

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 “technomoral change” and “sociotechnical imaginaries” will be introduced at the beginning of the course. Within these frameworks we will discuss topics such as ethics, morals and values, gendering AI, AI and robots, AI and creativity and digitalisation and sustainability.

Can we observe technomoral changes in the ways we deal with topics relevant for us as individuals, as communities or the environment (e.g. e-trash)? The methods introduced in this course are the qualitative interview and focus groups. Your task will be to conduct two interviews in English or a focus group in English to investigate a topic related to this course more in depth.

Course objectives

Introduction in digital cultures; introduction to the theoretical frameworks technomoral change and sociotechnical imaginaries; introduction in problem based learning; introduction to qualitative interviewing and focus groups.

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

4 Sep 2023

27 Oct 2023

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

[Print course description](#)

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

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. Augmented realities provide us with a physical world, overlaid with information. In these processes, off- and online experience and action become 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, generalising approach, Don Ihde’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 the layers of reality and virtuality that its use involves.

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

4 Sep 2023

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

27 Oct 2023

[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

Mentor Meetings

Full course description

Upon starting the MA Digital Cultures, you will be assigned a mentor: this academic faculty member will help you find your way at FASoS, and will talk to you about matters concerning your studies. During period 1, every student will attend an individual meeting with their mentor. Afterwards, there will be plenary meetings; you can contact your mentor by email in case of questions; and individual meetings can be arranged upon request. Please note that FASoS also has study advisors, with whom you can confidentially discuss personal or health-related matters that may impact your studies.

DCU4500

Period 1

4 Sep 2023

27 Oct 2023

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

0.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [A.S. Richterich](#)

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

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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 (critical) making practices. The course will provide a human/user-centred understanding to the formulation of problems, and their resolution. A group project, to be created during a design sprint, 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 theories of design thinking, critical making, and the ethos of maker culture. They will be trained in ethnographic methods, notably design ethnography and digital ethnography. As a media skills component, students will participate in audio editing/recording skills trainings, and produce a podcast on their experience with design thinking or critical making.

Recommended reading

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

Kimbell, L. (2011). Rethinking design thinking: Part I. *Design and culture*, 3(3), 285-306.

Ratto, M. (2011). Critical making: Conceptual and material studies in technology and social life. *The information society*, 27(4), 252-260.

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

DCU4007

Period 2

30 Oct 2023

22 Dec 2023

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [A.S. Richterich](#)

Teaching methods:

Lecture(s), PBL, Work in subgroups

Assessment methods:

Assignment

Keywords:

Design Thinking, Critical making, Maker Culture, make-tivism, podcast production, audio editing

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 analysing this content for research and business purposes.

New media players, especially large social networks, have the power to shape public opinion. On the one hand, digital activism can help underrepresented groups find a voice and lobby for political representation. On the other hand, social media are often linked with mis/disinformation,, (e.g. in the form of deep fakes) that undermine users' abilities to form their own opinions and create polarisation and bias. Navigating these opportunities and challenges, this course introduces you to the basics of computational text analysis ("distant reading") and trains you in applying this method to data collected from the web. We will explore different tools for data collection, data cleaning and data analysis / visualisation to critically reflect on how users interact online, how trending topics arise, and how digital communities are formed.

Course objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to problematise approaches to the digitisation, curation, analysis 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. 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

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in China. *China Information*, 29(3), 333-351.

See the course book for required and recommended reading.

DCU4008

Period 2

30 Oct 2023

22 Dec 2023

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinators:

- [M. Barget](#)
- [M.R. Barget](#)

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

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. Students will develop their own research project - deciding on a suitable topic, methodology, and relevant theory, and reflecting on relevant ethical considerations. 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, incl. ethical considerations, 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).

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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.

