Media Studies: Digital Cultures

Master's Programme

MA Digital Cultures regular

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Transformations in Digital Cultures

Full course description

This course focuses on digitalisation and its transformations for our society and culture. Digitalisation, the process of integrating digital technologies into all areas of our lives, has produced new interfaces between society, culture and doing social research. The theoretical framework "techno-moral change" will be introduced at the beginning of the course. Within this framework we will discuss topics such as digital participation, gender and technology, body and brain visions, and future imaginaries of digital technologies.

Can we observe technomoral changes in the ways we deal with topics relevant for us as individuals (e.g. privacy, AI and body visions, gendering digital tools), as communities (political and cultural participation) or the environment (e.g. e-trash)? The method introduced in this module is the qualitative interview. Your task will be to conduct an interview in English to investigate techno-moral change in a specific area discussed in this course.

Course objectives

Introduction in digital cultures; introduction to the theoretical framework techno-moral change; introduction to social media and user practices as e.g. net activism and digital participation; introduction in problem based learning; introduction to qualitative interviewing.

Recommended reading

Mager, A. & Katzenbach, C. (2021). Future imaginaries in the making and governing of digital technologies. New Media & Society, 23(2), 223-236.

Royakkers, L., Timmer, J., Kool, L., & van Est, R. (2018). Societal and Ethical Issues of Digitization. Ethics and Information Technology, 20(2), 127-142.

Swierstra, T. (2015). Identifying the normative challenges posed by technology's 'soft' impacts. Etikk i praksis. Nordic Journal of Applied Ethics, 9(1), 5–20.

See course book for further required and recommended reading.

DCU4000
Period 1
1 Sep 2021

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

22 Oct 2021
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- K. Wenz

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s), Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Final paper, Assignment
Keywords:
Digitalisation, techno-moral change, future imaginaries of technology
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Research Design

Full course description

In this module, students will draw together what they have learned so far: in order to develop their research plan for the MA thesis. In designing this research plan, they will apply and deepen the thematic, theoretical, and methodological knowledge and skills gained during previous modules. In addition, they will train methodological approaches complementing their research skills. Each of the five first-semester modules emphasised a particular disciplinary and/or theoretical approach and a specific methodology in a problem oriented and interdisciplinary context. In this module, students will develop their own research project - deciding on a suitable topic, methodology, and relevant theory. The research plan will support them in connecting their own research questions and strategies to previous modules. Students will design this research plan in a step-by-step process, receiving input and guidance through lectures, tutorials, and workshops.

Course objectives

Developing a research plan for the MA thesis: this includes deciding on a suitable topic, methodology, and relevant theory; applying knowledge and skills gained during previous modules; expanding and deepening methodological knowledge and skills to support students' work on their MA thesis.

Recommended reading

Basingstoke [etc.]: Palgrave/Macmillan. Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2003). Bertrand, I., & The Craft of Research. Chicago [etc.]: University of Chicago Press. Stokes, J. (2013). How to Do

Media and Cultural Studies. Los Angeles [etc.]: SAGE.

Hughes, P.(2005). Media Research Methods: Audiences, Institutions, Texts.

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Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2015). Digital ethnography: Principles and practice. Sage.

Ridley, D. (2012). The Literature Review: A step-by-Step Guide for Students. London: Sage.

Seale, C. (2007). Researching Society and Culture. Sage.

DCU4005
Period 4
1 Feb 2022
1 Apr 2022
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
5.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- A.S. Richterich

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL, Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
research plan, research questions, Theory, Methodology, peer-review
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Real Virtualities

Full course description

Media extend our senses and our engagement with the world—as Marshall McLuhan, the father of media studies, famously said. In this process media do not leave things untouched, but transform how we experience our environment and how we act in it. With webcams we access the world online from wherever we are. Our cellphones help us to keep our friends with us anywhere we go. Artificial assistants serve us and provide new forms of companionship. In these processes, of online experience and action becomes inextricably entangled. This course reflects on this emerging culture of 'real virtuality'. Students will be introduced to two main philosophers that have dealt with the changing relationship between 'the real' and 'the virtual' (W. Benjamin, J. Baudrillard). The issues they address in relationship to older media such as photography, film and television will be related to new media practices, such as telepresence and augmented   reality, and evaluated in the light of these. The methodology introduced is (post)phenomenology. Where the thinkers mentioned above take an overarching approach, Donhde's phenomenology focuses on concrete sets of perceptual relations between users, media and the world and helps to make more nuanced analyses, based on empirical data. During the course students will discuss different media applications and work towards their own analysis of an application and layers of reality and virtuality involved.

