

## BACHELOR THESIS ONLINE CULTURE

### THE BA THESIS IN YOUR STUDY PROGRAMME

- In your thesis, you show and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding you have acquired during your studies.
- The thesis
  - Presents a research question/thesis statement or a hypothesis
  - Places the study within the theoretical framework of the field
  - Indicates the contribution it makes to that field
  - Is based on data obtained through appropriate means of data collection and analysed by using relevant methods, or based on, and making interpretations of, relevant primary sources
  - Suggests potential further studies in the field
- Learning goals:
  - You are able to independently carry out a small research project
  - You are able to formulate a research question/thesis statement
  - You are able to find and critically evaluate relevant literature
  - You are able to collect appropriate data and apply appropriate methods
  - You are able to formulate an appropriate theoretical framework
  - You are able to formulate a research plan (see below for some instructions)
  - You are able to report on your research in a clear and engaging manner
  - You are able to write in an appropriate academic register
- For the thesis, 12 ECTS have been allocated, which represents (12x28) 336 hours or about 9 full weeks of work.

### GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR THESIS; TOPICS AND SUPERVISORS

- Only start with your thesis if you are seriously planning and able to finish it within one semester. If this is not the case, wait one semester or ask advice from the [study advisor](#).
- Contact the thesis coordinator and discuss with him/her who is available for supervision. For the BA Online Culture dr. [Jan Jaap de Ruiter](#) is the thesis coordinator.
- If you are still unsure about the topic of your thesis, do not hesitate to reach out to the thesis coordinator to discuss the next steps to help you find a topic. Next to that, brainstorming with fellow classmates or going through topics from previous courses you have taken to get inspiration is a good way to find a topic.
- Staff members supervise theses in their areas of expertise, but also in accordance with the time they have available for supervision. This means that in any semester, some staff members may not supervise students, while others supervise a number of students.

- Please see the document listing staff members’ areas of expertise and the topics on which they supervise theses on Canvas.
- Once you have a supervisor, you can arrange the first meeting with him/her and start preparing for your thesis work in the spring semester by
  - Fine-tuning the initial idea
  - Gathering and reading relevant literature
  - Starting to put together a research proposal to be discussed with the supervisor

### SCHEDULE

The schedule for your thesis work can vary, for instance depending on the kind of research you are doing. As a general guideline, the schedule looks like this:

September- October	Thesis information session. You can start thinking about a topic and contact the thesis coordinator to find a supervisor.
December- January	Establish contact with your thesis supervisor. You can collect and start reading relevant literature, and start working on a plan for your thesis.
January- April	You work on your thesis. The supervisor is available for meetings/feedback in the way you have agreed upon together.
May- June	You finish the first full draft of your thesis. You revise it based on feedback from your supervisor. Remember to check with your supervisor (and second reader) when they will be on holiday during the summer so that everything goes smoothly.
July- August	Finishing the thesis and handing it in.

Even if you are ‘late’ starting the thesis according to the above schedule, do not procrastinate any longer starting with your thesis. The earlier you start is always the better but do not postpone it too much.

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR SUPERVISOR, AND WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

- A BA thesis is always supervised by a staff member of the department. PhD students can also co-supervise theses, but only under the responsibility of a senior staff member.
- Your supervisor is supposed to spend no more than 20 hours supervision time on your thesis. This includes everything, from the first meeting with you to sending in the grade of your thesis.

- You will agree on specific deadlines together with your supervisor, but as a general guideline you should prepare to have the first draft version of your thesis finished in June. You can then work on revisions suggested by your supervisor, keeping in mind that you will have to deliver the final version in early August at the very latest, and also that your supervisor and second reader will be unavailable during their summer holidays (discuss the timing of the holiday period with your supervisor at the beginning of your thesis process).
- Your supervisor is responsible for making clear agreements with you about the supervision. Make sure your expectations on these points match those of your supervisor.
  - What does s/he expect from you when?
  - When and how often do you meet i) individually or in thematic groups with your supervisor and ii) face to face or otherwise (via email, Skype)?
  - When and how do you have to send in your draft chapters?
  - When and how do you receive your supervisor's comments?
  - What happens when these agreements are not respected
- The student
  - Is responsible for her/his thesis
  - Works independently and shows initiative
  - Meets deadlines and follows up on agreements with the supervisor
  - Uses the feedback from her/his supervisor in her/his thesis
- The supervisor
  - Reads the student's research proposal and gives feedback on it
  - Reads and gives feedback on one version of every chapter (including the introduction and the conclusion)
  - Reads and gives feedback on one version of a full draft
  - Is available for advice regularly (face to face or by other means agreed upon)

