



RESEARCH PROGRAM

THE VALUE AND VALORIZATION OF CULTURE

FACULTY OF
HUMANITIES

Colofon

ECO

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

04.	Introduction	→
07.	Open and relevant: the overarching theme of the research program	→
11.	Dimension 1 – Personal identities: the narrative and imaginative self	→
13.	Dimension 2 – National images and transnational perspectives	→
16.	Dimension 3 – Cultural diversity in the city	→
18.	Strategies and ambitions for the coming years	→
20.	Obtaining a PhD in the humanities	→
22.	Research and education	→



Introduction

This revised program is the follow-up to *Value and Valorization of Culture* as it served from 2015–2020 as the framework for the research and associated master's education of the Faculty of Humanities at the Open Universiteit. Cultural scholars from multiple disciplines work within this faculty, including philosophy, history, art history and literature. Staff members conduct both disciplinary and interdisciplinary research. This research focuses mainly on the (early) modern era and is particularly focused on the culture and history of the Netherlands, Flanders and Western Europe, including the (post)colonial aspects thereof. For an overview of our researchers and their activities, see:

<https://www.ou.nl/onderzoek-cultuurwetenschappen>.

The past years (2015–2020) have shown an increasing dynamism in the field of research within Cultural Sciences. For example, the number of PhDs and publications have increased, new professors have been recruited and employees have carried out research with funding from NWO, CLARIAH, HERA, and the OU-wide interdisciplinary research program *Safety in urban environments* (De Veilige Stad). Additionally, various employees have won awards for publications. CS employees are active within national research schools such as the Huizinga Institute for Cultural History, the Research School for Literary Studies, the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis (NICA), the Netherlands Research School for Art History, and the Netherlands Research School for Gender Studies, where they participate in research groups on *oral history*, *health humanities*, *law and humanities* and *postcolonial readings*.

In addition to dissemination activities such as public lectures, popular scientific publications, blogs and media appearances, employees also contributed to the online lecture series of the University of the Netherlands, they were present during the Month of Philosophy and the Month of History, and they offered webinars and podcasts. The online journal for cultural sciences *Locus*, edited by staff members of our faculty, offers scientific knowledge in an accessible and attractive way in theme files.

The interaction with social partners was founded in the organization of museum exhibitions, symposia and congresses, and in the design of various research projects at municipal level. For example, CS employees worked together with the Amsterdam Museum, the Van Abbe Museum, Museum Belvédère, Naturalis, Royal Africa Museum in Tervuren, the Foundation Together Strong against Stigma, Knowledge Center Phrenos, and MDHG Association for the Homeless and Drug Users. In addition, there was collaboration with other universities and research institutions, including NIOD, the Netherlands eScience Center, Network War Resources, and the Huygens Institute.

Multidisciplinary collaboration with other faculties within the Open Universiteit has taken shape more definitively. CS employees conduct research with colleagues from psychology, legal sciences, educational sciences, management sciences and beta sciences, on themes such as climate change, burnout problems, care innovations for vulnerable groups, and citizen participation in health care and nuisance in the city.

The international partnerships in which CS participates has also increased. Until 2017, we worked with colleagues from Sweden and England within an NWO project, *Internationalization of the humanities*, on the transnational cultural aspects of the Congo Free State. With colleagues from Germany, Denmark and France, CS has been involved since 2019 in the European research project, *Governing the narcotic city. Imaginaries, practices and discourses of public drug cultures in European cities from 1970 until today* (HERA) on the theme of drug use in urban public space. CS employees have also organized various international conferences and workshops, such as *The icon as a cultural model* (January 2018), *Imaginaries of the future city* (June 2020) and *Cultural perceptions of safety* (January 2021).

Building on these developments in recent years, this research program aims to make the connecting thematic lines in our research more visible. It also wants to set an agenda for research within CS for the coming years. At the end of 2020, a process of further development of the CS faculty was started in order to link education and research more explicitly to the social context in which it stands. From a broad and dynamic cultural concept, education and research will relate more directly to the evident cultural dimension of current social debates.

