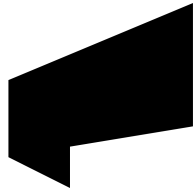**Media University**

Master of Arts
Visual and Media
Anthropology

MEDIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
Berlin, Germany

Online Program with On-Campus Workshops
MA Program - Master of Arts
Visual and Media Anthropology

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Content

About the Program

The Online M.A. program in Visual and Media Anthropology was initially developed and successfully offered at Freie Universität Berlin from 2008 to 2019. From the winter semester of 2019/20, the program is provided at MEDIA UNIVERSITY Berlin, University of Applied Sciences

This contemporary Master's program equips students with in-depth knowledge of visual and media anthropological themes to prepare them to become future leaders in digital media, the film industry, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. Distance Learning is offered via LMS Canvas and daily live streams of classes with lectures, presentations, and discussions. The program aims to develop and shape leading voices in the cultural industries, including museums and galleries, the education sector, film festivals, indigenous cultures and sustainable living experts, news and social media activism, and other institutions such as RGOs and NGOs producing audio-visual digital art and culture. The program is highly international, with students from numerous continents and countries.

The professors and lecturers of the VMA program are visual anthropologists, media anthropologists, professional documentary filmmakers, photographers, and experts for immersive 360-degree productions from universities and film production companies worldwide. The program aims to overcome the Eurocentric, non-scientifically grounded, audio-visual documentation about non-European countries that often give the local or indigenous communities of "least," or better to say alternatively developed countries, no voice and ignore other critical ethical guidelines in documenting and interpreting cultures. Moreover, exploring the impact of digitalization and new media on societies, particularly the role of social networks among people of color in political processes, resistance movements, transnational migration, gender dynamics, environmental activism, and community

development within indigenous communities, constitutes vital research domains within Media Anthropology.

Another idea of the program is to widen the traditional concept of ethnographic research and audiovisual documentation by integrating ideas of virtual, augmented, or mixed-realities, sensual, artistic, and fictional ethnographic filmmaking and photography and thus cross the boundaries from a mere distant scientific interpretation of cultures to participation in digital and trans-regional cultural processes.

We offer four forms of Online courses:

1.) Synchronous real-time webinars in Zoom. Students can log in from anywhere worldwide via a computer, laptop, or mobile phone.

2.) Videos created with AI Video generation Software (Synthesia.io)

3.) A-synchronal self-learning courses via LMS Canvas with content, video lectures, films, readings, and assignments that allow students greater flexibility.

4.) Life courses with VR Headsets and avatars in Horizon Workrooms and several virtual environments.

Program Overview

Type	Distance learning (flexible e-learning in virtual classrooms, webinars and LMS Canvas)
Degree	Master of Arts (M.A.)
Location	Berlin
Language	English
Tuition fees	4.170,- € per semester (16.680,- € in total for the two year's program)
Duration	4 semester (2 year's)
Start	Winter term (October)

The program is an Online program with five central units.

1. The online modules
3. An internship in a film production company, film festival, museum, film archive, online news media, NGOs for environmental issues or indigenous communities, or other related fields (professionals can submit a replacement paper)
4. A short film or media project
5. The Master's thesis and the film/media project

This Master's program educates researchers with backgrounds in film, photography, Social Sciences, anthropology, philosophy, communication studies, art, or media professionals.

The program focuses on the relationships between culture and media in several areas, such as indigenous communities, diasporas, Artificial Intelligence and Virtual reality research, digitalization of cultures worldwide, challenges in the representation of culture and gender through new media, the significance of ethnographic films and photography for Social and Cultural Anthropology, the development of media in rural and urban areas. "Western and non-Western" communities, future digital needs of Societies (AI, robotics, educational games, Essayistic Documentary film- and photography for online magazines, broadcast, and the Film Streaming Industry). The language of instruction is English. The program is highly international. The program uses a world-clock meeting planner for real-time online classes to offer students from countries worldwide the best time to study.

