

## MA National & Transnational Studies

### Guidelines for Research Module I (version from 11 April 2022)

This module enables students to refine their research skills at postgraduate level. This is done through the following components:

#### **Lecture course “Hotspots: Work in progress in literature, culture and language” (3 LP):**

Students gain insight into current research debates by attending this lecture course in which staff members present their own areas of research and their current projects.

These examples also give students a better understanding of the ways in which research questions can be conceptualised, formulated, and organised into a coherent framework.

In addition to regular attendance of the lectures, students are required (preferably in groups of 2) to chair one of the lecture sessions. Before the first lecture, students have one preparatory class meeting with one of the organisers of the lecture course to discuss organisational details, the modalities of chairing, and the distribution of groups and chairing sessions. In preparation for ‘their’ session, the prospective chairs research information on the profile of the lecturer they will chair (e.g. via the lecturer’s professional website and/or by contacting them directly, for instance via an office-hour appointment). At the beginning of ‘their’ session, chairs will introduce the lecturer to the audience.<sup>1</sup> After the lecture, they will chair the discussion between the lecturer and the audience (and ensure that they have one or two questions for the lecturer themselves, in case the discussion is slow to start).

#### **Postgraduate class (9 LP):**

The postgraduate class helps students to develop their practical research skills and their own research interests. They gain a deeper understanding of different subject-specific methodologies and research tools, as well as reflecting on different national and international academic cultures.

The postgraduate class also helps students to select their individual research projects (see below), monitors the progress of these projects and gives students an opportunity to present and discuss their results.

It will also introduce students to another form of presenting research results, i.e. academic conferences. Students enhance their academic writing skills by practising the writing of abstracts for conference papers, and are encouraged (though not obliged) to attend real conferences, either as presenters or listeners.

#### **Independent study (8 LP):**

Students further enhance their research skills as well as their knowledge of National and Transnational Studies through a programme of **independent study**. This consists of several parts. The modalities differ slightly between Literary/Cultural Studies, Linguistics and Book Studies, but the overall workload of 8 LP is the same.

##### **Part 1:**

**1 LP** (equivalent to 30 hours of study time) is acquired by **attending guest lectures, literary readings and other events** inside and/or outside the university (e.g. theatre performances, exhibitions in museums or galleries, conferences, festivals) which are thematically relevant to this M.A. programme. Events may vary in length, so students may either attend up to 4 shorter events (e.g. guest lectures, literary readings, performances) or one longer event (e.g. a conference). In addition to the time spent on attending these events, students will spend time on potential pre-event preparation, post-event reflection (e.g. looking up further details if needed) and the writing of a short text about the connection between the event and the student’s own studies on this M.A. programme.

Naturally, students can only count events for credit in independent study if these events are not already part of a taught course they attend for credit.

*Example:* A Münster professor gives a 15-week lecture course on “Caribbean Literature” and decides that 1 of the 15 lectures will be replaced by a poetry reading given by a Jamaican poet. All students who attend this lecture

---

<sup>1</sup> This is what the module description means when it says that students need to do a “presentation” in the “Hotspots” lecture. Whereas presentations in other courses usually mean “presentation of students’ own academic research”, in the “Hotspots” lecture it only means “finding out some information about the speaker and introducing him/her to the audience”.

course every week have to attend this reading as part of their normal study in this course. At the same time, the professor permits interested students from outside this course to listen to the poetry reading as well. An MA student who attends the lecture course “Caribbean Literature” for credit (e.g. in the Module “Nationalism, Transnationalism, Transculturalism”) cannot count attendance of this reading for his/her independent study in the “Research Module” because it is already part of his/her workload in another module. I.e., the same event cannot be credited twice. However, an MA student who does not attend the whole lecture course and just comes to this one poetry reading can count it for credit in independent study because it does not count anywhere else.

The remaining **7 LP** are acquired through an **individual reading and research programme** (parts 2, 3 and – where applicable – 4):

**Part 2: General reading list: history and theory**

In their first year, students choose a number of essential books and essays from the general introductory reading list for this degree programme. These texts should be read in their entirety.

Essays or book excerpts already studied as part of the course work in the seminars “Nation, Nationalism, Transnationalism: Historical and Theoretical Foundations”, “Text, Book and Culture” and “Language in Context” should not be counted in the text count for “Independent Study”; instead, “Independent Study” should be used to study *additional* texts.

There are slightly different modalities for students specialising in different fields. These are:

<b>For Literary &amp; Cultural Studies and Book Studies:</b>	<b>For Linguistics:</b>
<p>Texts chosen <i>may</i> be thematically relevant to the student’s individual research project (see part 3), but this is not compulsory; instead, students may also read more widely and use their engagement with the general introductory reading list to broaden their knowledge of different aspects of National and Transnational Studies, outside the specialised area of their own research project.</p> <p>Students should choose 3 essential books (not more than 1 book per author) and 6 essential essays from the general introductory reading list (essential texts are marked with an asterisk*).</p>	<p>Linguistics has <i>combined</i> modalities for part 2 and 3; for more details, see part 3 below.</p>

**Part 3: Individual research project**

Here, students choose their own field(s) of interest (e.g. a certain national/regional focus, a certain period, or a certain thematic field – e.g. ‘nation and gender’, ‘Colonial/Postcolonial Studies’, ‘Diaspora Studies’), research relevant texts themselves and design their own reading programme.

Advice and supervision on independent study projects is provided in the postgraduate class. The selection of students’ individual topics and texts takes place in consultation with one of the teachers of the postgraduate class in semesters 1–2. **The finalised reading programme must be approved by this teacher before the student starts reading. Ideally, this should be done in the first half of the second semester.**

<p>Students’ research and text selection for parts 2 &amp; 3 must be documented in a <b>bibliography</b>.</p> <p>Please note: When including material from our general reading list (or other bibliographical sources), <b>do not just copy and paste</b> them into your own document as they are! Instead, please <b>consistently adapt the entries to the appropriate style sheet</b> (MLA for Literary &amp; Cultural studies, Chicago Manual of Style for Book Studies, APA for Linguistics).</p>
---

*Example:* Our general reading list also contains library shelf marks for your convenience, but none of the style sheets require this information, so it must be deleted when you incorporate an entry from our reading list into your own bibliography.

If you are unfamiliar with the MLA and APA style sheets, you can find some information on the Learnweb folders for Postgraduate Class I. These are copies of documents we use in our 1<sup>st</sup>-year BA class “Academic Skills”, but they are also useful for MA students who still need an introduction or refresher.

If you want more information on the Chicago Manual of Style, please consult the appropriate section of the Book Studies style sheet in their website:

<https://www.uni-muenster.de/Anglistik/bookstudies/studieren/resourcesforstudents.html>

The **results** of students’ research will also be **presented and discussed in the postgraduate class**. At first, this is done in an informal manner; whereas in the second semester each student will give a semi-formal or formal presentation about the current state of their project, taking an active role in moderating the discussion about their presentation. Students will discuss with the respective postgraduate class instructor whether they will write an exposé or essay for the portfolio.

On completion of their first-year research project, students can either choose to continue working in the same research area during their second year, or select a new research area for that period. The research project chosen for the second year will typically lead to their Master theses. However, the topic of the thesis does not have to be chosen before the second year.

The first-year individual research project has slightly different modalities for students specialising in different fields. These are:

For Literary & Cultural Studies and Book Studies:	For Linguistics:
<p>This <b>individual reading programme</b> should comprise a mixture of general theoretical/historical/sociological texts, literary primary texts (as well as, potentially, other primary sources such as films, depending on the subject), and specialised secondary texts on the primary sources studied.</p> <p>The number of texts will vary depending on the subject in question. <b>A rough guideline: 3 books, 10 shorter texts</b> (e.g. essays, poems, short stories etc.). The <i>kinds</i> of texts studied can also vary, depending on the topic.</p> <p><b>Before selecting the exact texts they will finally read, students will need to research a much greater number of texts</b> in these fields, to get an overview of what is there, to familiarise themselves with important names, titles, topics, and perhaps also publishing houses etc, and to have a better foundation for their reading choices.</p> <p>All the texts they have researched (even the ones they have not read) should be documented in a <b>bibliography</b>. This also serves to document their research skills. Students who later decide to continue with the same topic in semesters 3 and 4 can also use this bibliography as a basis for further reading and research.</p> <p><i>Example: A student who wants to explore cultural nationalism East African literature and has very little previous knowledge of the region might find it helpful to read some introductory texts about the region’s social, cultural and literary history, combined with a number of novels, plays, poems and short stories, as well as some literary theory and criticism.</i></p> <p><i>During their initial research, s/he finds 10 relevant history books, 10 literary histories, 6 cultural histories/Cultural Studies books, 20 novels, 10 plays, 20 poems, 20 short stories, and 20 books and/or essays of literary theory and criticism. S/he lists all these texts in a larger bibliography.</i></p> <p><i>From this list, s/he then chooses a smaller selection of texts which s/he will actually read – for instance, 1 history book, 1 book on literary/cultural history, several literary primary texts (e.g. 1 novel, 3 short</i></p>	<p>For Parts 2 and 3 together, students who participate in the Linguistics postgraduate class should read <b>3–5 books</b>. The books chosen may, but need not be, related to the student’s individual research project; they may also relate more broadly to the student’s particular study interests (e.g. sociolinguistics, a particular geographical area etc.) and/or the concerns of the NTS programme in general. At least one of the books should be from the “Methods in Linguistics” section of the general introductory reading list. If an edited volume is chosen, at least 5 articles must be read. In addition to the books, the students should read <b>10–15 articles</b>. These may be from journals or edited volumes (if less than 5 from a single volume). The articles chosen must be related to the student’s individual research project.</p> <p>The selection of literature should be discussed and coordinated with the lecturer in the postgraduate class, who will also provide guidance with regard to relevant books and articles.</p>

<p>stories, 3 poems) and some (e.g. 4) works of specialised literary theory and/or criticism on this subject.  <b>THIS IS JUST AN EXAMPLE, HOWEVER!</b> Other students' bibliographies, research topics and reading programmes may be structured differently, depending on individual agreements they have reached with their teachers!</p>	
---	--

**Part 4: General Introductions to Literary/Cultural Studies, Book Studies, and Linguistics**  
**(this part is only for students whose previous degrees were not in a Literary / Cultural Studies / Book Studies / Linguistics discipline):**

All students should possess at least a grounding in the basic methodologies of Literary/Cultural Studies, Book Studies and Linguistics. Students whose previous degrees were not in a Literary, Cultural Studies, Book Studies or Linguistics discipline should acquire such a grounding during their first semester with the help of one or several introductory books. Students who make such introductions part of their individual reading programme for the M.A. course can slightly shorten their reading programme for parts 2 and 3 of the independent study programme.

We recommend the following introductory books:

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester & London: Manchester UP 2000, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2002.

Bradford, Richard. *Introducing Literary Studies*. Prentice Hall 1996. (this is a very big book, but you do not need to read everything, only excerpts: especially the sections on genre will be useful.

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP 2000.

Fabian, Bernhard, ed. *Ein anglistischer Grundkurs: Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft*. 9th ed.. Berlin: Erich Schmidt 2004.

Finkelstein, David, and Alistair McCleery. *An Introduction to Book History*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge 2013.

Howsam, Leslie, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*. Cambridge: CUP 2015.

Mair, Christian. *English Linguistics: An Introduction*. Tübingen: Narr 2008. (textbook also used in Münster in BA-level courses in Linguistics)

Meyer, Charles F. *Introducing English Linguistics*. Cambridge: CUP 2009.

