



**LUNDS**  
UNIVERSITET

*Institutionen för kommunikation och medier*

**MSc in Media and Communication**

**Thesis MKVM13 (30 credits)**

Course leader: Professor Annette Hill (annette.hill@kom.lu.se)

## **Information on thesis submission and examination**

## **Your Thesis in Media and Communication**

Your thesis represents a major achievement in your postgraduate studies. Within media and communication we are looking for an original, exciting thesis topic, communicated clearly, and backed up by a combination of empirical evidence and theoretical analysis. Our department focuses on understanding media and communication as part of structures and processes in modern life. This means we are looking for postgraduate theses that critically examine a combination of larger issues, such as media and democracy, in relation to specific contexts and people's practices, such as political participation.

### **Make your thesis original**

A common concern for postgraduate students is how to make your thesis original. Your thesis is a unique opportunity to make a creative and original contribution to knowledge. You can do this through taking a concept, theory or problem and applying it to a specific context or case study. You can also do this through collecting original empirical data and generating new ideas from your analysis of the data in relation to a concept, or problem. Both approaches allow you to add to existing knowledge, offering nuanced, and situated research. Above all pick a topic that you are passionate about, a topic where your voice can be heard.

### **The literature review is crucial**

In order to produce an original thesis it is important you situate your knowledge in the context of existing research and information relevant to your topic. We are looking for you to take an intellectual position, so your literature review does the job of critically examining existing academic research, addressing issues within these debates, locating gaps in the existing literature. Please look at the course reading list for helpful guides on how to conduct a literature search and how to write a literature review. Keep up to date on a wide range of readings, and remember to devote time and resources to writing the literature review, one of the most significant chapters in your thesis.

### **Methodology and methods matter**

The methodologies you use in your thesis work well with particular kinds of methods. It is common to use more than one methodology and method in your thesis. This is something you will discuss with your supervisor during one to one supervision. What is essential is a demonstration that you have mastered your choice of methodology and methods. Understand what methods work with particular methodologies and ensure you are fully versed in the literature and training for media and communication methodology and methods. The course reading list contains some helpful references for methods guides, alongside the courses you will have taken during your studies.

### **Understand your data**

Your thesis will contain empirical data, either existing data you have found, for example policy documents, or original data you collect during the course of your studies, for example interviews. Understand the value of your data in relation to your research questions. Where did your data come from? How did you collect it? How did you analyse it? Most importantly, your data connects with the questions you want to

ask. Make sure you ask clear research questions you can answer with your empirical and theoretical analysis.

### **Finding, organising and managing your material**

For a postgraduate thesis there are many ways of searching, managing and visualising information. You may want to use certain tools, software and techniques, but remember not to get lost in the organisational process. The most important thing is that the information and data you present is part of your overall argument. It is likely you will have too much information and data and you will have to choose the most relevant information for your argument. Your thesis is about original analysis, not description, so use the information and empirical data to add value to your argument.

### **Develop a clear narrative for the thesis**

A good thesis has a narrative flow so each chapter is integrated into an overall argument. Develop a clear analytical voice. Ask yourself what does the reader need to know? Why do your questions matter? Where is the evidence? What is the significance of your findings? A strong narrative to your thesis does not come easily, so you need to plan, write and re-write your thesis. A good thesis narrative involves preparation, discussion with your peers and supervisors, and major and minor revisions to your thesis chapters in plenty of time before the thesis deadline.

### **The craft of writing your thesis**

Writing is something that improves the more you do it. Think of your writing as a daily process, stay connected to the thesis narrative, work and re-work your words. The craft of writing helps your ideas to flow, so the more you write the more you will refine your ideas. Some of the best ideas also come when you are doing something else, for example sports, or art. Keep a notebook so you can take inspiration from these ideas and work them into your thesis. Above all start writing early and do not lose contact with the constant craft of writing, restructuring, and revising the thesis.

### **The personal challenge of the thesis experience**

The process of planning, researching and writing a thesis is a personal challenge. Pace yourself and work consistently from the beginning to the end of the process. In the early stages some students find picking their topic overwhelming, so sharing ideas with peers can be helpful, as well as reading other completed theses, to give you ideas on topics. In the latter stages some students also worry there is too much to do. Start the thesis work early and allow plenty of time for your supervisor to comment on your first full draft. This editorial support can give you a major confidence boost as you work to complete, submit and defend your thesis during examination.

**For further advice and guidelines, please check out the thesis information package on our website, including the thesis survival guide, written by our alumni, and full of invaluable advice on making it through the process from start to finish on the graduation day.**

## Thesis Submission

For those students taking the thesis course in Spring 2020, the deadline for the thesis is **MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> of MAY 2021 by the deadline of 2pm**. This deadline is non-negotiable. More details on how to submit the PDF and physical copy of your thesis will be sent by the course leader.

If you are unable to submit for medical reasons, or other exceptional circumstances, please contact the course leader in advance of the deadline. Other submission slots for exceptional cases, or re-submissions, include August 2021 and December 2021 dates to be provided by the course leader – please see the timetable for the course for the full list of dates for 2021. Note, supervision is provided during Spring 2021 for this course.

Every student submitting their postgraduate thesis must provide two soft bound hard copies.

Bookstores around Lund offer soft binding options for your thesis. You don't have to use a bookstore for this service, but keep in mind that soft binding means a more permanent binding than staples (for example a spiral spine with protective front and back), so be sure your thesis is up for a rigorous reading by your examiner.

Please submit to Linda Troein by 2pm on the date of thesis submission, and one digital copy (PDF) submitted through the Lund University web portal LUP (see LUP student manual on the MKV Masters thesis website). This is the first submission on LUP restricted to a readership of students and staff in MKV.

Students may post their theses for arrival in good time for the deadline of 2pm on the date of the deadline, or ask a friend to submit the hard copies in person.

**Contact for Linda Troein:** 046-222 88 33 or [linda.troein@kom.lu.se](mailto:linda.troein@kom.lu.se)

**Postal Address** Linda Troein, MKV, Box 117, 221 00 Lund

Each student is required to take their own copy to the examination seminars. Please see the guidance notes on the examination seminars.

## Thesis Presentation

The thesis needs to be professionally presented, following the guidelines for format and style provided by the department.

What to include:

- Use A4 paper (210 x 297 mm), plain white.
- Use one-and-a-half line spacing, except for indented quotations or endnotes where single spacing may be used.
- Margins ought to be at least 2.5cm on all sides. Please leave spacing between paragraphs.
- Use the standard font of Times New Roman size 12.

- Use headings and sub headings in bold to organize your writing.
- Use pagination in one continuous sequence, from title page to the last page, using numbers from 1 onwards.
- Title page, see below.
- Submit an abstract, 300-500 words, containing a summary of the topic and outcomes of the research.
- The abstract is followed by acknowledgements.
- The table of contents includes a list of all chapters, appendices, tables, photographs and other materials.
- Length of the dissertation is 20,000 -23,000 words, approximately 60 pages. This excludes references, endnotes and appendices.
- Appendices may be used for additional information regarding methods, or factual information relevant to your project. Note, the main body of the thesis needs to contain all core material, information, and analysis.

### **Referencing**

The department uses the Harvard referencing system for Masters theses, this is the author date system in text, and a full list of references in alphabetical order at the end of the thesis. Use endnotes, listed after the references at the end of the thesis. Endnotes are separate to the word count. Plagiarism regulations at Lund University are strictly applied to all dissertation.

### **Structure**

Every dissertation is structured according to the most appropriate outline for your topic, theories and methods. Please follow the advice of your supervisor. However, a general outline can include the following:

**Title page** Include the official Lund University logo, available from the Faculty website, in black and white, sizing approximately 3.5 in height, 2.8 in width; title, sub title, your name, name of programme MSc in Media and Communication, name of supervisor, name of examiner (on final submission after minor corrections).

### **Abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents.**

**Introduction** (1-2,000 words), here you outline the significance of the topic, your aims and research questions, and the structure of the thesis.

**Literature review** (5-7,000 words), here you synthesise and analyse the existing literature on your topic, situate your thesis within the literature, and provide an intellectual position for your work.

**Methodology and methods** (2-3,000 words), here you explain the methods, reflect on the research process and ethical issues, and critically reflect on methodology.

**Analysis** (6-8,000 words), here you critically analyse your data in relation to core concepts as applied to your work.

**Conclusion** (2-3,000 words), here you analyse your key findings, returning to the aims and research questions and critically reflecting on your/the thesis contribution to knowledge.

## **References, Endnotes, Appendices. Examination Instructions**

### **Examination**

A schedule will be provided by the course leader with dates, venues, examiners and student opponent information.

**Seminars will take place late May and early June 2021, details to be provided by the course leader regarding mode of examination.**

Your thesis will be examined by one member of staff, who will provide written and oral feedback, following the criteria for examination in the thesis course outline and using the A-F grading system.

You will defend your thesis in a seminar, with your examiner and a student rapporteur. The seminar is mandatory and part of the learning experience for a postgraduate thesis in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

### **Guide to the seminar**

The thesis seminar is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your ability to participate in lively academic debate. The seminar demonstrates, among other things, that the thesis is your own work, that you understand what you have written, that you understand how your thesis is situated in the wider academic literature, and that you understand and can critically reflect on your key findings in the thesis as an original contribution to knowledge.

A typical schedule for a thesis seminar includes: a short introduction by the examiner, the student opponent's brief summary of the thesis, and discussion with the student being examined (approximately 15 minutes), the discussion between the examiner and the student (approximately 20 minutes), general questions from the audience (10 minutes). Your examiner will offer detailed written feedback, given to the student at the end of the seminar.

You can prepare for your examination seminar by re-reading your thesis and planning answers to questions that relate to the examination of your thesis, including aims and objectives, research questions, literature review, methods and methodology, and analysis. When you re-read your thesis make notes in the margins, and prepare for the questions posed by your examiner.

Typically, your examiner will ask about the reasons for choosing your thesis topic, the strengths and weaknesses of your thesis, and specific questions on each chapter relating to your literature review, methodology and methods, and data analysis, and conclusion. Common questions that arise during a thesis examination can include, but are not limited to, why you chose specific research questions, what was the most interesting/challenging aspect of your research, what did you learn during the step by step process of collecting fieldwork, how did you design your research, how did you

analyse the data, or what are the most significant empirical and theoretical findings for your thesis?

Tips for your examination include reflecting on the main strengths of your work, so that you can defend your claims. No research is perfect, but you want to articulate the core strengths in your work. Draw up a list of possible questions by your examiner, perhaps considering three positive and negative questions. Spend some time rehearsing your key points, articulating your thesis in a way that gives you confidence in your own voice. Remember to remain calm, answer questions clearly, and enjoy the experience of discussing your work in detail with your peers.

The seminar is open to other postgraduate students and staff to attend and there will be an opportunity for the audience to ask questions towards the end of the discussion.

### **Student Rapporteur**

As a student rapporteur, you will be allocated a thesis by the course leader and asked to act as a reader. You can prepare for this by reading the thesis, making notes and writing comments on the student's thesis topic and questions that will be covered in the examination relating to the thesis aims and objectives, research questions, literature review, methods, and analysis. As a student rapporteur you are asked to briefly summarise the thesis, making notes for each chapter, and also making notes on the general contribution to knowledge of the thesis. You are also asked as a student rapporteur to discuss specific aspects of the thesis with the writer. Upon completion of the seminar, you will receive a pass/fail grade as a student opponent.

### **Results of a thesis seminar**

The results of the thesis seminar are reported by the examiner to the Department of Media and Communication administrator. The student can expect the grade and written feedback on the thesis from the examiner within 15 working days of the examination date.

If a student receives a fail grade then they can expect written feedback from the examiner on failure to meet the assessment requirements, as detailed in the thesis course documentation (MKVM13, 30 credits).

## **Guidelines for assessment**

### **Pass with Distinction**

A grade

The characteristics of an A grade can include exceptional evidence of a critical understanding of the general and specific field of study, including insight into the topic of investigation, and novel and relevant theories and methods related to the study; exceptional intellectual qualities related to work undertaken; a sophisticated and original analysis of ideas and concepts; an excellent knowledge of the topic of investigation used to support the argument; excellent organisation of the work and

global coherence in the work, a high degree of clarity and expression, an excellent reference list and use of references;

#### B grade

The characteristics of an B grade can include very good evidence of a critical understanding of the general field of study, including a very good command of the topic of investigation, and the theories and methods related to the study; an advanced critical approach to the object of study; very good analysis of ideas and concepts; evidence of original analysis in the work undertaken; evidence for very good knowledge of the topic of investigation used to support the argument; very good organisation of the work and global coherence in the work, very good expression, a very good reference list and use of references; the work may display some minor weaknesses regarding detailed theoretical discussion, or further need of intellectual qualities which enhance a strong analytical voice within the work.

#### **Pass**

#### C grade

The characteristics of an C grade can include good evidence of an understanding of the general field of study, including a basic and detailed knowledge of the topic of investigation, and the theories and methods related to the study; a critical approach to the object of study; good analysis of ideas and concepts; evidence of original analysis in the work undertaken; evidence for sound knowledge of the topic of investigation; good organisation of the work, good expression, a good reference list and use of references; there may be an absence of detailed theoretical discussion; a need for further evidence of independent critical analysis; some weaker material which limits the analytical voice within the work.

#### D grade

The characteristics of an D grade can include competent evidence of an understanding of the general field of study, including a basic knowledge of the topic of investigation, and the theories and methods related to the study; and a general critical approach to the object of study; competent analysis of ideas and concepts; there may be weak evidence for detailed knowledge of the topic of investigation; some mistakes in the theoretical discussion; some descriptive rather theoretical analysis; little evidence of independent critical analysis; some mistakes arising from misunderstanding or weak knowledge of the topic of investigation; there may be weak organisation of the work, poor expression, assertions made without evidence to support the points, a competent reference list and use of references.

#### E grade

The characteristics of an E grade can include a basic evidence of an understanding of the general field of study, including knowledge of the topic of investigation, and the theories and methods related to the study; however there will be little evidence of detailed knowledge of the topic of investigation; mistakes in the theoretical discussion; descriptive rather than analytical theoretical writing; mistakes in the methods used in the study; mistakes arising from misunderstanding or weak



knowledge of the topic of investigation; failure to cover all the relevant aspects of the study; weak organisation of the work, poor expression, an uncritical approach to the topic of study, assertions made without evidence to support the points, a weak reference list and use of references.

## **Fail**

U grade

The characteristics of a fail grade can include a failure to provide a rigorous academic piece of work; the work may display little or no evidence of an understanding of the general field of study; a weak understanding of the literature related to the topic of study; a weak or absent coherence and organisation of thoughts; a lack of relevance; errors resulting from a misunderstanding of theories and methods related to the field of study; points made in note form, or isolated points that do not relate to a global coherence for a thesis argument; poor referencing, and absence of relevant referencing.

## **Rescheduling a thesis seminar**

In exceptional cases, due to ill health for example, the Director of Studies and course leader may approve the rescheduling of a thesis seminar.

## **Re-examination**

Re-examination for the 2021 submission will occur at a date set by the course leader. Further re-examination opportunities will be offered in 2021 – see timetable for details.

On re-examination a student is not expected to participate in a public thesis seminar. The examiner will assess the thesis with you in person in their office, or in exceptional cases via telephone or Zoom/Skype. Please ensure you are available for this assessment and have sent your contact details (email, telephone, Zoom/Skype information) to the programme co-ordinator and course leader.

## **Final grade**

Upon completion of the seminar you will receive written feedback and your grade from the examiner. You have an opportunity to make minor corrections to the thesis within 15 days working of the examination seminar. Minor corrections are not related to the grade, rather this is an opportunity to correct minor mistakes, such as spelling errors, or incorrect references. Please add the name of your examiner to the title page at this final publication stage. You need to upload the final version of the thesis to LUP for approval by your examiner. Once your thesis is uploaded for the final publication, the grade will be sent to the course leader and published in Ladok.

## **Applying for your degree certificate**

At Lund University you need to apply for your degree certificate. Apply via the student web portal ([student.lu.se](http://student.lu.se)), or download the application form:

<http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/current-students/academic-matters-support/apply-for-your-degree-certificate>

Note, you need to have completed all courses included in your degree before applying for your certificate. Please make sure all course grades are reported correctly in Ladok.

Your certificate will be sent to the address stated in your application after 8-12 weeks. If you change your address after you have applied, please contact the Degree Office at [examen@stu.lu.se](mailto:examen@stu.lu.se) as soon as possible.