2.1 Entry Requirements

- A first university or university of applied sciences degree (Bachelor)
- A minimum of one year of work experience (internship, jobs, projects) after completing the undergraduate or first degree (after BA or diploma). This work experience should be related to your first degree or some media practice.
- Proficiency in English (fluent in both written and spoken) is a must
- Participants should have basic technical skills in film, video, or photography
- Participants must have adequate electronic equipment to handle various multimedia materials; high-speed Internet access, a fast computer, and a personal email account are compulsory. Owning a primary digital camera or a good smartphone with a video function is recommended.

2.2 Ideal Candidates

Applicants: This program is aimed at students who have an undergraduate degree in any subject and have already gained work experience relevant to their field of study.

Target jobs: Documentary filmmaking for film festivals, online channels, and TV broadcasts. Indigenous Media, the new media industry (education games, social media applications, and mixed-reality-environments), companies creating artificial intelligence technology for cultural needs, immersive or virtual reality-technology industry, AI and VR storytelling for educational games, film broadcast & online video industry with a focus on transnational societies; anthropological questions of artificial intelligence, social analysis of robotic technology, museum and art industries, jobs in governmental and non-governmental organizations in the sector of sustainable development and capacity building in developing and emerging countries with a focus on media usage.

2.3 Tuition Fees

1. The tuition fees are 4.170 € per semester, totaling 16.680 € for the two-year program. Students must also assume additional (travel, accommodation) costs from in-house periods (not mandatory) and fieldwork periods.

2.4 Technical Facilities

Media University offers Meta Quest VR Headsets, cameras, sound, and editing equipment for students on Campus. Furthermore, Media University Berlin has its own professional TV broadcast studio. The program also collaborates with broadcast rental facilities to provide students with additional cutting-edge equipment for their classes.

Program Structure

Program Structure and Modules

- First Semester: Basic Modules (30 CP): Visual Anthropology, Media Anthropology
- Second Semester: Profile Modules (30 CP): Basics and Varieties of Ethnographic Film Production, Communication/Mediascapes, Applied Visual & Media Anthropology
- Third Semester: Project Modules (30 CP): Internship, Film- or Media Project
- Fourth Semester: Supervision Courses (30 CP)

The four-semester MA program in Visual and Media Anthropology conveys 120 ECTS Credit Points (CP) in total, and it has the following structure:

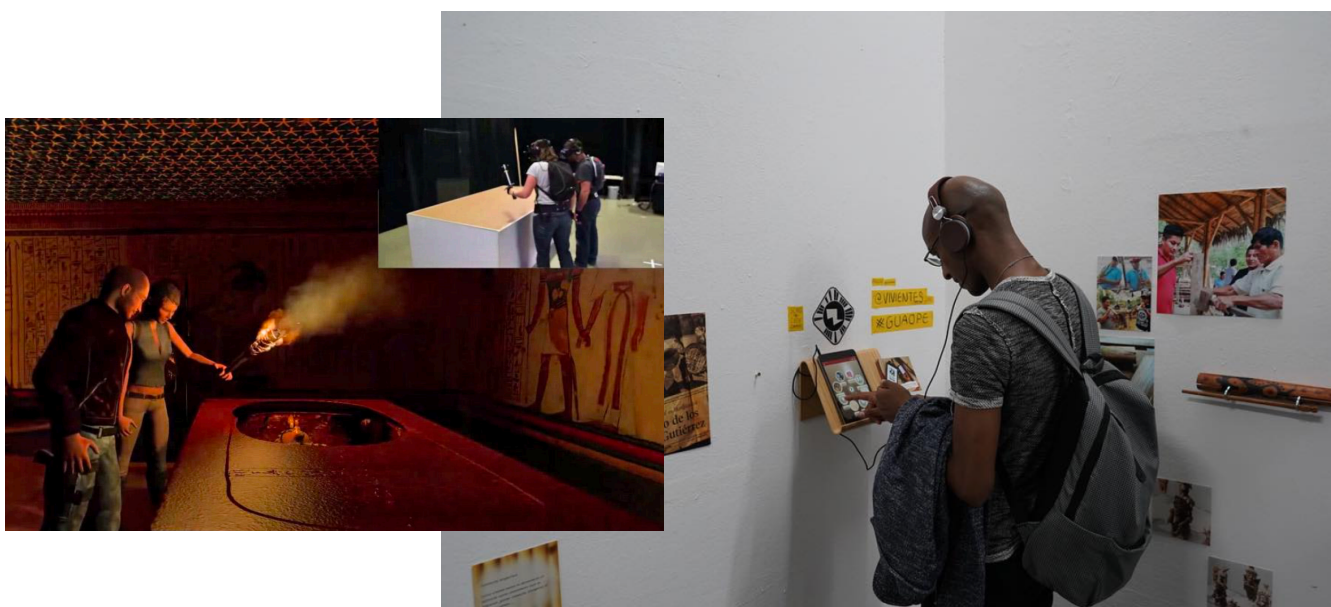|	1. Semester	2. Semester	3. Semester	4. Semester
Study field	Core	Profile	Practice/Project	Examination
Module area ECTS	Visual Anthropology 15 CP	Profile module I and II 2 * 15	Film project 15 CP	Master Thesis 30 CP
Module area ECTS	Media Anthropology 15 CP	• Basics & Varieties of Ethnographic Film Production • Communication/Mediascapes • Applied Visual and Media Anthropology	Internship 15 CP	
		Thesis Proposal		
Total ECTS	30 CP	30 CP	30CP	30 CP

Module areas highlighted in red comprise three or four modules/courses or seminars (those three notions are used synonymously). Teaching sessions are held for modules/courses.
• Such as distance-learning sessions, using online tools like virtual classrooms, webinars, etc.
• The program offers short-term (maximum of 5 days) non-mandatory and not guaranteed presence/classroom-based technical On-Campus workshops.

The Profile study field encompasses three module areas consisting entirely of mandatory elective modules (all other compulsory modules). Five of these profile electives are graded. Each student must pick at least two of these five graded modules, belonging to two different module areas.

In total, each student must choose five graded modules:
• Two compulsory core modules (1. term): (see below)
• 2 of the five graded profile electives (2. term):
• 1 Thesis Proposal (2. term)

3.1 Modules

A comprehensive overview of all module areas and their possible modules/courses (course titles are subject to change each semester. Not all classes are offered every year. All classes take place online, and Workshops take place on-campus in Berlin):

