



M.A. TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES



Description of Modules

October 2011

The M.A. Transcultural Studies at Heidelberg University has an interdisciplinary and transregional focus. It is informed by the perspective that cultures are not contained within ethnically closed, linguistically homogenous and territorially bounded spheres, but that they are constituted through transformations and entanglements that follow from extended contacts and relationships. Forms of mobility and connectedness have been characteristic of cultures over centuries pre-dating the advent of modern communication technologies and global capital. The courses of this programme address these issues by focusing on the changes which circulatory practices have undergone from the past to the present. Studying the dynamics of transcultural exchanges involves analyzing the agency of participants in these developments and shifts over longer as well as shorter time spans. The programme is designed to provide substantive knowledge and the methodological tools for this study. Particular attention will be paid to introduce students to the integrated study of different types of records – objects, texts of different genres, visual, audio or digital media, with a view to flesh out the ways in which people in specific regional contexts experience, contest and represent these shifts.

The programme has a common theoretical-cum-methodological component in which concepts and practices of Transcultural Studies will be presented and discussed. Due to the nature of the approach, students will be confronted with a variety of theories and methods and will be trained to select according to their own research questions. A second component consists of courses offered by the different chairs – each one framed in order to explore the connections and mutually constitutive exchanges between regions of Europe and Asia and/or other regions where available. Many courses offered jointly by different chairs explore both disciplinary and interdisciplinary questions – such as the relationships between visual practices, intellectual discourses and economic factors. The programme intends to foster cooperative research across linguistic, historical and media divides. Students are encouraged to acquire expertise in relevant foreign languages, including languages of ancient cultures. Linguistic and disciplinary expertise is an important basis for transcultural studies and research, which invariably involves writing about different cultures in one language, involving a constant process of translating and negotiating concepts from one context to another. The programme encourages self-reflexivity about the processes of transition from the multiple languages of primary sources and the mono-lingual narratives of academic language.

The core teaching in the M.A. Transcultural Studies is conducted by the chairs of Buddhist Studies, Cultural Economic History, Global Art History, Intellectual History, and Visual and Media Anthropology.

The following pages contain general information about the structure of the programme and a detailed description of its modules and courses.

Overall Structure

The two-year M.A. Transcultural Studies amounts to a total of 120 Credit Points (CP) to be accumulated over four semesters. The first three semesters are devoted mainly to course work, while the fourth semester is mostly spent writing the M.A. Thesis.

During the first semester students are required to take the modules "Transcultural Studies" (14 CP) and "Orientation" (14 CP). They will meet with their mentor at the end of the first semester to decide on their individual study focus. In the second semester, students select two modules in their study focus (14 CP each). The third semester consists either of two modules in "Advanced Transcultural Studies" (14 CP and 16 CP), or of a "Mobility Window" amounting to a total of 30 CP. During the fourth semester students will write their M.A. Thesis (30 ECTS). A Research Colloquium concluding with an Oral Examination (4 CP) will provide a platform for critical feedback during the writing process.

The M.A. Transcultural Studies only consists of a major ("Hauptfach"). However, up to a total of 37 CP can be imported by completing courses from other M.A. programmes at Heidelberg University which are suitable to the respective study focus. The selection of courses will be made with the guidance of all the programme coordinators involved. Credit points and assessments for imported courses may vary according to the conducting programme.

Formalities

A course in the M.A. Transcultural Studies generally refers to a seminar, only rarely to a lecture, a language or reading course, or another format. However, individual teachers may design their courses to include excursions, archival research, etc. A large part of the core courses will include elements of eLearning and/or blended learning.

Thus far there is no mandatory enrolment for the regular courses offered within the programme. The situation might be different for courses imported from other programmes, so students are advised to check the individual course regulations early on and plan accordingly.

Students are expected to prepare for their courses and actively engage in the activities of each class. Regular assessments include different forms of oral, written and multi-media presentations and assignments. If not otherwise specified, the final grade of a module is the arithmetic average of the grades from the courses' assessments. The final grade of the M.A. Transcultural Studies consists of the arithmetic average of the grades from all modules.

