

Note:

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Curriculum for the
Master's Programme Media, Society and Communication
at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Innsbruck

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§ 1 Allocation of the study programme

According to §54 par. 1 Universities Act 2002, the Master's Programme Media, Society and Communication is allocated to the group of economic study programmes.

§ 2 Qualification profile

- (1) The Master's Programme Media, Society and Communication serves to deepen and supplement the academic professional preparation on the basis of a bachelor's programme in a relevant subject. Graduates master the theories, methods and instruments of media and communication sciences. They are able to independently plan, conduct, evaluate and process studies in media and communication in science and practice. Graduates possess scientifically sound, theory- and method-based analytical and problem-solving competences. These competences enable them to work independently on problems in new or unfamiliar contexts, to assess scientific knowledge and to apply it in new research-relevant contexts as well as to work on relevant problems in their respective non-university professional fields in a scientifically sound and practice-relevant manner.
- (2) Graduates have both an understanding and a critical awareness of the dynamics of digitisation and transversally networked media systems as well as the associated challenges in society, politics, the economy, public administration, culture and everyday life. With a view to media and communication dynamics as well as social change, they are able to deal with social, cultural, political and technical functions of media and questions of sustainability and diversity in an independent, critical and differentiated manner. Graduates acquire an understanding of the ongoing digital transformation, which is central to enabling and securing democracy, social self-determination and sustainable development. They have the competence to apply their knowledge in a solution-oriented manner. Graduates are able to critically reflect on the ethical and social consequences and prerequisites of the use of their knowledge. They are able to understand complex media constellations and successfully manage unpredictable working or learning contexts. They can communicate knowledge and competences acquired in the master's programme in a comprehensible way to both experts and laypersons.
- (3) In the Master's Programme Media, Society and Communication, students acquire competences that enable them to work in media-related positions in companies, NGOs, organisations and administrations in addition to leading positions in media and communication professions. Examples of this are:
 1. media and cultural work as well as institutional media work (e.g. in agencies, publishing houses, media companies, broadcasters)
 2. media research and opinion, market and survey research
 3. public relations as well as media and communication consulting
 4. media and communication management as well as content & programme management
 5. evaluation of communication services, media strategies and media campaigns
 6. media politics
 7. media education and training in the fields of media and communication
 8. publishing and book trade, journalism
- (4) With regard to possible occupational profiles, general qualifications are taught and advanced in the course of the degree programme in addition to subject-specific knowledge; these include:
 1. the competence to present the facts resulting from the sources in a critical, factual and clear manner,
 2. the competence to combine analytical, critical, creative and design thinking,
 3. the competence to take an independent critical position towards existing scientific as well as popular views, theories, ideologies and dogmas,
 4. the competence to reflect on gender topics in discourse contexts of media and communication studies and to consider results of contemporary gender studies,

5. the competence to anticipate future trends and keep pace with new technologies and related challenges.
- (5) Graduates possess (meta)cognitive strategies, in particular organisational techniques and elaboration strategies, which enable them to acquire new knowledge and additional competences largely independently and autonomously.
- (6) The master's programme is the basis for postgraduate further education in the relevant subject and, in particular, it forms the basis for doctoral study programmes.

§ 3 Scope and duration

The Master's Programme Media, Society and Communication covers 120 ECTS-Credits. This corresponds to a duration of the study programme of four semesters. One ECTS-Credit corresponds to a workload of 25 hours.

§ 4 Language

The Master's Programme Media, Society and Communication is offered in English.

§ 5 Admission

1. The admission to the Master's Programme Media, Society and Communication requires the completion of a subject-specific bachelor's programme that in any case covers the following contents:
 - 5 ECTS-Credits from the core area of media and communication theories
 - 5 ECTS-Credits from the core area of methods in empirical social research
 - 5 ECTS-Credits from the core area of digital communication
 - 5 ECTS-Credits from the core area of current discourse in media and communication studies
 - 10 ECTS-Credits from the core area of social communication and medial change
2. The Rectorate decides whether the prerequisites have been met in accordance with §64 par. 3 Universities Act. In order to compensate for significant subject-related differences, supplementary examinations may be prescribed, which must be taken by the end of the second semester of the master's programme. The Rectorate may specify which of these supplementary examinations are required for passing examinations as specified in the curriculum of the master's programme.

