

MA National & Transnational Studies – Guidelines for Research Module II

(version from 14 June 2016)

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

Postgraduate class (4 LP):

The postgraduate class provides advice and supervision on independent study projects, as well as being a forum for the presentation and discussion of students' results. The class also helps students to develop other aspects of their academic profile. In semester four, the postgraduate class also prepares for the disputatio, discusses students' perspectives for their future careers, gives information on career opportunities in different academic and non-academic sectors (e.g. in cooperation with the University's Career Service), reviews important transferable skills, gives more specific guidance on career strategies for the academic sector, discusses opportunities for PhD study and PhD project planning, and provides advice on applications.

Independent study (5 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:

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. As a rough guideline, we assume that students will have spent c. 3 hours altogether for each guest lecture, literary reading, theatre performance, or exhibition – these 3 hours comprise potential pre-event preparation, event attendance and post-event reflection / looking up further details etc. Certain events (e.g. academic conferences) usually last longer than 3 hours; here, the student can also be credited for more than 30 hours if s/he can prove that s/he spent more hours on this event.

Examples: A student who has attended 5 guest lectures and 5 exhibitions gets credit for 3 hours per event, i.e. $10 \times 3 = 30$ hours = 1 LP. Another student who has spent 9 hours attending a one-day conference, 4 guest lectures (worth 3 hours each = 12 hours) and 3 exhibitions (worth 3 hours each = 9 hours) likewise gets credit for 30 hours altogether, i.e. 1 LP.

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.

Examples: A Münster professor gives a 15-week lecture course on "Postcolonial African Literature" and decides that 1 of the 15 lectures will be replaced by a visit from a Nigerian poet who will read from his latest book. All students

who attend this lecture 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 "Postcolonial African Literature" for credit (e.g. in the module "Culture Contact, Culture Conflict" 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.

Part 2:

The remaining **4 LP** are acquired through an **individual research project**. Students either deepen their knowledge of the research area they had already chosen for "Research Module I" or choose a new research area. The research area chosen for "Research Module II" will typically lead to (and later complement) their Master theses. Advice and supervision on independent study projects is provided in the postgraduate class, and later also by their MA supervisors. The number and kind of texts will vary depending on the subject in question and the length of complexity of the texts involved. **A rough guideline: 1–2 books, 5–6 shorter texts** (e.g. essays, poems, short stories etc.). The **results** of students' research will be **presented and discussed in the postgraduate class**. Further supervision, presentation and discussion opportunities may be provided online.

Portfolio:

The portfolio documents the work which students have done in the different module components. It is compiled over the course of the third and fourth semesters and submitted to the teacher of the Postgraduate Class towards the end of semester 4. It contains all of the following elements:

- **List of events attended / activities pursued for part 1 of independent study** (guest lectures, readings, exhibitions, conferences etc.) (c. 50–100 words)
- **Bibliography** (*not* annotated) of texts read **for independent study, part 2** (c. 100–200 words)
- **Material from the presentation and discussion of students' individual research** (i.e. MA thesis proposal or case studies related to the MA thesis project - **specifics to be determined by the lecturer** in question)

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