Study Focus

Within the interdisciplinary courses offered in the M.A. Transcultural Studies each student is required to select a study focus after the first term. The study focus will indicate the student's main disciplinary, methodological and theoretical competence. The selection should be based on one's educational background and career intentions, and should be made in consultation with the programme coordinator and members of the chairs involved.

There are three study foci on offer, "Knowledge, Belief and Religion", "Society, Economy and Governance", and "Visual, Media and Material Culture". Following is a brief description of each study focus.

Knowledge, Belief and Religion

This focus examines circulations of knowledge, beliefs and associated religious practices across political, cultural, social and linguistic boundaries in and between Asia and Europe. Exploring concrete examples from diverse historical periods, the courses apply theories and methods of transcultural inquiry relating to, or cutting across, disciplines such as history, philosophy, religious studies, art history, the history of science and technology, anthropology, economics, sociology, political science, linguistics and translation studies.

Students are introduced to relevant types of sources (textual, material, visual), the agents, pathways and networks on which migrations of knowledge, belief and religion depend, as well as the diverse factors shaping processes of appropriation, integration, and rejection. Historically grounded investigations of cultural encounters will enable them to gain insights into the changing conditions of knowledge production in different regions and communities, learn about a wide array of intellectual, social and religious practices, and develop a more nuanced understanding of transcultural issues in global communications.

Society, Economy and Governance

This focus explores issues of Society, Economy and Governance from an explicitly transcultural and historical perspective. Unlike current popular discourse, globalization will be treated not only as a recent phenomenon of the contemporary world, but as longer-term and recurrent changes in many areas of the world at different times and places. The emphasis will be on political, social and economic changes and their respective mutual and international influences, such as war and peace, causes and consequences of economic development, the consumer revolution, migration and integration, gender and social transformations, the worldwide demographic transition, and global governance and climate change.

Visual, Media and Material Culture

This focus investigates the production, proliferation, and reception of images and objects as well as their collection, display, and reconfiguration with a view to the human agency involved. A transcultural perspective calls for recovering the ways in which experiences and processes of mobility and braidedness are constitutive for the actors and visual regimes involved in these processes. Transculturality also addresses the enmeshing of visual technologies, institutional practices, spectatorship and power in ways that cut across bipolar asymmetries, and investigate the role of multiple agencies, local and trans-regional, in negotiating power and the production of knowledge.

The range of visual media under investigation stretches from graffiti to vernacular art and digital images, incorporating perspectives from multiple locations, and can induce a critique of the ocular essentialism that has come in the wake of a dramatic increase in images and a fascination with simulacra on a global scale. Interdisciplinary conversations can help reach into literary, linguistic, musical, performative or ritual dimensions of expressive culture, whose meanings can be more fully apprehended through a range of experiences centering on the body, space and the senses.

Mobility Window, Language Courses

We encourage our students to spend the third semester outside Heidelberg University, either by joining a complementary programme at a research institution abroad, or by conducting a guided research or internship with a view to furthering research for their M.A. thesis. Structured student exchange programmes with partner institutions in Asia are available through Heidelberg University, and we will advise students in selecting and organizing such stays. The same applies to field or archival research and internships.

As the preparation and organization depends on individual needs and can be time consuming, we advise students to consult with the programme coordinator about their plans by the end of the first semester.

We further encourage students to enhance their foreign language skills. The programme coordinator will help interested students in selecting the courses to be imported and will attend to the formalities with the respective course conductor.

Consultation

We want to provide our students with excellent guidance throughout the M.A. Transcultural Studies and beyond. We therefore encourage all students to make use of our offer to consult us. This is particularly important in regard to the selection of the study focus, the selection of imported courses and the planning of the Mobility Window in the third semester.

For all general and specific questions you may first approach the programme coordinator, who will assist you or direct you further. For questions regarding individual courses you may approach the respective teacher. For the planning of the mobility window or the M.A. thesis you may also approach individual professors. All contact details and office hours are up-to-date on our website: www.transcultural.uni-hd.de.

Study Plan and Description of Modules

Abbreviations

CP	Credit Point
KVN	Presence in class and preparation time ("Kontaktzeit, Vor- und Nachbereitung)
PM	Required Module ("Pflichtmodul")
WPM	Required Elective Module ("Wahlpflichtmodul")
WM	Elective Module ("Wahlmodul")
SWS	Hours per week per term ("Semesterwochenstunden")
BS	Buddhist Studies
CEH	Cultural Economic History
GAH	Global Art History
IH	Intellectual History
VMA	Visual and Media Anthropology
SEG	Society, Economy and Governance
KBR	Knowledge, Belief and Religion
VMC	Visual, Media and Material Culture

Study Plan Major ("Hauptfach", 100%)

First Year

Sem.	Module	Course Title	CP Detail	CP Course	CP Module
1	<i>Transcultural Studies (WPM)</i>	Introduction to Transcultural Studies (2 SWS)	4 KVN 3 PL	7	14
		Transcultural Studies in KBR / SEG / VMC (2 SWS)	4 KVN 3 PL	7	
	<i>Orientation (WM)</i>	Orientation in KBR / SEG / VMC (2 SWS)	4 KVN 3 PL	7	14
		Import	4 KVN 3 PL	7	
2	<i>Focus 1 (PM)</i>	KBR 1 / SEG 1 / VMC 1 (2 SWS)	4 KVN 3 PL	7	14
		KBR 2 / SEG 2 / VMC 2 (2 SWS)	4 KVN 3 PL	7	
	<i>Focus 2 (WPM)</i>	KBR 3 / SEG 3 / VMC 3 (2 SWS)	4 KVN 3 PL	7	14
		Import	4 KVN 3 PL	7	

Second Year

Sem.	Module	Course Title	CP Detail	CP Course	CP Module
3	<i>Advanced Transcultural Studies 1 (WM)</i>	Advanced Transcultural Studies in KBR / SEG / VMC (2 SWS)	4 KVN 3 PL	7	14
		Import	4 KVN 3 PL	7	
	<i>Advanced Transcultural Studies 2 (WM)</i>	Import			16
	OR – OR – OR – OR – OR – OR – OR – OR – OR – OR – OR – OR – OR – OR				
	<i>Mobility Window 1+2 (WM)</i>	Mobility Window			30
4	<i>Oral Examination (PM)</i>	Research Colloquium (2 SWS)	2 KVN 2 PL	4	4
	<i>M.A. Thesis (PM)</i>		30	30	30

Study Plan Minor ("Begleitfach")

Sem.	Modul	Course Title	CP Detail	CP Course	CP Module
1	<i>Transcultural Studies (WPM)</i>	Introduction to Transcultural Studies (2 SWS)	4 KVN 3 PL	7	14
		Transcultural Studies in KBR / SEG / VMC (2 SWS)	4 KVN 3 PL	7	
3	<i>Orientation (WM)</i>	Orientation in KBR / SEG / VMC (2 SWS)	3 KVN 3 PL	6	6

Description of Modules

Name: "Transcultural Studies"				
Conducting disciplines: BS, CEH, GAH, IH, VMA				
Status: Required Elective Module (WPM)				
Offered every: Winter Semester				
Semester / Duration: First Semester / One Semester				
Content and aims of the module:				
<p>The concept of transculturality can be used both as a heuristic device (e.g. multi-perspectivity and multi-locality) and focus of study (e.g. cultural entanglements). It is embedded in a large and very heterogeneous landscape of theoretical and methodological approaches that come from various disciplines and cover different thematic, historical and geographic areas. For the study of the dynamics of transcultural exchanges, approaches, insights and source materials from different disciplines (e.g. History, Art History, Anthropology, Philosophy) have to be integrated. The introduction to these contributions opens a critical window on their limitations as well as on inherited concepts, and will help students to frame their own approach to globality. This approach helps us to critically understand classical concepts such as 'origin/ality' or 'indigenous' and define newly emerging notions of globality.</p> <p>It is the goal of this module to introduce students to the history of theoretical concepts and their methodological background with a focus on cultural differentiation / adaptation / entanglements, and to exemplify their application to different disciplines and regions. This is achieved by a lecture cum seminar "Introduction to Transcultural Studies" taught jointly by BS, CEH, GAH, IH, VMA, and a corresponding seminar in one of the three foci.</p>				
Use of module: Prerequisite for "Advanced Transcultural Studies 1"				
Conditions for participation: none				
Grade of module: Average of grades from both courses				
Course	SWS	CP	Semester	Study and Examination Requirements
Introduction to Transcultural Studies Lecture / Seminar	2	7	1	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
Transcultural Studies in KBR / SEG / VMC Seminar	2	7	1	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
Total:	4	14		