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

Course objectives

Introduction to three relevant philosophical positions and hands on introduction to the phenomenological analysis of experiencing (through) media.

Recommended reading

See course book for required and recommended reading.

DCU4001
Period 1
1 Sep 2021
22 Oct 2021
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [D.J. Kamphof](#)

Teaching methods:
PBL
Assessment methods:
Assignment, Final paper
Keywords:
Reality, virtuality, mediation
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Creating Digital Collections I

Full course description

This is part I of a two part course. Taken together, these courses are designed as a capstone course which brings together much of the skills and knowledge, theories and methods taught in previous courses, along with new competencies to design a specific type of web presence, that of a digital collection. It does this by having you consider the ethical, methodological, theoretical, and practical issues regarding collecting and curation, representation, reconstruction, and reproduction. Taking a project-based approach to PBL, students will collaboratively work to develop a digital collection (depending on the year this might be a collection of images, tweets, text, or 3D objects) utilising skills and competencies, such project management, design thinking, content development, web design, podcasts, technical integration, and social media. In 2021-2022 the course will focus on material culture with the ultimate aim to create a 3D digital collection. The 3D objects will be contextualised thematically for a specific audience, with interactive elements inviting readers to actively participate in knowledge creation. In Part I of the course, students will be introduced to the tools and methods that they will use for the digitisation of the collection, including digital photography protocols, capturing and processing software, and online 3D repositories. Particular emphasis will be placed on the field of computational imaging; a field in computer science that studies the computational extraction of information from digital photographs that has democratised

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

preservation and dissemination of heritage. They will also delve into different debates in the digitisation of material culture, including authenticity, reconstruction, transparency, and the aura of the digital.

Course objectives

By the end of this course, students will have the ability to use digital tools and methods to record 3D material culture. They will also develop skills in problematising collections by exploring the politics of collecting and digitisation, investigating their affordances, and scrutinising principles and practices of curation in traditional and new media collections.

Recommended reading

Conway, B. (2010). New Directions in the Sociology of Collective Memory and Commemoration. Sociology Compass, 4(7), 442–453.

Manoff, M. (2006). The materiality of digital collections: Theoretical and historical perspectives. portal: Libraries and the Academy, 6(3), 311-325.

Modest, W. & Lelijveld, R., Eds (2018). Words Matter, Work in Progress I. National Museum of World Cultures.

Pearce, S (1994). 'The Urge to Collect', in Susan Pearce (ed.), Interpreting Objects and Collections, London, pp. 157-9.

Tebeau, M. (2016). Engaging the Materiality of the Archive in the Digital Age. Collections, 12(4), 475–487.

Watkins, R.B., Sellen, A. and Lindley, S.E. (2015). Digital Collections and Digital Collecting Practices. In Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '15). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 3423–3432.

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

3D modelling, digitisation, material culture, online collections, heritage, new media
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Creating Digital Collections II

Full course description

In part II of this course, students will utilise the 3D artefacts created in Part I of this course to create an online collection and disseminate the research. Working in small teams, students will contribute to specific aspects of the final project based on their skills, expertise, and interests. This will include project management, content development, web design, creation of video content and audio narratives, technical integration, and social media. This course will explore, both theoretically and practically, the narrative being created in the design and presentation of artefacts while situating this collection within a conversation of other similar web-based artefacts, collections, and narratives.

Course objectives

To apply design thinking practices and maker culture ethos to the creation of a digital collection while being cognizant in its design and technical choices of audiences and stakeholders. To understand how and what the project design communicates (however intentional/unintentional) about past cultures as well as our own situatedness in time and space. They will design wireframes for the digital collection to be implemented in the next study period.

Recommended reading

See the course book for required and recommended reading.

DCU4010
Period 4
31 Jan 2022
25 Feb 2022
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
5.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- [S. Schreibman](#)
- [K. Papadopoulos](#)

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL, Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Assignment, Assessment
Keywords:
material culture, online collections, heritage, object biographies, new media, project-based learning, project management
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Design Thinking and Maker Culture

Full course description

This course will introduce students to the theories, methods, and principles of Design Thinking and the ethos of Maker Culture. Design thinking combines what is desirable from a human point of view with what is technologically feasible and economically viable. It has become a crucial tool and mindset that enables projects, organisations and companies to think creatively beyond traditional logical and analytical approaches, helping them to be agile and critically responsive to change. This course takes a design-derived perspective on challenge-oriented learning and problem solving and analysis. It will provide models for how to generate creative ideas for deriving solutions to problems in a variety of contexts and will introduce students to different 'making practices'. The course will provide human/user-centred understanding to the formulation of problems, and their resolution. A group project (within which project management will be taught), will provide the vehicle from which to apply these theories and methods. Training in the fundamentals of audio editing/recording will equip students with the professional skills necessary to produce a podcast, while an introduction to key concepts and approaches in sound studies will help students to ground them conceptually.

Course objectives

By the end of this course students will understand the twin theories of design thinking and maker culture. They will combine these methods, along with project management and audio editing/recording skills, in a project-and-team-based learning approach to the development of an app-based audio soundscape.

Recommended reading

Davies, S. R. (2017). Hackerspaces: Making the maker movement. John Wiley & Sons.

Sterne, J.(ed.) (2012). The Sound Studies Reader. London: Routledge.

Sayers, Jentery (ed.) (2017). Making Things and Drawing Boundaries: Experiments in the Digital Humanities. Minnesota Press.

DCU4007
Period 2
25 Oct 2021
17 Dec 2021
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- A.S. Richterich

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL, Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

Assignment

Keywords:

Design Thinking, project management, Maker Culture, Sound Technologies and Cultural Practices

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Machines of Knowledge

Full course description

This course will introduce students to the transformation of the World Wide Web from an information space to one that is increasingly seen as a series of dynamic knowledge sites. These new types of sites take advantage of the affordances of Web 2.0, including more dynamic multimodality, interactivity, user-generated content and enhanced usability. These changes in how content is generated, shared, and delivered raise new issues, including the ethics and challenges of creating, curating, archiving, and preserving digital content.

New media players, such as Google and Facebook, have the power to shape public opinion. Wealth and power determine the circulation and visibility of information and as a consequence fake/junk news, misinformation, deep fakes, and propaganda undermine media independence while creating polarisation and bias; human- or machine-generated echo chambers, filter bubbles, and micro-celebrities/ influencers all have an influence on how information is transmitted and consumed. The fragmented nature of reporting and its remix with entertainment, together with more recent phenomena, such as shitstorms and 'cancel culture' have given new meaning to the notion of public sphere. Do these new ways of generating, distributing, and consuming information lead to the creation of new machines of knowledge or can they potentially lead to the gradual depoliticisation of public communication?

Course objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to problematise approaches to the digitisation, curation, and preservation of web-based content while interrogating the role of World Wide Web in the production of knowledge. Students will also learn how to apply distant reading, text mining, and visualisation tools to explore a research question pertinent to generation, use, sharing, delivery, and presentation of data on the web and will be able to discuss this within postcolonial and feminist frames.

Recommended reading

D'Ignazio, C. and Klein, L. (2020). Data Feminism. MIT Press.

Fuchs, C., Hofkirchner, W., Schafranek, M., Raffl, C., Sandoval, M., & Bichler, R. (2010). Theoretical foundations of the web: cognition, communication, and co-operation. Towards an understanding of Web 1.0, 2.0, 3.0. Future Internet, 2(1), 41-59.

Michael A. Peters & Tina Besley (2019) Digital archives in the cloud: Collective memory, institutional histories and the politics of information, Educational Philosophy and Theory, 51:10, 1020-1029.

Mirowski, P. (2018). The future (s) of open science. Social studies of science, 48(2), 171-203.

Sinclair, S. and Rockwell, S. (2016). Text Analysis and Visualization: Making Meaning Count, In S.

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Schreibman, R. Siemens, and J. Unsworth (Eds.) A New Companion to the Digital Humanities (pp. 274–90). Wiley Blackwell.

