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 ethics in the context of digitalisation and its the transformations caused by digitalisation for our society and culture. Digitalisation, the process of integrating digital technologies into all areas of our lives, has produced ethical new interfaceschallenges for between society, culture and doing social research. The theoretical framework concepts "technomoral change" and "sociotechnical imaginaries" will be introduced at the beginning of the course as possible theoretical frameworks for doing research in the field. Within these frameworks we will discuss topics such as ethics, morals and values, topics such as 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 conduct a focus group in English to investigate a topic related to this course more in depth. Training in the fundamentals of audio editing/recording will equip students with the professional skills necessary to produce a podcast. The podcast is used to present the results of the interviews/focus group. A written MECC exam at the end of the course will test knowledge of the theoretical concepts of the course and ask students to apply them to a specific example.

Course objectives

By the end of this course students will understand the theoretical frameworks of technomoral change and sociotechnical imaginaries. They will be trained in the qualitative method of the semistructured interview and focus group, 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. As a media skills component, students will participate in audio editing/recording skills trainings, and produce a podcast in which they present the results from their interviews/focus group.

Recommended reading

- Benjamin, R. (202). Imagination. A Manifesto. Norton.
- 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.

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> Etikk i praksis. Nordic Journal of Applied Ethics, 9(1), 5–20.
- See course book for further required and recommended reading.

DCU4000
Period 1
2 Sep 2024
25 Oct 2024
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [K. Wenz](#)

Teaching methods:
PBL, Lecture(s), Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Written exam
Keywords:
Ethics and Technology, 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, overlayed 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.

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

Recommended reading

See course book for required and recommended reading.

DCU4001
Period 1
2 Sep 2024
25 Oct 2024
[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, Phenomenology
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
2 Sep 2024
25 Oct 2024
[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 design thinking, critical making, and the ethos of Maker Culture. This course links design thinking, an approach aimed at human-centred problem solving, to the notions of critical making and maker culture. Researchers in the field of critical design studies and civic making have criticized design thinking for inter alia its solutionist and commercial outlook. To counter such pitfalls, while still mobilising the strengths of design thinking, Matt Ratto suggested the notion of critical making as an 'antidote to design thinking' (2019). Critical making refers to design practices bringing together conceptual thinking and digital technology development. Both concepts, design thinking and critical making, will be explored in this course, notably in relation to (digital) innovation.

Since various design practices, including design thinking and critical making, have been insightfully studied with the help of ethnography, students will be introduced to ethnographic methods too. They will notably learn more about design ethnography and digital ethnography. To experience designing and to engage in ethnographic research, they will participate in a design sprint, hosted at FASoS for students in this course (exclusively). This event will allow students to practically experience what it is like to develop and design a project, while also serving as a field site for their ethnographic research. In two final course assessments, they will present and reflect on their insights from this design sprint: they will write an individual paper, and they will create a video.

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 video editing/recording skills trainings, and produce a video on their experience with design thinking or critical making during the design sprint.

Recommended reading

- Costanza-Chock, S. (2020). Design justice: Community-led practices to build the worlds we need. The MIT Press.
- Kimbell, L. (2011). Rethinking design thinking: Part I. Design and culture, 3(3), 285-306.
- Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2015). Digital ethnography: Principles and practice. New York: Sage.
- Ratto, M. (2011). Critical making: Conceptual and material studies in technology and social life. The information society, 27(4), 252-260.
- Razzouk, R., & Shute, V. (2012). What is design thinking and why is it important?. Review of educational research, 82(3), 330-348.

DCU4007
Period 2
28 Oct 2024
20 Dec 2024
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- A.S. Richterich

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL, Work in subgroups
Assessment methods:
Assignment, Final paper
Keywords:
Design Thinking, Critical making, Maker Culture, Design Justice, video editing
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Machines of Knowledge

Full course description

This course introduces students to the transformation of the World Wide Web from an information space with a limited number of content creators to a complex network of dynamic knowledge sites to which all users can contribute. These changes in how content is generated, shared, and delivered come with new economic, ethical and legal challenges.

