

# Study plan – Master of Philosophy in Visual Cultural studies – valid from cohort of 2015

2015

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education  
Department for Archeology and Social Anthropology



## Qualification awarded

Master of Philosophy in Visual Cultural Studies.

## Credits

120 ECTS

## Learning outcomes

General competences

### *The candidate*

- is able to identify, analyze and discuss different theoretical and methodological approaches to their own empirical material and apply it in the description and analysis of other sociocultural phenomena.
- masters the language and terminology of visual socio-cultural research and can communicate to colleagues, partners, and public audiences, the methodological/analytical approaches used *in-* and the final results *of-* his/her own work.
- is able to build up responsibility towards partners in the field and thereby a profound consciousness of the ethics and potentials for empowerment of research and dissemination.
- can contribute to new thinking and innovation processes based in the exploration of the possible potentials of visual and analytical tools.
- is in an independent way able to apply audiovisual tools creatively and critically to enhance/clarify their story narratives within a social science framework.

Knowledge

### *The candidate*

- has knowledge of the evolution of the social scientific tradition in general, and advanced knowledge of theoretical perspectives within the field of Visual anthropology especially.
- has thorough knowledge of the region and/or the field where his/her proper Master project takes place and solid knowledge of the cutting edge of his/her Master project's theme.
- has thorough knowledge of ethnographic research methodology and the different steps in a research process which involves the use of the video camera.
- can apply the acquired methods and theoretical perspectives in the description and analyses of new areas within the academic field of Visual Anthropology.
- can reflect critically on the use of different filmic languages and narrative structures as 'ways of knowing' in specific historical and societal contexts.

- has technical knowledge of how to handle and use the recording and editing equipment for video.

## Skills

### *The candidate*

- can in a systematic way manage, process and analyze critically material from various sources and use them to structure and formulate a written scholarly argument.
- Is able to capture the narrative conceptualizations of their field partners by the use of video and create intelligible narrative strategies with a future audience in mind.
- is able to demonstrate how film and text mutually inform, inspire, and contradict each other, and critically evaluate the role of film in the creation of social scientific knowledge.
- can under supervision carry out an independent research project which makes use of participant observation and audiovisual tools, with applicable norms for research ethics.
- is able to make use of video as a tool in the acquisition and dissemination of social scientific knowledge.

## Admission requirements

Applicants must document a bachelor degree (180 ECTS) or equivalent qualification in the social sciences or related field in the humanities. An average grade of equivalent to C or better in Norwegian grading system is required. Applicants must document adequate proficiency in English on an advanced level, either through education or an internationally recognized examination/test. For more information see [Admission – Proof of English Proficiency](#).

Applicants must enclose a statement of purpose (max. 2 pages) written in English. This should include descriptions of their motivation for, interest in and expectations relating to their master´s degree studies. In addition the statement should also include ideas for their master's thesis project.

## Application deadline

Local admission, study code 5057.

Quota students: 1 December

Self-financed international students: 1 December

Norwegian and Nordic students: 15 April

## Programme description

VCS offers a two-year full-time Master's program in Visual Cultural Studies. The students at the Master's program follow compulsory courses, and conduct an individual research project, based on fieldwork, writing a Master's thesis, and making an ethnographic film. The audio-visual material should reflect both the researcher´s and the informants' perceptions of given social situations. Film may create and contribute to a particular kind of knowledge that can often supplement textual representations. The exam films produced at VCS are well known for

their quality. Every year several films are selected for international documentary and ethnographic film festivals.

The Master's program in Visual Cultural Studies consists of 6 compulsory courses and the Master's thesis, totalling 120 ECTS credit points, 60 ECTS by studying the obligatory courses and 60 ECTS by finishing their master's thesis and film. The aim of the Master's program in Visual Cultural Studies is to teach students how to produce knowledge about people's lives and culture(s) through an exploration of their everyday lives based on the use of qualitative social science research methods and ethnographic film. The course combines lectures, seminars, and practical instruction in camerawork, sound recording and editing.

### Compulsory courses

- SVF-3101 Approaching Social Realities: Understanding Other People's Life-Worlds (20 ECTS)
- SVF-3102 Conveying Social Realities: Exploring Audio-Visual Narrative Strategies (10 ECTS)
- SVF-3109 Anthropological Theory and Ethnographic Praxis (20 ECTS)
- SVF-3107 Visual Ethnography and Ways of Knowing (10 ECTS)

### Master's thesis

- SVF-3903 From Fieldwork Experience to Ethnographic Film and Text (60 ECTS)

### Programme structure

Term	10 ECTS	10 ECTS	10 ECTS
First term (autumn)	SVF-3101 Approaching Social Realities: Understanding Other People's Lives		SVF-3102 Conveying Social Realities: Exploring AudioVisual Narrative Strategies
Second term (spring)	SVF-3109 Anthropological Theory and Ethnographic Praxis		SVF-3107 Visual Ethnography and Ways of Knowing
First term (autumn)	SVF-3903 From Fieldwork Experience to Ethnographic Film and Text		
Second term (spring)			

## Requirements for the independent work

The degree includes 60 ECTS which must be earned by writing a Master's Thesis and producing a film. During the first year each student chooses a topic in consultation with one of the academic staff, who will serve as a supervisor. Students conduct field work at the end of the first year, and during the second year students work with their thesis and film under supervision. The final examination consists of the following elements:

- Film of maximum 30 minutes duration
- Master's Thesis (50 pages +/-)
- Oral examination (about 60 minutes)

The evaluation of the film and the thesis will count equally, and an oral exam will follow to adjust or confirm the evaluation. Grading will be on the scale A to F, where F=Fail.

## Language of instruction and examination

English.

## Teaching and assessment methods

The programme is organised as a continuous participatory learning process: lectures, screenings, writing and filming assignments, and seminars make up the unique cumulative learning process of the two year programme. Students are encouraged to collaborate with each other in developing skills and understandings throughout the study.

The programme includes various types of exams and coursework requirements, such as essays, research papers, and film presentations. Please note that some courses have coursework requirements. Only students whose coursework requirements have been approved will be allowed to sit the examination.

Teaching and assessment methods are described in the course plan for each course.

This Master's degree is an intensive programme. All courses are compulsory and demand active participation from the students.

## Possibilities for studying abroad

Students have the possibility to carry out their fieldwork abroad.

## Programme evaluation

The study programme is evaluated annually and the different courses at least once during each programme period.

## Access to further studies

This programme qualifies for studies at PhD-level.