§ 6 Types of courses and maximum number of students per course

- (1) Courses without continuous performance assessment:
Lectures (VO) are courses held in lecture format. They introduce the research areas, methods and schools of thought for a given subject. No maximum number of participants.
- (2) Courses with continuous performance assessment:
 - 1. Lectures with practical elements (VU)** focus on the practical treatment of concrete scientific tasks that are discussed during the lecture parts of the course. Maximum number of students per course: 30
 - 2. Seminars (SE)** provide in-depth treatment of scientific topics through students' presentations and discussion thereof. Maximum number of participants: 30

§ 7 Procedure for the allocation of places in courses with a limited number of participants

In courses with a limited number of participants, the places are allocated as follows:

1. Students for whom the study duration would be extended due to the postponement are to be given priority.

2. If the criterium in no. 1 does not suffice, then first students who take this course as part of a compulsory module and secondly students for whom this course is part of an elective module are given a place.
3. If the criteria in no. 1 and no. 2 do not suffice to regulate the admission, then the available places are drawn at random.

§ 8 Compulsory and elective module

The following compulsory modules covering altogether 70 ECTS-Credits are to be passed:

1.	Compulsory Module: Advanced Theory	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	VU Emerging Media and Current Discourses	2	5
b.	VO Media Dynamics and Sustainability	2	5
c.	VO Digital Democracy and Society	2	5
	Total	6	15
<p>Learning Outcomes: Students have knowledge of selected theories and approaches from media and communication studies in the three subject areas "Emerging Media", "Media Dynamics and Sustainability" and "Digital Democracy and Society". They can differentiate and critically assess these. They are able to work independently and theory-guided on exemplary scientific texts from the three subject areas. The students can analyse media and communication technologies, digital cultures as well as processes of media change on this basis and identify social and political consequences and challenges of digital networking, reflect on them and discuss them constructively and critically with both experts and laypersons.</p>			
Prerequisites: none			

2.	Compulsory Module: Advanced Methodology	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	VO Theories and Methodology	2	5
b.	SE Advanced Qualitative Methods	2	5
c.	SE Advanced Quantitative Methods	2	5
	Total	6	15
<p>Learning Outcomes: The students grasp the strengths and weaknesses of theories and approaches of research in media and communication studies. They have a deeper understanding of the limited performance of different research designs as well as of questions of the appropriateness of the subject matter, generalisability and quality criteria in empirical social research. They can handle qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods and the so-called digital methods and test their practical applications in exercises. Students are able to select and plan appropriate research designs for different types of research projects in media and communication studies. They grasp the strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches and can use them to answer questions, critically reflect on them and draw conclusions for their use. They can use analyses to support their arguments when communicating with experts and laypersons. Students recognise research ethics issues (dealing with interviewees, handling data, principles of good scientific practice, etc.) and can reflect on them.</p>			
Prerequisites: none			

3.	Compulsory Module: Digitisation and Datafication: Platforms and Data Analysis	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	VU Platforms and Communication	2	5
b.	SE Data: Analysis and Interpretation	2	5
	Total	4	10

	Learning Outcomes:	Students are able to analyse, present and interpret processes of digitisation and datafication and the associated opportunities and challenges (impacts) on social life. This includes the critical examination of digital platforms, networks and infrastructures (including architecture, affordances), their use and the interactions that take place on and over them, as well as their impact on society, organisations, institutions and companies. Students are able to select and use theories and digital methods in a justified and appropriate manner to initiate processes that collect, process and interpret data in a scientifically and methodologically correct manner. They are able to interpret data with regard to their use in different social, cultural and political contexts and acquire the ability to assess, explain, visualise and interpret data and their sources.
	Prerequisites: none	