On the theoretical level, this course enables students to discuss these challenges from (data) feminist, postcolonial and public spheres perspectives. In terms of methods, the course introduces students to the basic of computational text analysis ("distant reading"). Students learn how to collect their own text corpus from the web and how to analyse it with text analysis software that highlights word frequencies, word co-occurences and narrative trends.

We explore different data sets 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 problematize the curation, analysis and preservation of web-based content and to assess the role of World Wide Web in the production of knowledge. Students will be able to harvest digital data and to analyse them using distant reading and data visualisations. They will also learn how to apply three important theoretical frameworks. The technical skills acquired in this course prepare students for further studies and research, but are equally useful for professional careers in the media and (social media) marketing.

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,

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> 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 in China. China Information, 29(3), 333–351.
- See the course book for required and recommended reading.

DCU4008
Period 2
28 Oct 2024
20 Dec 2024
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, Presentation, Written exam
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 allow students to connect 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 from their tutor (through lectures, tutorials, and workshops) and from their thesis supervisor. The supervisor grades the research plan.

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

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students' work on their MA thesis.

Recommended reading

- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2016). The craft of research. The University of Chicago press.
- Brennen, B. S. (2021). Qualitative research methods for media studies. Routledge.
- Franzke, A., Bechmann, A., Zimmer, M., Ess, C., and the Association of Internet Researchers (2020). Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0. https://aoir.org/reports/ethics3.pdf.
- Seale, C. (2017). Researching Society and Culture. Sage.

DCU4005
Period 3
6 Jan 2025
31 Jan 2025
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
6.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- A.S. Richterich

Teaching methods:
Lecture(s), PBL, Work in subgroups, Research
Assessment methods:
Final paper
Keywords:
research plan, research questions, tTheory, mMethodology, 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.

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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
3 Feb 2025
4 Apr 2025
[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 studies with a focus on digital cultures. The MA thesis is written under supervision of a FASoS teaching staff member with expertise relevant to research on digital cultures. For the assessment of the thesis, a second reader also evaluates and grades the thesis.

Course objectives

The thesis, as a traditional final assessment of a MA programme, provides students with the opportunity of engaging in in-depth research. It will allow them to deepen and demonstrate their knowledge of a specific field in media studies with a focus on 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 5
7 Apr 2025
20 Jun 2025
[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

For their final work, students in the MA MS:DC can opt for the internship trajectory. This means they do an internship relevant to the field of media studies with a focus on digital cultures.

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Thematically related to this, they will then write an internship thesis plus a report. The programme maintains a network of internship organisations willing to host MA DC students, to help students in securing an internship opportunity. However, students are responsible for selecting an organisation and coordinating the application procedure (application writing, interview etc.) themselves. We advise students pursuing this option to begin early in the study year to secure an internship position. Students may choose to go to another country, e.g. return to their home country, for this part of their study. The internship starts in April and should last at least two months. The internship is graded by a faculty supervisor, in close consultation with the internship line manager.

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 5
7 Apr 2025
6 Jun 2025
[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 critically reflects on the practical work undertaken during the internship. It describes and evaluates the projects(s) the student worked on. In addition, 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 5
7 Apr 2025

Media Studies: Digital Cultures

6 Jun 2025
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
2.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- [A.S. Richterich](#)

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 internship thesis provides students with the opportunity of engaging in research related to a specific, professional context. It allows them ti deepen their knowledge of a specific field in media studies with a focus on digital cultures. Students have wide latitude in their choice of topic, with the caveat that it: a) draws from the theories, methods, and/or practices taught in the MA MC:DC programme, and b) is linked to the internship.

DCU4890
Period 5
7 Apr 2025
20 Jun 2025
[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, hosted by academic writing advisor John Harbord, will guide you in further developing the research and writing skills you need for producing your MA thesis.

DCU4700
Period 4
3 Feb 2025
4 Apr 2025
[Print course description](#)
ECTS credits:
0.0
Instruction language:
English
Coordinator:

- A.S. Richterich

Teaching methods:
Skills