### **Consent form: publication of assessed coursework**

You will be given a consent form on the date of your thesis seminar. The consent form is for the Department to use your thesis as an example of good practice for future students on the programme. The consent form shows you are aware that the thesis will be published internally on our website and archived so that other students may be able to read examples of completed dissertation from the programme.

The department has a publication series, where a selection of the best dissertations are published through Lund University. If the Department selects your thesis for publication your research will appear in this edited collection.

Publication of your thesis on the website and/or in a book is optional, and you are under no obligation to provide your consent.

Students retain intellectual property of all Masters theses submitted for assessment at the Department of Media and Communication, Lund University. This means students and graduates can use the content for publication in other places. We ask that you provide acknowledgement of Lund University, for example through including a note at the end of a journal article saying something like this: 'This article is based on a Masters dissertation submitted to Lund University, Department of Media and Communication as part of the MSc in Media and Communication in (XXXX year).'

### **The MSc Excellent Dissertations publication series**

The MSc Excellent Dissertations edited collection is produced once a year to showcase the best thesis work by a cohort in the programme. To be eligible for consideration in the book you need to be enrolled in the thesis course for the Spring as a first time thesis student, have submitted your thesis for the May deadline of that year, and received a grade of excellent (A). All eligible theses will be evaluated by the MSc programme committee after examination in May for consideration in the edited collection. This book is published in the spring of the following year, where authors are invited to the Postgraduate Symposium in February; during the symposium

authors present their research work in a panel and participate in the book launch.

## **The Graduation ceremony**

The Graduation ceremony for the Master's Programmes in the Social Sciences Faculty is organised by the Faculty.

The ceremony for 2021 has not yet been announced. Information will be sent to your email as soon as the date is set.

A formal invitation to this event will be sent out during the Spring semester. Due to space limitations, please note that there may be a limit of the maximum amount of guests per student. The ceremony includes speeches, music, and individual congratulations as students receive a token certificate from Faculty Leaders. Graduating students can look forward to sharing this celebration with close family or friends, as well as classmates and students from other Master's programmes.

The ceremony is followed by a graduation party, organised by the students from the programme. We look forward to celebrating with you on this important day.

## **Marketing your thesis in the workplace**

Think about your thesis as a portfolio of skills. Such a portfolio includes relevant topics for the type of work you want to do, analytical and problem solving skills, rigorous training in a range of methods, in-depth understanding of real world cases, and an ability to communicate ideas clearly and effectively. Your thesis is your calling card, so think through how you want to market these skills for professional purposes.

Consider the impact of your thesis to academic and non-academic beneficiaries. If you are thinking of addressing an academic audience then consider parts of your thesis for academic journal articles; discuss with your supervisor or examiner how you might do this and what specific journals might offer the best platform for your thesis topic, methodology and theoretical and empirical research. Each journal has its own style and form of research so investigate the best journals for your subject area. It is also a good idea to present at conferences related to your research; there are many subject specific conferences and symposia on focused themes, and you can find out more about this at subject associations websites such as ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association) which has a young ECREA section for encouraging younger scholars (YECREA); MeCCSA (Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association) which has a postgraduate network dedicated to junior scholars; IAMCR (International Association of Media and Communication Research); ICA (International Communication Association); and NORDICOM, an association for Nordic research in communication and media.

Some of you may be considering writing short reports from your thesis that are

beneficial for organisations, advocacy groups, and enhancing professional practice. Here, you can consider the pathways to communication and engagement, using reports, workshops, journalism articles, blogs, to spread the message about your research. You may wish to publish extracts or produce impact statements for policy recommendations related to your topic.

### **Thinking of doing a PhD?**

The Masters' thesis can be a stepping stone to doctoral research. Most PhD positions and scholarships require a completed Masters' thesis of 30 credits. The quality and relevance of your Masters' thesis is part of the assessment criteria for a position, alongside a doctoral thesis proposal, and other relevant professional skills. If you are thinking of doing a PhD then take time to reflect on the choice of topic, methodology and methods for your Masters' thesis. Is this topic and approach a building block to advanced research? Think about the originality of your contribution to knowledge, up to date and advanced reading on the topic, multiple methodologies and methods, and a balance of theoretical and empirical analysis.