### ASSESSMENT AND GRADUATION

- At least three weeks before the end of August, you have to hand in your thesis through the online [Thesis Dossier](#). See the [Manual Thesis Dossier for Students](#).
- On request of the supervisor, you also hand in your thesis in hardcopy (printed and bound) to the supervisor and the second reader.
- The supervisor and second reader independently assess your thesis on each of the grading criteria (see the document on thesis assessment).
- After filling in the assessment forms the supervisor and second reader can have a meeting to discuss the final grade. This academic discussion leads to the final grade which will be communicated to the student. In case the grades of the supervisor and second reader differ more than two points, a third reader will be involved. The Head of Studies is in charge in inviting a third reader.

- Within two weeks after handing in your thesis, you will hear from your supervisor whether your thesis is a pass or not. The thesis is a pass if and only if all partial grades (i.e. the grades for each of the grading criteria) are a pass.
- The supervisor is responsible for registering the final grade in the thesis database, including a summary of the feedback.
- If the final mark is a minimally a 6, you will be invited for the joint graduation ceremony. If the final mark is below 6, you will do the resit. NB: you don't run a risk, because the highest mark will be the definitive one. If the supervisor and the second reader cannot agree on a final mark and the difference is greater than 2 points, the programme director must appoint a third reader whose task it will be to decide on a grade that equals one of the grades given by the supervisor and the second reader or lies anywhere between the two ((s)he cannot go higher than the highest grade or lower than the lowest one).
- If you are going to do the resit, the supervisor and second reader together prepare a (written) improvement report which is communicated to you by the supervisor by the end of the assessment week, or after the third reader has handed in her/his assessment. You are now in the resit phase and have 2 weeks for improvement of the thesis.
- You will have a joint graduation ceremony where you will receive your diploma. You will be informed about the date later on by the student administration.

#### WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONTENT AND FORM OF YOUR THESIS?

- The thesis is an individually written product. If more students are writing a thesis on a similar topic, part of the supervision can be in small groups, and you may collaborate in designing and conducting your research. If this is the case, in your thesis you should explicitly state the extent and form of the collaboration. Your supervisor will instruct you on how to do that.
- A thesis consists of a number of chapters (in general these include introduction, theory/background literature, research question, method, results, discussion, conclusion) which taken together should result in a text of preferably no longer than 30 pages (c. 12,000 words), excluding table of contents, references and possible appendices.
- The thesis must reflect *your own work*. All quotes and sourced information must be properly identified as such. If a supervisor suspects plagiarism or fraud, s/he contacts the Board of Examiners, following the regular procedure in place. Plagiarism is checked with the help of Canvas.
- Your thesis is a report on data that you have analysed yourself. In some cases, you will also collect your own data (but not always; you may for instance use a previously compiled corpus etc.).
- Your thesis should be written in correct English, using an appropriate academic register. At any point during the supervision, your supervisor may indicate that the writing is of insufficient quality. You are responsible yourself for solving this issue. You can contact the [Scriptorium](#), or find another solution.

- Follow the fixed template for the title page of your thesis (see below).
- Follow the conventions used in the field (e.g. for presenting data). This is something you will learn from reading literature in the field in question, and from feedback by your supervisor.
- Follow the 'light' version of [APA guidelines](#) for sources and citations. You can find more information on the appropriate use of sources, different ways of referencing your sources, and plagiarism at <http://itswww.uvt.nl/lis/es/refcite-uk/index.html>.
- If you are working with human subjects, there are ethical considerations to be taken into account and established procedures to follow (e.g. consent forms when conducting interviews). Your supervisor will help you with these questions. See the documents on Canvas (BA Thesis page). For online research, there are specific considerations different from 'offline' research – again, your supervisor will help you identify any issues you may need to take into account, and you can also consult the [ethics guide](#) by the Association of Internet Researchers.

### WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF PROBLEMS?

- In general, your first ports of call are your thesis supervisor, thesis coordinator, study advisor, and programme director.
- Problems with the writing process and need extra help? Contact the [Scriptorium](#).
- Thesis writing not going well because of personal circumstances? Contact the [study advisor](#).
- Problems between you and your supervisor? The first thing to do is to of course try to solve any issues between the two of you. In case of unsolvable problems, you can contact the confidential counsellor responsible for issues related to thesis writing (for the School of Humanities: Marije van Amelsvoort, [m.a.a.vanamelsvoort@uvt.nl](mailto:m.a.a.vanamelsvoort@uvt.nl)).
- The university also has [student counsellors](#) (or 'Deans of students') who are independent advisors not connected to any particular programme or school. Please see the website for when it is appropriate to contact them.
- If the thesis is not ready after the semester, you need to have an agreement with your supervisor as to how you will continue and when you will finish your thesis. On issues related to enrolment, the [Student Desk](#) is your best source of information.
- If the supervisor and the second reader do not agree on a grade, they will inform the programme director, who will then take appropriate action.

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A research proposal is a document in which you describe your proposed thesis research. Its main purpose is to ensure that both you and the supervisor have a shared vision of what the research entails, and are able to clearly communicate the research ideas to other parties. The proposal should of course also be realistic and reasonable, i.e. the supervisor should agree that you will actually be able to do the proposed research in the allotted time.

A research proposal generally contains the following sections (section titles may differ, and each section can be about half a page to one page long):

### *Context ('why')*

The 'context' section gives a brief, general overview of the research field that you will work in. It may contain references to relevant literature. It does not have to be extensive; you should just make clear that you already have some knowledge of the research field, can focus on a question in that field, and know why that question is worthy of investigation. The 'why' part of course is also about the societal dimension of your research; you can also explain why your study may have societal relevance. This leads automatically to the following section:

### *Research question(s)/thesis statement ('what')*

The research question(s)/thesis statement indicates what exact question(s) you will try to answer.

Note that you are not 'pinned down' to the research defined by these questions. It may happen that, during the research, you will find that the original question should be changed or modified. Together with the supervisor, you can decide to make changes to the question, or add questions, if that is better for the research.

In case of hypotheses, you may need to do more literature research before suitable hypotheses can be defined. However, nothing stops you from already formulating some ideas on hypotheses in the research proposal, with the remark that final hypotheses will follow as you go further with your research.

### *Methodology ('how')*

In the methodology section you describe how the research will be performed. What is your data? When appropriate, how will you collect your data? How much data is needed? How will you analyse the materials you have chosen as your data? A relation to the research question(s) should be clear. Again, in discussion with the supervisor later on, changes to the methodology can be made if they are deemed necessary, but at the time of the proposal writing you should be able

to propose a specific methodology and have an explanation for why the proposed methodology is appropriate for the issue at hand.

*Schedule ('when')*

The schedule specifies the timeline that you are going to follow. It is useful to make clear what will you do when – when you will engage with relevant literature, when will you collect data (if applicable), when work on the analysis, and when you will write chapters of the thesis. This is useful for several reasons: it's a lesson in (research) project management and how to be realistic in planning your work, and it also makes the process more predictable and manageable not only for yourself, but also your supervisor. Having a clear plan also helps you make sure that all the different parts of your work will get the attention they deserve, and that you e.g. don't end up with too little time to write up your conclusions. Make sure to take holidays into account, and also take into account potential delays, i.e. leave some time for extensions at the end.



**TITLE PAGE TEMPLATE**

**Title of Thesis**  
**Possible subtitle**

*room for an illustration if you want to include one*

BA Thesis

Name of author

Student number:

Online Culture: Art, Media and Society / Global Communication / Digital Media

Department of Culture Studies

School of Humanities and Digital Sciences

Date (e.g. August 2023)

Supervisor:

Second reader: