

Protocols Master New Media & Digital Culture

Last revised by Imar de Vries, 13-11-2011

1. Please first see

Faculty Master's website: www.uu.nl/faculty/humanities/EN/education/mastersprogrammes/newmediadigitalculture/Pages/default.aspx

OER: www.uu.nl/faculty/humanities/NL/Onderwijs/studiepunt/onderwijsregelingen/onderwijs-enexamenregelingen/Pages/default.aspx (will soon be available in English)

2. Coursework (30 ECTS)

- 1) In the first half year of your Masters you take four courses from those on offer from the MA New Media & Digital Culture semester programme. Requests to take courses elsewhere must be presented to the Exam Committee.
- 2) During your coursework, based on your preferences for specific research areas and staff availability, you will be appointed a tutor, who will supervise and assess you in the second half of your Masters. With your tutor, you will discuss these MA protocols and establish mutual expectations in terms of availability, manner of feedback, and evaluation. Not every tutor is or works the same way, so be sure that these agreements are clear at an early stage. Should problems arise with your tutor, you are advised to contact the MA coordinator, Ann-Sophie Lehmann (a.s.lehmann@uu.nl).
- 3) You may only begin with the second, individualized part of your Masters once you have successfully completed at least three NMDC MA courses (see the *OER*). If you have not passed two or more courses, contact your tutor and the MA coordinator.

3. Individual trajectory (30 ECTS)

In the second half year of your Masters you will work independently, under supervision of your tutor. If you exceed the planned MA schedule by more than half a year, tutor supervision may be stopped; the MA coordinator will be notified in any case where the planned time is exceeded.

In the individual trajectory, which consists of the *Research internship* and the *MA thesis*, the focus is always on various ways of carrying out independent academic research:

- during the period of your internship, this entails carrying out research embedded in the practical duties and producing an empirical/concrete report of it;
- in the MA thesis, this entails deeper engagement with, and further reflection on, the NMDC field of research, prepared by a literature survey, formulation of a research question, and determining the research methodology.

Both components are described in detail below.

Research internship (15 ECTS)

Code: MCMV10016

Title in the course catalogue and study guide: THE-Research Internship/ MA NMDC

- 1) You can find internship positions via the internship offerings on the NMDC website (see www.newmediastudies.nl/jobs-and-internships), via the general internship site of the faculty (www.hum.uu.nl/stage), via Mediastages (www.media-stages.nl), via VillaMedia (<http://www.villamedia.nl/n/vacatures.shtm>), via your tutor or via other avenues. Let your choice be guided by your work interests as well as your research interests, and bear in mind that an internship of at least 15 ECTS requires a time investment of approximately three months full time.
- 2) As soon as you have found an internship position, you need to prepare a plan of work and an internship agreement, the forms for which you can download at www.uu.nl/faculty/humanities/NL/Onderwijs/studiepunt/ontplooing/stage/Pages/formulieren.aspx. Your plan of work should consist of the filled out form (which serves as the cover page) and a content section, which must contain all of the following:

- Name, student number, tutor, name of your supervisor at the internship position, their address, telephone number and email address (if available), plus the period of the internship;
- A justification of the choice of internship;
- A description of your research proposal, which clearly states the kind of question you want to answer with what theory, approach and material;
- A description of the content and time frame of the work to be carried out, both the practical as well as the research related aspects;
- Agreements about the nature and intensity of supervision, both from the internship institution and from your tutor.

Once all has been approved and signed by your tutor, turn the entire pack back in to the *Studiepunt*, and you will be automatically registered for the internship.

- 3) Work during the internship consists by definition of two parts: practical duties and the research portion. The practical duties consist of the work that the institution or business took you on for: editorial work, advice, organization, etc. Usually this results in delivering a specific product (report, website). Besides these duties, you carry out academic research that is embedded in your specific work environment. In the ideal scenario the practical and research portions will overlap one-for-one: that is when your workplace asks you to conduct academic research for them. In most cases, the two parts are separate, and in your planning you should bear both portions in mind. Both the practical duties and the broader research question and method should be described in your work plan. Your tutor must approve the plan before you can start!
- 4) Your internship research report will consist of a description and reporting of your *research*. Evaluative attention to the practical duties – including, where applicable (a summary of) the products delivered – can be integrated into the research, or you can include it in an appendix or the introduction. It should be clear that no two reports are alike; the final form of your report will flow out of choices you make in consultation with your tutor. In terms of size, you should think of around 8000 words (not including products). You will further be asked to write about 300 words for publication on newmediastudies.nl.
- 5) Your tutor will generally visit you at your workplace at the start or at the end of your internship to discuss the setup or the evaluation of your internship with you and your supervisor. The final evaluation of your internship will take place on the bases of these discussions, the evaluation form filled in by your supervisor, and of course the quality of your report.