1. Semester	2. Semester	3. Semester	4. Semester
Winter term Oct.-Feb.	Summer term April–July	Winter term Oct.-Feb.	Summer term April–July
Core	Profile	Practice/Project	Examination
Visual Anthropology	**Ethnographic Film Production**	**Film /Photography or Media Project**	**MA Thesis**
(October – February) S1-1A Hands-On-Camera Workshop I S1-1B Documentary Photography Workshop (On-Campus) & Online OPTIONAL GRADE	*(April–July)* S2-1A Documentary Filmmaking OPTIONAL GRADE S2-1B Gender and Visual Anthropology OPTIONAL GRADE	*(October – February)* OPTIONAL GRADE S3-1A Ethnographic Methods III S3-1B Diaspora Studies OPTIONAL GRADE S3-1C Migration and Representation OPTIONAL GRADE	*(April – July)* S4-1A Writing the thesis
(October – February) S1-1C Ethnographic Films from the 19th to the 21st Century OPTIONAL GRADE S1-1D Introduction to the Theory and History of Social and Cultural Anthropology OPTIONAL GRADE S1-1E Sound Recording I OPTIONAL GRADE S1-1F Editing	*(Apriil – July)* S2-1C Qualitative Methods II S2-1D Hands-On-Camera Workshop II (On-Campus) S2-1E Sound Recording II OPTIONAL GRADE S2- 1F Editing II	*(October – February)* S3-1F Supervision Courses	*(April – July)* S4-1B Supervision Courses Several lecturers
Media Anthropology	**Communication / Mediascapes**	**Internship**	**MA Film / Photography (optional)**
(Oct.) S1-2A Contemporary Museography Workshop (On Campus) S1-2B Digital Anthropology OPTIONAL GRADE S1-2C AI Chatbots OPTIONAL GRADE	*(ONLINE April – July)* S2-2A Virtual Environments S2-2B Social Media Activism OPTIONAL GRADE S2-2C Building in the Metaverse OPTIONAL GRADE S2-2D Environmental Anthropology OPTIONAL GRADE S2-2E Artificial Intelligence & Anthropology II	*(October – February)* S3-2A Internship - 9 weeks (external) S3-2B Artistic Practice in Transcultural Context OPTIONAL GRADE S3-2C Museumsethography S3-2D Decolonized Images OPTIONAL GRADE	*(April – July)* S4-2A Digital Film Editing Forum
(Novemb. – Febr.) S1-2D Ethnographic Methods I S1-2E Artificial Intelligence & Anthropology		*(October – Febr.)*	*(April – July)* S4-2B Film Composition and Dramaturgy S4-2C Sound Recording III

		Applied Visual and Media Anthropology		MA exhibition project (optional)
S1-2F AI and Cultural Heritage	Apriil – July	Mapping of Multispecies Perspectives in the Anthropocene S2-3A OPTIONAL GRADE S2-3B Photography and Performance OPTIONAL GRADE S2-3C Immersive Story telling Workshop (On-Campus) S2-3D Auto-Ethnography		S4-3A Curating Exhibitions S4-3B Final Master exhibition preparation
		Master Thesis Proposal see chap. 4 GRADED		

Course Examples

Documentary Filmmaking

This course will take students on a transformative journey into the heart of documentary filmmaking. Designed for aspiring filmmakers, storytellers, and enthusiasts alike, this seminar offers a comprehensive exploration of the art and craft of documentary filmmaking. Students will learn to recognize their artistic identity and develop and find story ideas. The course will illuminate your role as a director and teach you how to apply film semiotics to enrich your film with subtext, connotations, and visual commentary that add to your overall story. This seminar covers every aspect of the filmmaking process, from conceptualization to filming and editing.

Documentary Photography

How can we deal with documentary photography in times of "click, post, like" and use it as a photographic practice for engaged auteur photography focusing on socially relevant issues?
During the on-campus classes in Berlin, we will learn how to use the photographic camera as a research tool in the streets and the studio. The online sessions will start with an introduction to documentary photography's theories, historical perspectives, and positions. Later, we will discuss how frozen images can tell the story of complex social issues and personal fates. How can we make the invisible visible? Through investigating a selection of significant positions and concepts in documentary photography, we learn methods to visualize complex topics and discuss the possibilities of the documentary and the development of visual narrations that subvert the traditional viewing habits, expectations, and stereotyping of classical documentary photographic narrative forms.
We will look at design rules for a photographic image to compromise the message and technical aspects. In addition to that, we will learn how to use the tools Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop as a helping hand in our professional workflow. In this process, we mainly focus on everybody finding their visual language and working on an individual photographic series to prepare the students for a career in today´s confusing flood of images and media. We will talk about aspects of the present market, such as picture agencies, publishers, and professional magazines, and experts from this field will be invited to the class. The students will learn about collaborations, contracts, rights of use, panoramic freedom, and personal rights. Finally, everybody will work on their project in documentary photography.
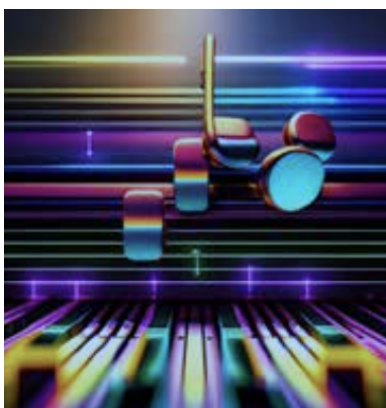
Sound, Recording, and Aural Cultures