4.	Compulsory Module: Digitisation and Datafication: Governance and Data Criticism	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	VU Ethics and Governance	2	5
b.	SE Data: Critical Analysis	2	5
	Total	4	10
	Learning Outcomes: Students are able to assess and critically reflect on processes of digitisation and datafication and the associated opportunities and challenges for social life. They have the competence to independently formulate interdisciplinary and context-related questions and conclusions in the areas of ethics, law and governance. They have an advanced understanding of social, cultural, political and economic aspects of processes of digitisation and measurement of society. The students are able to grasp digital methods and data in an ethically justified manner, to critically reflect on them and to discuss them with both experts and laypersons.		
	Prerequisites: none		

5.	Compulsory Module: Research Project	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	SE Research Project	4	10
	Total	4	10
	Learning Outcomes: Students are able to develop specific research questions in the field of media and communication studies, taking into account methodological aspects and current scientific developments. They can evaluate their own and other people's research results and can explain research questions and controversial perspectives from their discipline and reflect critically on sources. They thus have competences for active participation in scientific discourse as well as for communicating and presenting scientific results. The students can organise and carry out projects independently. They have also advanced their communicative and social skills through the combination of teamwork and independent work in the context of seminars. Having completed this module, the students are able to independently carry out their own research project for their Master's Thesis.		
	Prerequisites: none		

6.	Compulsory Module: Preparation of the Master's Thesis	h	ECTS-Credits
	Agreement on the topic, the scope and the form of the Master's Thesis on the basis of a content structure and a short description of the content (synopsis) as well as agreement on the work process and the progress in the study programme; planning of an appropriate time frame for the completion of the Master's Thesis;	-	7.5
	Total	-	7.5

Learning Outcomes: Having passed this module, the students have acquired the knowledge required for agreeing on a topic, writing a brief synopsis of the Master's Thesis and outlining the time frame.
Prerequisites: none

7.	Compulsory Module: Master's Thesis Defense	h	ECTS-Credits
	Final oral defense of the Master's Thesis before an examination board	-	2.5
	Total	-	2.5
	Learning Outcomes: Students have acquired the knowledge to reflect on the results of the Master's Thesis in the overall context of the master's programme and to present them in the form of a lecture and defend them in a discussion. The focus is on theoretical understanding, methodological issues, communicating the results of the Master's Thesis and presentation skills.		
	Prerequisites: positive evaluation of all other compulsory and elective modules as well as the Master's Thesis.		

Elective modules covering altogether **30 ECTS-Credits** are to be passed. Instead of the elective modules, a Minor on master level can be passed, providing the availability of places. The Minors are fixed modules from other disciplines covering 30 ECTS-Credits and are published in the University of Innsbruck Bulletin.

1.	Elective Module: Interdisciplinary Skills	h	ECTS-Credits
	Providing the availability of places, master-level courses from other master's/diploma programmes at the University of Innsbruck covering 10 ECTS-Credits can be freely selected. Passing one course from the field of gender studies, women's and gender research is compulsory.	-	10
	Total	-	10
	Learning Outcomes: Students are able to understand theories, methods and perspectives of other subjects/studies. Against the background of their own discipline, they are able to identify challenges at the interfaces between disciplines and formulate interdisciplinary questions.		
	Prerequisites: The prerequisites specified by the respective curricula must be met.		
2.	Elective Module: Individual Choice of Specialisation I	h	ECTS-Credits
	For Individual Choice of Specialisation, modules from the curricula of the master's programmes offered at the University of Innsbruck covering 10 ECTS-Credits can be freely selected. It is expressly recommended to pass a course from the field of Gender Studies, Women and Gender Research.	-	10
	Total	-	10
	Learning Outcomes: Students have additional and advanced competences, skills and additional qualifications.		
	Prerequisites: The prerequisites specified by the respective curricula must be met.		