First, we will set out the broader contours of our research program in its entirety, or rather, the perspectives and themes that we focus on. Second, we will then show the three dimensions through which we investigate this theme: that of the self, of (trans)national image and identity, and of the city. We will also discuss the research ambitions and strategies for the coming years, the role of the PhD community within the faculty, and the relationship between research and education.



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Open and relevant: overarching theme of the research program

Why is a book, a poem, a work of art or a building important or not – and who decides that? How do people remember and preserve events or objects from the past? The value that citizens, scientists or politicians attribute to cultural expressions is neither eternally valid nor universal. Culture is constantly being rethought, recalibrated and designed. Moreover, at all levels in society, people use cultural products to mark their identity, distinguish themselves from others and show what they consider important. We see this very clearly, for example, in the recent controversies surrounding intangible and material heritage that touches on the colonial past of the Netherlands, such as the slave panels on the Golden Coach, the statue of J.P. Coen in Hoorn, and the celebration of Sinterklaas.

Within the Faculty of Cultural Studies at the Open Universiteit, we investigate how people give meaning to their lives and to developments in the past and present through cultural expressions. We do this by *close reading* of cultural objects as carriers of identity, symbolism and memory and by looking at the representations of meaning in prose, poetry, works of art, museum exhibitions and historiography. From a philosophical perspective, we also reflect on the nature of meaning and how scientific research can be conducted on this. We also analyze the social processes of cultural production, cultural mediation and cultural participation, as well as the reception, dissemination and consumption of ideas and culture in institutions, networks, clubs and associations.

We conduct our research within CS in a way that is based on the original emancipatory ideals of our university, in which our researchers are deeply rooted. They question the openness/closedness of our society and raise issues of deviation and tolerance, knowledge inequality, stereotyping and *othering* in collaboration with the public, social institutions and hands-on experts. For example, our researchers pay special attention to less-heard voices in (art) history, literature and philosophy: the *outsiders*, *silent voices* or, as historians put it, history “from the bottom up.” We are concerned with how societies deal with people who diverge from the norms of gender, ethnicity, health and physicality, and the impact of stigmatization.

The research within CS is also in line with the new OU-wide research program *Innovating for resilience*, in which the scientific contribution is central to dealing with the challenges facing today’s society. Today we see strongly conflicting perspectives around modern challenges, which in public-administrative terms are referred to as *wicked problems*. This term refers to issues of a particularly complex nature and associated with conflicting visions, norms and values. It is CS’s ambition to be a leader in the analysis of the problems and dilemmas in dealing with these challenges.

Firstly, researchers in CS focus on issues that have become even more topical as a result of the recent COVID-19 crisis, namely issues related to health, illness and care. In the past century and a half, the (mental) health care sector has grown dramatically and the therapeutic arsenal has increased considerably. However, the medicalization of society is controversial and the subject of fierce *culture wars*. After two centuries of pharmaceutical innovation, are we consuming too many drugs and pills now – from antidepressants and tranquilizers to speed and XTC – and who determines which of these agents are legal or illegal? How can culture help to interpret and reverse the enormous *burnout* problem? Are we too easily scattered with diagnoses such as ADHD, obesity or addiction?

Throughout all the discussions, the question arises as to whether we can still keep up with all available medical interventions, or whether it is time for a more holistic view on healing and quality of life. From a *health humanities* approach, we show how views about health and disease are partly culture-determined and we offer insight into the underlying norms and values behind healing and prevention practices.

A second theme that researchers within Cultural Sciences are working on is technology, media and culture. We live in a time of constant technological innovation. Technological developments are accelerating and they are causing radical transformations. We live in a digital and global media culture that has an enormous impact on all dimensions of our social life and leads to debate about new ethical questions regarding media and the internet, privacy, and algorithmic profiling. Through research into the impact of innovations in the field of technology and media on our society (culture), on our self-image (psychology) and on the ways in which we speak about the world (discourses), we shed light on the cultural dimensions of these current debates.

