health and safety risk exists. Moderate risks may include working in an Australian bush setting, working with people, working outside normal office hours for example. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty

From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty

More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au