

Experimental Game Cultures

Curriculum

Master's programme

Duration: 4 semesters

Programme Number: 066 536

This is the English translation of the original German version. Only the latter is legally binding.

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§ 1 Preamble

Play is one of the elementary cultural techniques of humankind. A society without games is inconceivable, no childhood was ever without them. The spectrum is wide – games in a multitude of analog and digital forms increasingly permeate people’s daily life, from leisure time to education, from social networks to citizen science games, from gamification as a strategy to influence users’ reaction patterns to the research of human behaviour and social dynamics.

The study programme of Experimental Game Cultures thus aims at critical reflection of the societal impact of games while at the same time applying it to the prototypical development of innovative game concepts and approaches. Therefore, the central aspect of the studies is formed by the development of innovative game concepts beyond the commercial game industry in interconnection with the critical reflection of games in their various historical, societal, and social contexts. Research areas of the study programme are, among others, the use of games as an instrument for a better understanding of social, economic, and political interrelations and for a democratic shaping of their future (serious games, critical games, educational games, etc.). As this is based on interdisciplinary cooperation, the master’s study programme is geared to graduates of bachelor and diploma degree studies of all disciplines (in particular art, design, technical and social sciences, and the humanities).

§ 2 Legal Basis, Extent and Academic Degree

- (1) Pursuant to § 54 para.1 [11] Universities Act, the master’s programme of Experimental Game Cultures is assigned to the group of Interdisciplinary Studies.
- (2) The study programme comprises 120 ECTS credit points which corresponds to a minimum study duration of four semesters.
- (3) On the basis of successful completion of the programme and pursuant to § 51 para.2 subpara 11 Universities Act, the academic degree of „Master of Arts“, abbreviated to „MA“, is awarded.
- (4) As the programme is set up at a university of arts, admission to the study programme requires evidence of appropriate aptitude as defined in § 4 of the curriculum.

§ 3 Qualification Profile

(1) Graduates of the master's programme Experimental Game Cultures have an in-depth knowledge regarding sociological, philosophical, historical, and artistic perspectives on games. On this basis, they will be able to profoundly analyze, systematize, and contextualize current developments in the field of game culture, games industry, and game-based influencing strategies directed by state and economy. Furthermore, they know the constructive potential of games for raising awareness and dealing with issues relevant to the future (e.g. Grand Challenges, UN SDGs).

(2) The core competence of graduates lies in the development of innovative games concepts with societal impact. This includes creating game narrative and dramaturgy, game design and prototyping/simulation. In addition, they possess a generalist's fundamental understanding of the whole game development process which also covers basic competencies in project management and digital game development (level design, asset design, sound design and game development/programming). Beside basic knowledge in these areas, they have in-depth expertise in some of them as a result of their individual focus.

(3) Graduates are able to operate in interdisciplinary teams and can draw on a broad spectrum of communicative and methodological skills for collaborative game development. Also, they are familiar with the self-initiated acquisition of knowledge and competences and are prepared for continuous autodidactic learning in this highly dynamic field.

(4) Professional fields are available for graduates in games research, games criticism and games journalism plus in the conceptional development of art games, serious games, educational games and gamification projects with democratic aspirations.

§ 4 Admission

(1) Prerequisites for the admission to the master's programme of Experimental Game Cultures are:

- completed bachelor or diploma degree studies (or equivalent degree) at a recognized domestic or foreign post-secondary education institution,
- evidence of visual and linguistic aptitude provided in the context of an exam by an examination committee pursuant to § 75 Universities Act,
- evidence of English and German language skills at level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

(2) The following documents are to be attached to the written application:

- a brief biography showing the qualifications acquired to date, plus competencies and main areas of activity,
- a description of the motivation to study, which includes the personal objectives and the main areas of interest pursued in the course of study,
- the formulation of one (or more) project idea(s) which the applicant would like to pursue during the first year of studies.

In addition, the written application may be accompanied by theoretical and practical work from the previous studies that demonstrate the described competencies and points of interest.

(3) The admission exam consists of two parts. In part one the congruence between the study objectives and the applicants personal qualifications, objectives and desired areas of interest is assessed. Part two is a personal interview during which the applicants interests are discussed in more detail and their aptitude is assessed. Positive completion of part one of the exam is a prerequisite for admission to part two.

§ 5 Programme Structure and Subjects

(1) In the first to the third semester, the course of study is divided into the following three subjects respectively:

1. History and Theories of Games

Topics are (a) the cultural and social history of games, (b) theories of the games, (c) functions of analog and digital games in present times. Engaging with the historical and theoretical foundations in general will be intertwined with concrete research preparing for the individual Master thesis.

2. Game Development and Reflection

Topics are (a) narrative and content development, (b) developing ideas and formats (analog/digital/performative), (c) critical support and reflection. The teaching is project-oriented and is interlaced with preparatory experimental applications and reflections geared toward the individual Master thesis. „Game Development and Reflection“ is classed as the central artistic subject pursuant to § 68 para. 2 Universities Act.

3. Free Electives

Free electives to the extent of 18 ECTS may be selected from the range of scheduled courses at the Angewandte¹ except for individual artistic tutoring (KE).

(2) Teaching in the first to the third semester is project-oriented: In the first and the second semester, a study project, which is based on the project idea submitted in the admission procedure, is carried out within the framework of „Game Development and Reflection“. In the third semester, support to lay the groundwork for the Master thesis is provided within the framework of „Game Development and Reflection“.

(3) Producing the Master thesis, pursuant to § 8, is scheduled for the fourth semester.

§ 6 Study Route

Semester	Subjects	ECTS (per semester)
1 st to 3 rd semester	History and Theories of Games	12
	Game Development and Reflection	12
	Free Electives	6
4 th semester	Master Thesis	30

§ 7 Language of Instruction

(1) The languages of instruction are English and German.

(2) Courses and exams may be held in either English or German; students are to be informed about the language used prior to the beginning of the semester.

(3) The Master thesis is to be produced in English.

§ 8 Master Thesis

(1) A Master thesis to the extent of 30 ECTS is to be produced with a focus selected from the following three areas:

1. development of a prototype of an experimental game with theoretical reflection – focus on game prototype
2. development of a prototype of an experimental game with theoretical reflection – focus on theoretical-reflective work
3. critical-theoretical work from the field of cultural studies

¹ depending on places available

(2) In the third semester of study, the foundation of the Master thesis is individually supported within the framework of "Game Development and Reflection" and the supervising tutor(s) is(are) determined based on the topic, the idea, and the problem formulation of the thesis.

(3) The Master thesis may be produced as a team effort. Contributions by the individual students must be clearly identified and they will each be assessed separately pursuant to § 81 para. 3 Universities Act.

(4) Following a public presentation of the results by the student, the Master thesis is assessed by an examination committee consisting of at least three university lecturers whose area of expertise is relevant to the subject. The supervising tutor(s) are in any case part of the examination committee.

§ 9 Exam Regulations

(1) Course exams are carried out by the head of the course in either written or oral form. Exam contents, methods, and assessment criteria are to be announced in a suitable format prior to the beginning of each semester.

(2) The master's exam concludes the study programme. The master's exam consists of the courses completed in the master's study programme (history and theory of games, game development and reflection, electives) as well as the assessment of the Master thesis by the exam committee.

§ 10 Entry into force

The curriculum comes into effect on 1 October 2021.