Technology is also playing an increasingly important role in the research of cultural scientists themselves, in the form of *digital humanities* techniques that we use in publishing, preserving and analyzing sources. The digital databases available to cultural-science scholars (historical newspapers and audiovisual media, literary and art historical databases, etc.) are valuable but also present us with new challenges regarding the use of the available material. Based on our experience with *digital-humanities* tools, we simultaneously offer reflection on the impact of the digitization of cultural-scientific research.

A third theme is cultural heritage and identity. This concerns, for example, issues of controversial heritage that touches upon the colonial past. By means of critical analysis of (among other things) literature, museum collections, festivals and rituals, our researchers intervene in the heated social discussions around the material and intangible heritage and other forms of memorial culture. By looking at this tension between heritage, (national) identities and decolonization, we want to shed light on terms such as “we” and “them”: who are the “we” and who are the “they” in heritage discussions, and what distinction does this bring in our current society? And how did this dividing line between “we” and “them” come about?

In addition to these controversial heritage issues, we are also concerned with the national literary, artistic and historical heritage and the care and appreciation for this. The twentieth century saw a boom in institutions and associations around heritage management and local or regional historiography. At the national level, there is an explicit desire to canonize history, literary and art-historical culture. Based on the dynamic cultural view that we use within the Faculty of Cultural Studies at the Open Universiteit, we are greatly interested in the backgrounds and contexts of canonization processes, the transfer of memories to future generations, and the selection and preservation of heritage.

A fourth theme that runs through the research within cultural sciences is the role of cultural forms of expression in relation to intercultural, (trans)national, global processes in modern society, from the colonial period to the present day. Within this domain, attention is focused on: the transnational production, circulation and reception of cultural forms of expression; for cultural forms of expression as carriers of memory, identity and community and how aspects such as ethnicity, gender, nationality, class and sexuality play a role in this; and for new aesthetic developments arising from a global history characterized by cross-cultural interaction, mobility, and exchange across national, linguistic and geographic boundaries (e.g. hybridity, polyphony, genre mixing, experiment).

In particular, the emphasis will be on Dutch literature (including (post)colonial and minority literature) as an excellent medium to investigate broader cultural dynamics in Dutch and Flemish society, and this will always be studied in an international and comparative cultural-scientific framework. This theme has a distinct interdisciplinary profile. Literary, artistic and philosophical texts are analyzed in relation to their socio-historical background and are used methodologically to gain insight from transnational, postcolonial, gender and globalization studies. In this way, the cultural sciences can make an enlightened contribution to current, social issues – about migration, feminism, national identity, cultural heritage.

Finally, CS researchers are concerned with the dangers of climate change. This theme is surrounded by political and cultural conflict. There are discussions about possible solutions and about the best ways to make citizens and politicians aware of the urgency of the situation. Climate change has been described as *slow violence*: violence that takes place gradually and invisibly. Cultural expressions increasingly reflect the concern about this. The number of climate novels – often dystopian in nature – has risen sharply in recent years, as has the number of films and works of art on this theme. Within the research of cultural sciences, we study, for example, the way in which the process of climate change is represented in domestic and foreign climate fiction. Stories not only provide an excellent opportunity to engage readers on a personal level in the complexities of climate change, they also play a productive role in policy-making practices and in the mediation of climate scenarios.

Our research into the cultural dimensions of the current themes described above takes place on several levels. We describe the three dimensions on which our research is based below.





Dimension 1

Personal identities: the narrative and imaginative self

This research dimension revolves around the person (the individual, self or subject) and their identity and self-presentation. How can we interpret and explain the (apparently) growing attention to “the personal story,” the biographical or autobiographical perspective in historiography, literature and visual culture?