Meyer, Michael. *English and American Literatures*, 3rd ed. UTB. Francke 2008.

Pope, Rob. *The English Studies Book*. London et al.: Routledge 1999, 2nd ed. 2002,

Schneider, Edgar W. *English Around the World: An Introduction*. Cambridge: CUP 2011.

Weber, Jean Jacques. *Introducing Multilingualism: A Social Approach*. London: Routledge 2012. (a good introduction to NTS-related aspects of Linguistics)

**Portfolio**

The portfolio documents the work which students have done in the different module components. It is compiled over the course of the first two semesters and submitted to the teacher of the Postgraduate Class at the end of semester 2. The portfolio contains all of the following elements:

For students specialising in Literary & Cultural Studies and Book Studies:	For students specialising in Linguistics:
<p><b>List of (at the most 4) events attended / activities pursued for part 1 of independent study</b> (guest lectures, readings, exhibitions, conferences) including a short <b>description</b> of the event and a short <b>reflection</b> on the connection to the student's own studies, research interests or research project. (c.150 words per event)</p>	
<p><b>Bibliography (not annotated) of texts read for independent study, part 2</b> (texts chosen from general</p>	<p><b>Bibliography of all texts for independent study, parts 2 and 3</b> (texts chosen from general introductory reading list &amp; for <b>individual research project</b>)</p>

<p>introductory reading list) <b>and (if applicable) part 4</b> (introductory books on Literary/Cultural Studies, Book Studies and Linguistics) (c.200 words)</p>	<p><b>and (if applicable) 4</b> (introductory books on Literary/Cultural Studies, Book Studies and Linguistics). This bibliography is not annotated (c.280–525 words).</p>
<p><b>Bibliography (partially annotated) for independent study, part 3 (individual research project).</b> This contains the topic/title of the individual research project, followed by a 3-page annotated bibliography of texts which the student has read (or other materials s/he has consulted, e.g. films s/he has watched) for this project. The annotations should summarise the contents of the text in question, but should not contain interpretation, critical analysis, or personal comment. However, if the text which is being annotated is an edition of a primary text (e.g. a novel) of which there are several editions to choose from, students may also use the annotation to critically evaluate the merits and/or disadvantages of this edition compared to others (e.g. as regards reliability, the critical apparatus such as explanatory notes etc.). Depending on the length and complexity of the text which is being annotated, the length of an annotation can vary between 3–4 lines and half a page.</p> <p>The 3 pages of annotated bibliography are followed by a further 7 pages of bibliographical entries (<i>without</i> annotations) about additional texts which are also <i>relevant</i> to their research project, although they have not been able to <i>read</i> all of them within the limited time and LP frame of the module (also see the details given above in the section on the “individual research project”).</p> <p>Formatting guidelines for the 10-page-bibliography (c.3000 words): font Times New Roman, font size 12, line spacing 1.5, margins 2.5 cm on all sides (top, bottom, left and right).</p> <p>The bibliography should be structured into sections for the different kinds of material. This kind of structuring will be discussed and practised in the postgraduate class. Here, students also receive a handout with practical examples as a guideline for their own work.</p>	<p><b>Reflection on three books (part 2 and 3 together).</b> This includes a description and summary of each book as well as an explanation of how it relates to the student’s research project, study interests and/or the NTS programme (c.300–400 words per book).</p> <p><b>Critical reflection on 5 articles (part 2 and 3 together).</b> Articles chosen for critical reflection should be ones reporting original research. Critical reflections include a summary and critical discussion of the article as well as an explanation of how it relates to the student’s research project (c.300–400 words per article).</p>
<p><b>Handout and/or slides for the presentation</b> given in the <b>postgraduate class in semester 2</b> (based on their individual research project) (c.400–500 words)</p>	
<p><b>Written assignment (e.g. exposé or essay)</b> prepared for the <b>postgraduate class in semester 2</b> (based on their individual research project) (c.2500–3000 words)</p>	

**Submission deadline** for the Portfolios: **31 August**