Name: "Orientation"				
Conducting disciplines: BS, CEH, GAH, IH, VMA; other participating MA programmes				
Status: Elective Module (WM)				
Offered every: Winter Semester				
Semester / Duration: First Semester / One Semester				
Content and aims of the module: This module complements the introductory aspects of the module "Transcultural Studies" by presenting the theoretical, methodological approaches within a specific focus. In addition, students may select one or more courses worth 7 CP from another M.A. programme in order to extend their disciplinary horizon. Ultimately, the freedom of choice will result in the student's selection of one focus within the M.A. Transcultural Studies. This selection will be made at the end of the first semester with the guidance of the programme coordinator.				
Use of module: Prerequisite for "Focus 1" and "Focus 2"				
Conditions for participation: none				
Grade of module: Average of grades from both courses				
Course	SWS	CP	Semester	Study and Examination Requirements
Orientation in KBR / SEG / VMC Seminar	2	7	1	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
Import	2	7	1	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
Total:	min. 4	14		

Name: "Focus 1"				
Conducting disciplines: BS, CEH, GAH, IH, VMA				
Status: Required Module (PM)				
Offered every: Summer Semester				
Semester / Duration: Second Semester / One Semester				
<p>Content and aims of the module:</p> <p>Building upon the general theoretical and methodological framework laid out in the module "Transcultural Studies", the specific approaches of the selected focus are presented and discussed in two courses here.</p> <p>On the one hand, the specific region and questions of investigation are presented and discussed. On the other hand, disciplinary approaches are set in a wider context of the focus and relocated under the umbrella of transcultural studies.</p> <p>Students are required to make themselves familiar with primary and secondary sources of the focus regarding the specific region and disciplines.</p>				
Use of module: Prerequisite for "Oral Examination" and "MA Thesis"				
Conditions for participation: "Orientation"				
Grade of module: Grade from the assessment of the seminar				
Course	SWS	CP	Semester	Study and Examination Requirements
KBR 1 / SEG 1 / VMC 1 Lecture / Seminar	2	7	2	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
KBR 2 / SEG 2 / VMC 2 Seminar	2	7	2	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
Total:	4	14		

Name: "Focus 2"				
Conducting disciplines: BS, CEH, GAH, IH, VMA; other participating MA programmes				
Status: Required Elective Module (WPM)				
Offered every: Summer Semester				
Semester / Duration: Second Semester / One Semester				
Content and aims of the module: Similar to the module "Focus 1", students are required to extend their studies in the selected focus onto another region and/or theoretical, methodological approach. Furthermore, their ability to apply a transcultural, transdisciplinary approach to any field of investigation is enhanced through one or more courses worth 7 CP which may be imported from another M.A. programme.				
Use of module: Prerequisite for "Oral Examination" and "M.A. Thesis"				
Conditions for participation: "Orientation"				
Grade of module: Grade from the assessment of the seminar				
Course	SWS	CP	Semester	Study and Examination Requirements
KBR 3 / SEG 3 / VMC 3	2	7	2	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
Import	2	7	2	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
Total:	min. 4	14		

Name: "Advanced Transcultural Studies 1"				
Conducting disciplines: BS, CEH, GAH, IH, VMA; other participating MA programmes				
Status: Elective Module (WM)				
Offered every: Winter Semester				
Semester / Duration: Third Semester / One Semester				
<p>Content and aims of the module: Students not using the third semester as a mobility window are required to take this module as well as "Advanced Transcultural Studies 2". Courses are meant to expand students' knowledge in the selected focus and to guide them to formulating a research question for their M.A. thesis. One or more courses worth 7 CP may be imported from another M.A. programme.</p>				
Use of module:				
Conditions for participation: "Transcultural Studies"				
Grade of module: Average of grades from all courses				
Course	SWS	CP	Semester	Study and Examination Requirements
Advanced Transcultural Studies in KBR / SEG / VMC Seminar	2	7	3	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
Import	2	7	3	KVN (4 CP) Assessment according to specific course description (3 CP)
Total:	min. 4	14		

Name: "Advanced Transcultural Studies 2"				
Conducting disciplines: Other participating MA programmes				
Status: Elective Module (WM)				
Offered every: Winter Semester				
Semester / Duration: Third Semester / One Semester				
Content and aims of the module: In this module students select at least two further courses related to their study focus, optionally by import.				
Use of module:				
Conditions for participation:				
Grade of module: Average of grades from all courses				
Course	SWS	CP	Semester	Study and Examination Requirements
Import	min. 4	16	3	According to specific course description
Total:	min. 4	16		

Name: "Mobility 1"				
Conducting disciplines: Partner institution				
Status: Elective Module (WM)				
Offered every: Winter Semester				
Semester / Duration: Third Semester / One Semester				
Content and aims of the module: The third semester may (partly) be spent as a mobility window. For details see the introductory part of the brochure. Courses, research or internships should counting for the mobility window should amount to a maximum of 30 CP. The individual design of the mobility window will be decided upon with the programme coordinator.				
Use of module:				
Conditions for participation: "Transcultural Studies"				
Grade of module: According to partner institution				
Course	SWS	CP	Semester	Study and Examination Requirements
			3	Individual arrangement
Total:		14		

Name: "Mobility 2"				
Conducting disciplines: Partner institution				
Status: Elective Module (WM)				
Offered every: Winter Semester				
Semester / Duration: Third Semester / One Semester				
Content and aims of the module: Continuation of "Mobility 1".				
Use of module:				
Conditions for participation: "Transcultural Studies"				
Grade of module: According to partner institution				
Course	SWS	CP	Semester	Study and Examination Requirements
			3	Individual arrangement
Total:		16		

Name: "Oral Examination"				
Conducting disciplines: BS, CEH, GAH, IH, VMA				
Status: Required Module (PM)				
Offered every: Summer Semester				
Semester / Duration: Fourth Semester / One Semester				
Content and aims of the module: This module accompanies the module "M.A. Thesis" by providing a research colloquium in the selected focus. During the colloquium students are required to develop, present and discuss their research plans in front of their supervisors and fellow students. Furthermore, writing samples from the M.A. thesis are presented and discussed. Through this regular feedback, a structured completion of the programme is facilitated. The module is concluded by the oral M.A. examination. The examination lasts approximately 30 minutes, during which students should present their familiarity with theories and methods of Transcultural Studies by applying them to a certain topic.				
Use of module:				
Conditions for participation: "Focus 1" and "Focus 2"				
Grade of module: Grade from the oral assessment				
Course	SWS	CP	Semester	Study and Examination Requirements
Research Colloquium	2	2	4	KVN (2 CP)
Oral M.A. Examination		2		Oral assessment (2 CP)
Total:	2	4		

Name: "M.A. Thesis"	
Conducting disciplines: BS, CEH, GAH, IH, VMA	
Status: Required Module (PM)	
Offered every: Summer Semester	
Semester / Duration: Fourth Semester / One Semester	
Content and aims of the module: At the beginning of the fourth semester at latest students select a supervisor from their focus and develop a research question for their thesis. The thesis is an independent piece of research, through which students prove their capability of applying the (trans)disciplinary theories and methods of transcultural studies to a specific field of research.	
Use of module:	
Conditions for participation: "Focus 1" and "Focus 2"	
Grade of module: Grade of M.A. Thesis	
CP	Examination Requirements
30	150.000 characters, 25.000 words, 60 pages

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