A personal identity comprises a self-understanding, on the basis of which a person imagines him/herself. An important function of this imagination is the narrative bringing together of events from the past, with a view to formulating a greater or more efficient coherence and meaning, and the interpretation of a person in her/his relationship to others in her/his proximity, society and the world. “Imagination” is used here in two different but interrelated ways: as mental imagery and as an artistic or literary self-representation. This forms the starting point for a number of conceptual and thematic research directions, in which cross-fertilization naturally occurs.

Conceptually, the research that takes place on this subject-oriented dimension focuses on a fundamental reflection on the practices of telling and imagining one’s own life story or that of others. Which conception of the self (person, subject) is contained in this or is given shape in this? What assumptions about “life” underlie this? Personal stories and identities take shape within changing cultural contexts. In our health culture, for example, dealing with physicality, illness and lifestyle have become important markers for the expression of identity. We also look at the connections between presentations of the self and the technicalization of society.

Second, research focuses on the “actuality diagnoses” of how contemporary individuals relate to themselves. We look at the way in which individuals try to use their individuality and influence in difficult and limiting circumstances. Finally, our research focuses on the analysis of narratological, narrative, fictional/literary and visual formal languages and genres, from transhistorical and transnational perspectives.

These approaches can be used for the study of diverse cultural products, such as novels, (auto) biographies, diaries and memoirs, films, exhibitions, medical or judicial archives, art objects, plays, heritage, *oral-history* interviews, philosophical texts, et cetera. We also look at how told and imagined life stories are intertwined with transhistoric and transnational influences, through cross-pollination across borders, changing formats, genres and traditions in the way in which people write or tell about their lives in spoken words or images.

Some research questions within this dimension:

How does a person today, through cultural expressions, shape her/himself as a citizen or as a consumer in relation to themes such as climate, physicality and health, and modern technology?

How does the digitization of historical eyewitness accounts and ego documents change the use of these sources?





Dimension 2

National images and transnational perspectives

Research within CS also takes place at the level of collective identities. Nation and national identity definitions are the dynamic and often contentious result of political, social and cultural processes of meaning and value assignment. Historical research in cultural sciences is concerned with, among other things, the formation of the nation-state since 1750, looking at both the physical and institutional “spaces” of the nation-state, as well as its “imaginary” space: the mental space of shared and controversial symbols, ideas and rituals in which the representation of a past, whether or not supposedly shared, plays a central role.

For example, it is investigated how countries such as the Netherlands and Belgium deal with the material and intangible heritage of their colonial past. The depiction of this colonial past is analyzed in literary texts, but also, for example, in museum presentations. In this perspective, immaterial and material cultural objects appear to be carriers of national, colonial and post-colonial identities. The colonial elite in the former Dutch East Indies, for example, concentrated on collecting ethnography and thus shaped their own identity and status in both the colony and the Dutch nation-state.

It also examines the role of “reference cultures” in the construction of nation-states and national identities. For the Netherlands of the long nineteenth century, French, English and German culture in particular formed models in a positive and negative sense. By means of interpretations, translations and adaptations, the Dutch (consumers, critics and artists) appropriated the “foreign” and gave it its own color (“indigenization”). National cultures are not closed systems, but rather consist of different circuits, pillars, regions, institutions and infrastructures, an insight that has proven fruitful in research into cultural transfers that, moreover, are often reciprocal.

After the Second World War, the United States in particular was an important reference culture. While the Netherlands benefited from the financial injections of Marshall aid during the reconstruction period and nine regions in the Netherlands were designated as “development areas,” at the same time there was fear that our country would lose its own traditional local, regional and national values as a result of “Americanization.” Dutch citizens used the United States as a frame of reference to relate to the effects of Americanization and the transformation of the Netherlands into a modern consumer society.