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

DCU4005

Period 3

8 Jan 2024

2 Feb 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

6.0

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

Creating Digital Collections

Full course description

In this course you will create a digital collection with 3D models at its centre. You will do this by considering the ethical, methodological, theoretical, and practical issues regarding collecting and curation, representation, reconstruction, and reproduction. Taking a project-based approach to PBL and working in small teams, you will collaboratively develop a digital collection of 3D objects in collaboration with a cultural heritage institution/project/initiative. You will utilise skills and competencies, such as project management, design thinking, content development, curatorial writing, technical integration, and multimodal narratives and storytelling. The 3D objects will be contextualised thematically for a specific audience, with interactive elements inviting readers to actively participate in knowledge creation. 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. The collection should be thought of as both a medium and a rhetoric (in addition to a mode of dissemination), a way of communicating multimodally and interactively, creating arguments as powerful and persuasive as those we expect from long form arguments.

Course objectives

By the end of this course students will be able to reflect on issues brought about by the digitisation of material culture, while demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the theory and practice of using digital technologies and methods to digitise, disseminate, and promote material culture in

three dimensions. Students will do this, via a team-based approach, through the production of 3D models and associated annotation and apparatus within a bespoke publishing environment for 3D scholarship.

Recommended reading

Conway, B. (2010). New Directions in the Sociology of Collective Memory and Commemoration. *Sociology Compass*, 4(7), 442-453. <http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/8981/1/BC-New-2011.pdf>

Di Giuseppantonio Di Franco, P., Galeazzi F., Vassalo, V. Eds (2018). Authenticity and cultural heritage in the age of 3D digital reproductions. *McDonald Institute Conversations*. <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.27029>

Doloughan, F. (2011). *Contemporary Narrative: Textual Production, Multimodality and Multiliteracies*. London and New York: Continuum.

Huvila, I. (2018). The subtle difference between knowledge and 3D knowledge. *Hamburger Journal für Kulturanthropologie*, 7, 99-111. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:gbv:18-8-11966>

Schreibman, S. and Papadopoulos, C. (2019). Textuality in 3D: three-dimensional (re)constructions as digital scholarly editions. *International Journal of Digital Humanities* 1, 221-233. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42803-019-00024-6>

DCU4012

Period 4

5 Feb 2024

5 Apr 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

8.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinators:

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

Teaching methods:

Assignment(s), Coaching, Lecture(s), PBL, Presentation(s), Research, Skills, Work in subgroups, Working visit(s)

Assessment methods:

Assessment, Portfolio

Keywords:

digital collection, representation, digital narratives, storytelling, 3D visualisation, groupwork

MA Digital Cultures Thesis

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Thesis

Full course description

Students write an extensive MA thesis of 20.000 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

5 Feb 2024

21 Jun 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

22.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [A.S. Richterich](#)

Assessment methods:

Final paper

MA Digital Cultures Internship

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.

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

5 Feb 2024

21 Jun 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

8.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [A.S. Richterich](#)

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

5 Feb 2024

21 Jun 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

2.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [A.S. Richterich](#)

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 an internship thesis of 12.000 words. This (comparatively) shorter thesis has to be clearly related to the MA DC curriculum and must establish a link between the internship and the thesis research. 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

5 Feb 2024

21 Jun 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

12.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [A.S. Richterich](#)

Assessment methods:

Final paper

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Workshops Supporting Thesis and Internship

Full course description

To conclude the MA Digital Cultures curriculum, you will submit a thesis: some students combine this with an internship, and therefore write a comparatively shorter 'internship thesis' plus and 'internship report'; some students want to focus on research and write an extended thesis. Either way, you will receive support along the way: not only by your assigned supervisor but also by attending workshops on tasks and skills needed to complete your thesis. These workshops will guide you in further developing the research and writing skills you need for producing your MA thesis.

DCU4700

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

Period 4

5 Feb 2024

21 Jun 2024

[Print course description](#)

ECTS credits:

0.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

- [A.S. Richterich](#)

Teaching methods:

Skills