3.	Elective Module: Individual Choice of Specialisation II	h	ECTS-Credits
	For Individual Choice of Specialisation, modules from the curricula of the master's programmes offered at the University of Innsbruck covering 10 ECTS-Credits can be freely selected. It is expressly recommended to pass a course from the field of Gender Studies, Women and Gender Research.	-	10
	Total	-	10
	Learning Outcomes: Students have additional and advanced competences, skills and additional qualifications.		

Prerequisites: The prerequisites specified by the respective curricula must be met.

4.	Elective Module: Practice I	h	ECTS-Credits
	To test and apply the acquired knowledge and skills or to orientate themselves about the conditions in professional practice, the students can complete a Practice covering 225 hours. Prior its start, approval from the Director of Studies must be obtained. The institution must issue a statement on the duration, scope and contents of the practice as well as on the commitment of the student; furthermore, a report in written form or in the form of a video clip must be presented, which – in additional to objectives and activities – also includes the documentation of learning experiences (25 work hours are allocated to the report).	-	10
	Total	-	10
	Learning Outcomes: The students are informed about possible occupational fields and have applied their acquired knowledge and skills in a professional environment. They have acquired professional experience in the field and are familiar with conditions in the professional practice in their specific field.		
	Prerequisites: at the earliest after having passed a minimum of 30 ECTS-Credits.		

5.	Elective Module: Practice II	h	ECTS-Credits
	To test and apply the acquired knowledge and skills or to orientate themselves about the conditions in professional practice, the students can complete a Practice covering 225 hours. Prior its start, approval from the Director of Studies must be obtained. The institution must issue a statement on the duration, scope and contents of the practice as well as on the commitment of the student; furthermore, a report in written form or in the form of a video clip must be presented, which – in additional to objectives and activities – also includes the documentation of learning experiences (25 work hours are allocated to the report).	-	10
	Total	-	10
	Learning Outcomes: The students are informed about possible occupational fields and have applied their acquired knowledge and skills in a professional environment. They have acquired professional experience in the field and are familiar with conditions in the professional practice in their specific field.		
	Prerequisites: at the earliest after having passed a minimum of 30 ECTS-Credits.		

§ 9 Master's Thesis

- (1) A Master's Thesis amounting to 20 ECTS-Credits has to be written. The Master's Thesis is a scientific piece of work which serves to prove the student's ability to autonomously cope with scientific questions using adequate scientific methods.
- (2) The Master's Thesis must be thematically related to the field of media and communication research. The students are entitled to suggest a topic for their Master's Thesis or can select from a number of suggestions.
- (3) The finished Master's Thesis is to be submitted in the form (electronic) specified in §25 par. 7 Study Law Regulations sections of the statutes of the University of Innsbruck.

§ 10 Examination regulations

- (1) A module, with the exception of the "Preparation of the Master's Thesis", "Master's Thesis Defense", "Practice 1" and "Practice 2", is evaluated by the positive evaluation of its courses.

The performance of the courses of the modules is evaluated by course examinations. Course examinations assess the knowledge and skills acquired in an individual course.

1. In the case of courses without continuous performance assessment, the evaluation is based on a single exam at the end of the course;
 2. In the case of courses with continuous performance assessment, the evaluation is based on at least two written, oral and/or practical contributions of the participants.
- (2) Before the start of the course, the course instructor has to define and announce the examination method (written and/or oral, paper) and the evaluation criteria.
2. The performance of the Module “Practice” is evaluated by the Director of Studies. Positive evaluation reads “participated with success”, negative evaluation “participated without success”.
 3. The module “Preparation of the Master’s Thesis (CM1) is evaluated by the supervisor on the basis of a synopsis. Positive evaluation reads “participated with success”, negative evaluations “participated without success”.
 4. The performance of the “Master’s Thesis Defense”, the module finalising the study programme, is evaluated by an oral examination before an examination board consisting of three persons.

§ 11 Academic degree

Graduates of the master’s programmes receive the academic degree “Master of Arts”, abbreviated as “MA”.

§ 12 Coming into force

This curriculum comes into force as of October 1st, 2023