Finally, the role of literature in the development of nations is also examined from a *law and humanities* perspective. In South Africa, for example, litigation over literature ultimately contributed to the country's artistic freedom. In addition, the impact that the German occupation and the purification processes after the liberation in 1945 had on the Dutch literary field is investigated.

Some research questions within this dimension:

What role do representations of national identity play in social debates about health and care, heritage, climate, media and technology, and diversity?

How did the physical, institutional and imaginary space of the nation-state take shape in national historiography, in the historiography of art and literature, in historical culture, in heritage management, and in education?



Dimension 3

Cultural diversity in the city

Globally, more and more citizens live in cities, who are increasingly striving to establish their own urban identity in the context of *city marketing*. The research in CS is therefore increasingly taking place at city level. We are particularly interested in the impact of the increased cultural diversity in the city.

The concept of cultural diversity refers to differences in ethnicity, background and religion as well as diversity in lifestyle, behavior, norms and values. In modern history, this urban cultural diversity has greatly increased, not only as a result of increased Western and non-Western migration, but also due to profound sociocultural changes that took place in the twentieth century. Developments such as secularization, an increased emphasis on self-development and self-determination, the emancipation of women and young people and the sexual revolution have led to a greater variety in behavior, lifestyle and personal expression in society. Social scientists currently even speak of a “super diversity.”

Cities are breeding grounds for cultural renewal and social and cultural integration. The city has a pioneering role and social changes are therefore often first visible in cities, including the negative aspects such as social tensions, exclusion and violence. In addition, cities have complex core tasks, such as: promoting inclusiveness, providing a safe living environment for all citizens and offering space for interaction, innovation, migration and citizen participation. These core tasks regularly collide with the different interests of people who live together in the city. For example, in the industrial Western city of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, “decent citizens” went to war against “immoral behavior,” such as prostitution and gambling, in the city. In the post-industrial city, on the other hand, entertainment, going out and shopping have become dominant functions. Today, tensions within the multicultural society, mass tourism and gentrification lead to conflict.

Cultural-science research into urban diversity not only focuses on the perspective of authorities and authorities, but also explicitly on the perception, interpretation and practices of citizens; for example, in maintaining order and safety. In the early modern city, “vigilance” was an explicit civic duty, but also in the 19th-, 20th- and 21st-century cities, an appeal was made to the vigilant citizen, or citizens themselves take initiatives to make their neighborhood or city more livable and safe. In urban social movements, other citizens advocated more space in the city for individual freedom. Special attention is paid to dealing with vulnerable groups in the city, such as the homeless, people with mental health problems and drug users..

Some research questions within this dimension:

How is urban cultural diversity represented in visual art, museums, literature, film or theater?

Where did citizens and government clash in the battle between order and safety on the one hand (e.g. in the sense of public health care, nuisance control, climate control) and the provision of space for innovation and diversity on the other?



AMBITION



Strategy and ambitions for the coming years

Cultural Studies has set itself various research strategies and ambitions to work towards. We will first of all focus on a mid-term visitation in 2022 and participation in the national research visitation in 2025. The writing of *peer-reviewed* publications and the submission of applications for indirect and contract funding by employees will be encouraged, as in previous years. We strive to strengthen support in this.

As already mentioned in the Introduction, at the end of 2020 we started on the further development of the Faculty of Humanities, under the name *CS in connection [CW in verbinding]*. A number of pathways have been set out for the longer term, which will be further developed in the course of 2021-2025. The development has progressed towards an even stronger emphasis on contemporary problems, empirical broadening of the domain of CS research and strengthening cooperation, also in the field of research, with external parties. In this sense, this research program has a dynamic character, because it runs parallel to a period of renewal within our faculty that may provide new accents in the Value and Valorization of Culture program.

First of all, we want to further strengthen the focus on society in our research. By means of in-depth analysis of the changing appreciation, function and urgency of culture, we not only want to contribute to fundamental scientific knowledge and insight, but also contribute substantively to social debates.