MA Thesis (15 ECTS)

Code: MCMV10009

Title in the course catalogue and study guide: THE-Masterthesis/ MA NMDC

- 1) In your MA thesis you have the opportunity to write a final academic work on a topic of your choice. This could, for example, be an extension of your internship research, going into further depth and conceptual reflection. The length should be about 12000 to 16000 words.
- 2) It is also possible, in consultation with your tutor, to turn your internship report and your MA thesis into a single (larger) work. In this case, you need to consider carefully the structural coherence! Think, for example, of using your internship research as a specific case-study within a broader (more conceptual) research framework. The length of such a combined work should be at least 20000 words. **Please note:** You will still receive two separate grades, one for the ‘internship’ portion and one for the ‘thesis’ portion.
- 3) In preparation for writing your MA thesis, you will have to assemble a *thesis concept*. This consists of two sections. First, a reading dossier with a list of at least 15 academic titles/references. Choose/describe five keywords *in total* that cover the whole field of your research and assign *two each* to all of the titles read. At least five of your chosen sources will have to be presented in reading analyses (max. 800 words), where you discuss their relevance for your research question. Second, you will hand in a preliminary *research question* and *research design* (max. two pages) that make clear what you are planning to do and how your reading dossier will help you with that.
- 4) Before you actually begin with writing, you will be asked by your tutor and a second reader to take an oral exam in which you talk about the connections with your chosen literature, the academic relevance, and, where applicable, about the relationship with your internship research. Consider this a public defense of your

research proposal, where you will demonstrate your knowledge (vocabulary, repertoire and discourse) of the field of New Media & Digital Culture. After oral approval, a thesis protocol will be signed, indicating to the *Studiepunten* that you have started on your MA thesis (see also www.uu.nl/faculty/humanities/EN/education/mastersprogrammes/newmediadigitalculture/studyprogramme/masterthesis/Pages/default.aspx).

- 5) The MA thesis has two specific moments of revision. That is to say that as you write your thesis, your tutor will give you feedback within an agreed-upon time, whereupon you will adjust your work. This will ensure that you will be able to round off the MA programme with as good a thesis possible (and that we can be even prouder!). Your final version will be assessed by your tutor and a second reader.
- 6) If you publish your MA thesis via the university library's system *Igitur*, please ensure that it conforms completely to academic standards. That means that you include a clear cover page with the title of the work, your name, your student number, name of the MA programme, faculty and university; that the pages are numbered, that your work is absolutely free of spelling errors; that your references and bibliography look tip-top; and that the layout is clear and readable.

4. Quality requirements

Oral

In the preparatory discussion for your MA thesis you will give a presentation of your proposed research. The presentation will be assessed on the following three criteria:

- 1) Vocabulary (descriptive and analytic): you can give a coherent description, in adequate terms, of your research, the literature you have read, and the assigned keywords.
- 2) Repertoire (comparative and historical): you can situate your research and literature in the relevant contexts, you can name and evaluate various positions, movements, genres, methods, research traditions, etc.
- 3) Discourse (theoretical and argumentative): you know the dominant thought models, theories and concepts in the academic field, and you can place your research within them.

Written

- 1) The internship research report is written primarily in an argumentative-descriptive mode, and provides a justification for the work and research carried out. Your MA thesis is primarily an academic text, which is expected to contribute to current debates in relevant fields of research. Both are structured around a clearly defined central research question, to which an answer is formulated. In answering the question, it must be clear throughout what steps you have taken to answer the question, how and why you have made the given choices, and what useful results you have found.
- 2) Assessment will above all focus on the following points:
 - Focus: Is your central research question clear, delimited and answerable?
 - Knowledge of the field: Is your question clearly positioned in a scientific debate? Do you show that you know the relevant literature and discussions? Do you know the limits of the different positions?
 - Research quality: Do you give sufficient treatment of relevant primary and secondary sources?
 - Methodology: Have you made clear what methods you will use to answer your question? Have you used them consistently?
 - Argumentation: Are your arguments clear and followable? Do your results support your conclusions? Have you found a good balance between evidence and argumentation?
 - Presentation: Is your work written in clear and careful Dutch/English? Do you have a formal and eloquent style? Are your notes, references and bibliography assembled in a consistent academic form?
 - Originality: Have you been creative in your approach? Have you worked independently and not leaned too heavily on the work of others?

5. Time frame

Below you will find a table that shows per cohort when you will need to *complete* specific aspects of the MA in order to graduate. The responsibility to complete within one year lies with the student; it is possible if you work hard for it!

| | September cohort | February cohort |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| First two MA courses finished | End block 1 (start of November) | End block 3 (mid April) |
| Tutor assigned, first meeting | Mid November | End of April |
| Start looking for an internship | November/December | May/August |
| Second two MA courses finished | End block 2 (start of February) | End block 4 (end June) |
| Start internship | Mid February | Start of September |
| Internship work & research plan | End February | Mid September |
| Internship final research report | Start of May | Start of November |
| MA thesis plan & oral exam | Mid to end May | Mid November |
| MA thesis final | Mid to end August | Start February |

6. Exam dossiers and graduation

See www.uu.nl/faculty/humanities/EN/education/mastersprogrammes/newmediadigitalculture/graduation/Pages/default.aspx for an overview of the regulations and deadlines for graduation exams.