Tong, J. (2015). The formation of an agonistic public sphere: Emotions, the Internet and news media in China. China Information, 29(3), 333–351.

See the course book for required and recommended reading.

DCU4008
Period 2
25 Oct 2021
17 Dec 2021
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [K. Papadopoulos](#)

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL, Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Assignment
Keywords:
digital archives, cultural memory, data feminism, postcolonialism, Public Sphere, data ethics, distant reading
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Mentor meetings

DCU4500
Period 1
1 Sep 2021
22 Oct 2021
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
0.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- [S. Schreibman](#)
- [K. Papadopoulos](#)

MA Digital Cultures Thesis

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Workshops supporting Thesis and Internship

Full course description

For further information please contact the course coordinator.

DCU4700
Period 4
31 Jan 2022
30 Jun 2022
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
0.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- [K. Papadopoulos](#)
- A.S. Richterich

Teaching methods:
Skills
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Thesis

Full course description

Students write an extensive MA thesis of at least 24.000 words, for which they independently and individually conduct research in the field of media/digital cultures. The MA thesis is written under supervision of one of the MA teaching staff members (but they may also choose another supervisor from the FASoS staff). For the assessment a second reader will be added.

Course objectives

The thesis, as a traditional final assessment of a MA programme,provides students with the opportunity of engaging in in depth research and deepening their knowledge of a specific field in media/digital cultures. The thesis is research-oriented and students often choose it as preparation for a second MA programme or for future research. Students have wide latitude in their choice of topic, with the caveat that it draws from the theories, methods, and/or practices taught in the MA MC:DC programme.

DCU4800
Period 4
31 Jan 2022
30 Jun 2022
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
22.0

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- [K. Papadopoulos](#)
- A.S. Richterich

Assessment methods:
Final paper

MA Digital Cultures Internship

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Workshops supporting Thesis and Internship

Full course description

For further information please contact the course coordinator.

DCU4700
Period 4
31 Jan 2022
30 Jun 2022
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
0.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinators:

- [K. Papadopoulos](#)
- A.S. Richterich

Teaching methods:
Skills
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Internship

Full course description

Many students choose to undertake an internship. Students are responsible for finding their own placement and we advise students pursuing this option to begin early in the study year to secure a position. For non-Dutch speaking students it may pose challenges to find a placement in the Maastricht region. Thus students may choose to return to their home country for this part of their study. The internship starts in April and should last at least two months. We have a database of past placements to help students in securing an internship opportunity.

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

Course objectives

To develop students' expertise within a professional context and to apply knowledge learned in the course to a real-world project.

DCU4990
Period 4
31 Jan 2022
30 Jun 2022
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
8.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [C. Rasterhoff](#)

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Internship report

Full course description

The internship report can best be described as a diary of the practical work undertaken during the internship. It describes the projects(s) the student worked on. It may include a development, business or marketing plan or a white paper. The report should critically reflect and evaluate the internship within the context of the MA MC:DC programme. The report is marked by the faculty supervisor and a second reader.

Course objectives

The goal of this report is to introduce the internship to the reader, as well as to reflect on the practical aspects of the project and evaluate its results. The report should include a reflection that relates the professional and practical aspects of the internship to the theories and methods studied in the course. This report should provide insight into the professional experience of the student, as well as what aspects of the programme proved useful within a work context.

DCU4991
Period 4
31 Jan 2022
30 Jun 2022
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
2.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [C. Rasterhoff](#)

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

Assessment methods:
Final paper
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Internship thesis

Full course description

Those students who undertake an internship also have to write a short internship thesis of 12.000 words. This short thesis has to be clearly related to at least one of the courses and must be finished before the internship starts in May. The internship thesis is written under supervision of one of the staff members.

Course objectives

The thesis, as a traditional final assessment of a MA programme, provides students with the opportunity of engaging in research and deepening their knowledge of a specific field in media/digital cultures. Students have wide latitude in their choice of topic, with the caveat that it draws from the theories, methods, and/or practices taught in the MA MC:DC programme.

DCU4890
Period 4
31 Jan 2022
30 Jun 2022
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
12.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [C. Rasterhoff](#)

Assessment methods:
Final paper