We want to further strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration by collaborating in thematic, cross-disciplinary research groups. The main objectives of setting up these research groups at CS are to unite research, facilitate *peer feedback*, and increase interdisciplinary collaboration. By setting up research groups, the faculty wants to further expand a fertile research environment and further stimulate peer review and teamwork. In the current research and subsidy landscape, research groups are becoming increasingly important both for embedding research and for international scientific collaboration.

Seven research groups were formed at the beginning of 2021:

- Culture, colonialism and coloniality
- Mental health humanities
- Technology and culture
- Imaginaries of the future city: envisioning climate change and technological cityscapes through contemporary (literary) narratives
- Envisioning Climate Change and Technological Cityscapes through Contemporary (Literary) Narratives)
- Cultural heritage, representation and identity
- *Critical thinking in the humanities*
- Culture and democracy.

In addition, the faculty wants to structurally create opportunities for all colleagues to discuss CS research matters with each other as a department. Four times a year we organize a research meeting for the entire department. The details of the meetings are determined within the faculty research committee in consultation with the staff and research groups.

Furthermore, the faculty wants to ensure that the research carried out is improved in the public domain, by setting up an online valorization platform. This platform will become the gathering place for all valorization activities of our scientists and will be filled with their mixed-media output. By bringing together all these initiatives, activities and research output, we want to promote the visibility of our research and show the importance of cultural sciences for the community.

In line with the objective of the online valorization platform, CS also aims to focus research even more on collaboration with social partners and involving citizens in the research in the coming years. In the coming years, the faculty wants to stimulate the use of *oral history* and *citizen science* methods and activities, research in collaboration with citizens. These might include, for example, *witness seminars*, a specific form of oral history; organizing *crowd-sourcing* events around archives and museum exhibitions; or collaborating with experts by experience in research. Over the next five years, we want to further expand this interactive and engaged way of research in order to better utilize the memories of people with lived experiential knowledge.

Finally, the aim is to further expand the collaborations with external partners in the coming years: with international colleagues, other universities, research institutions, research schools and social partners. Structural partnerships already exist within the European research project *Governing the narcotic city*, with the German University of Paderborn on research into Hannah Ahrend, and within interdisciplinary research consortia in which CS plays a leading role, on burnout issues and climate change (*Imagaries of the future city*). For June 2021, CS is organizing a symposium entitled “Beyond the boxes,” which deals with the theme of stigma in and around public mental health care (GGZ), together with the Faculty of Psychology and various social partners. These types of research activities are fruitful and stimulate the social relevance and involvement of our research and the strengthening of contacts across disciplines. It also stimulates new questions and provides access to new networks, data and financing.



Obtaining a PhD in the humanities

An important part of the research community in the Faculty of Humanities is our growing number of PhD students. At the beginning of 2021, the PhD community will consist of twenty-eight researchers; three are funded by NWO, there are six internally funded places and nineteen external PhD candidates. In the past five years, twelve PhD students have also successfully defended their thesis, many of them alumni of our MA program in Art and Cultural Sciences.

It is the aim of CS to have a close connection between PhD students, the research program and the staff. All PhD students are invited to become members of the research groups; there is a monthly “PhD club” for mutual exchange, feedback and peer review; and twice a year there are so-called PhD afternoons, which have been organized since 2012 for internal and external PhD students. CS has a relatively large number of external PhD students and this is in line with the emancipatory mission of “lifelong learning” that is so characteristic of the Open Universiteit.

All Open Universiteit PhD students are also affiliated with the Open Universiteit Graduate School (OUGS). The Graduate School informs prospective PhD students and facilitates PhD students who have been formally admitted to a PhD program. CS PhD students also participate in the annual PhD day organized by the Graduate School. Furthermore, the Faculty of Cultural Studies encourages its internal PhD students to become members of one of the national research schools. In this way, they can come into contact with PhD students from other universities, strengthen their professional network and make use of the training opportunities offered by these schools. For example, the faculty has contacts with the Huizinga Institute for Cultural History; the Political History Research School (OPG); the Research School for Art History (OSK); the Research School for Literary Studies (OSL) and the Research School for Philosophy (OZSW).

PhD programs

The PhD trajectory of both internal and external PhD students proceeds in different phases. External PhD students start with an “aspirant phase” of a maximum of one year, in which they develop a research plan and a training and supervision plan under the supervision of the intended supervisors. Once these plans have been completed to the satisfaction of all parties, the supervisor/day-to-day supervisor sends them to the research coordinator for perusal, who supervises an inventory of current PhD programs and formal notification of the PhD defense to the executive board (CvB).

For internal PhD students, an evaluation takes place approximately one year after the start of each PhD trajectory, for which a file must be submitted. This file must include: (1) a brief report of the work performed so far, (2) a final research proposal, (3) a draft chapter or other substantial part of the text and, (4) a schedule of the further research process, supervision and education. Based on this, it is then determined whether the PhD program will be continued.¹

Quality control of PhD programs²

candidates). PhD students are always linked to two (co-)supervisors, in accordance with the Open Universiteit PhD regulations. In the training and supervision plan, agreements are made about, among other things, the method of supervision, additional courses to be followed and the frequency of supervisory meetings. Internal PhD students will have an R&O meeting each year about their progress with a manager appointed by the department head of CS, usually the supervisor. A report of this meeting will be sent to the research coordinator. In addition, PhD students can request assistance from the research coordinator if they experience problems with the supervision or contact the confidential advisor of the Graduate School if problems arise during the PhD trajectory.

1. For specifications about the PhD program and the evaluation times, see the website of the Graduate School: <https://www.ou.nl/en/-/graduate-school>.
2. For the most up-to-date information about quality assurance and regulations regarding doctoral degrees, please refer to the website of the Open Universiteit Graduate School: <https://www.ou.nl/en/-/graduate-school>. All statements are made subject to the new development of the PhD policy of the Open Universiteit Graduate School. In the autumn of 2020 they will work on a large-scale renewal and centralization of quality assurance.



Research and education

The CS research program also serves as the basis for education in the Master of Arts and Cultural Studies degree, in which a great deal of emphasis is placed on research-oriented education. First of all, we do this by closely linking the content of the courses with current research and the expertise of our staff members, whereby the interdisciplinary connecting themes in research are also explicitly addressed. We encourage all theses to be in line with staff research.

We also help shape the relationship between education and research by training students in research skills that touch upon the research fields in which the staff members themselves are active. In this way, we strive to facilitate the step towards conducting independent research for students with ambitions in that direction. For example, in the academic year 2020/2021, students in our master's program could learn to work with theories, concepts, sources and methods related to colonial history, the transnational aspects of nationalism, historical and artistic representations of drug use, and the history of leisure activities, among others. They can gain experience with digital network analysis and become acquainted with the ego document as a literary genre and as a cultural-historical source.

The focus on research in the master's program is also clearly represented in the Masterclass in Cultural Sciences, where students reflect on recent trends and developments in the academic world, such as the increasing focus on *citizen science* and valorization. Students can also opt for a masterclass that we offer in collaboration with legal sciences, if they are interested in interdisciplinarity and an introduction to a field (and students) from a faculty other than cultural sciences.

The aim for the coming years is to further address the interdisciplinary connecting themes that are central to this research program. In terms of methodologies, we want to give *oral history* a place in our master's program and expand the focus on *digital humanities*. In addition, we want to encourage collaboration in research with cultural institutions and social partners, partly through the use of the work context of students and offer them the opportunity to write a "customized" thesis that is in line with their professional practice. A thesis based on professional practice can already lead to an internship/learning in the workplace during the bachelor's degree of cultural sciences.