Figure 1 Image created with ARTA. Command: AI, sound, and music. @mu

The course introduces the critical sound theory and its applications in ethnographic research and art practice. The sound field is simultaneously a sensual and conceptual space, emerging through the interaction between the researcher and their interlocutors and technological and environmental agents. We will engage with key concepts in sound studies (listening, recording, soundscape, archives, noise, unsound, acoustemology, etc.), re-examining them from a decolonial, feminist, and eco-critical perspective. We will consider how these notions can be applied performatively to research and creative sound production using various media and modes of intervention. Basic information about recording and editing techniques will be provided, although the method is not the course's primary focus.

Editing I & II
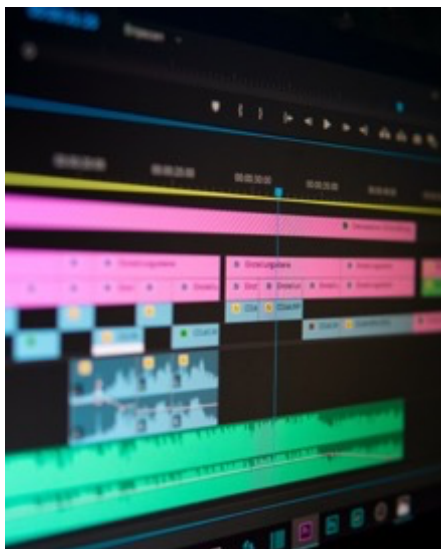
Our two editing courses introduce students to editing for documentary films. Editing II picks up where Editing I left off. These courses will help you gain a broader and deeper understanding of post-production and its role in production. As with Editing I, the focus is on a holistic approach to the practical, technical, and creative craft of editing.

The class will include lecture-style technical input, open forums, live editing sessions, and practical analyses. Students are always welcome to bring any questions, films on which they want feedback, or technical issues they need support.

The goal of the class is to help you feel comfortable utilizing editing as a storytelling method.

Introduction to Immersive Storytelling

During the two-day introductory workshop on the Media University Berlin campus, students will view immersive storytelling works and participate in a workshop offered by the award-winning VR company NowHere Media. In addition, they will learn fundamental storytelling principles for immersive formats like VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality).
Students will gain a basic understanding of how to develop narrative concepts for immersive media and work in groups to conceptualize an immersive project of their choice. Finally, students will pitch the idea on the final workshop day to be graded.

Ethnographic Methods

Qualitative methods crosscut many diverse academic fields such as sociology, anthropology, education, psychology, economics, and business. They allow us to study how people, institutions, and organizations experience and interpret their lives. Therefore, qualitative methods are becoming increasingly relevant for students in many academic fields and disciplines.
You will learn about questions of epistemology, or how you know what you know, and how this relates to your choice of methods and their interpretation. We will then spend considerable time focused on the basics of research. You will learn how to navigate your entrance into the field, select informants, do observations, and write field notes and analytic memos. Furthermore, you will learn about the kinds of qualitative interviews, how to develop an interview schedule according to your needs, and learn valuable tips on keeping an interviewee immersed in conversation.

Virtual Environments

Image horizon workrooms ©mu

In this course students will gain an understanding of virtual reality and an insight into the values and needs of virtual communities. We will analyze and discuss the history, current state, and future of virtual environments and immersive technology from an anthropological perspective. Participants learn hands-on how to create experiences in the metaverse. These experiences can include but are not limited to galleries, showrooms, quests, simulations, treasure hunts, quizzes, mazes, games, or similar engaging experiences in 3D environments. This calls for finding prompts, realia and creating your own 3D objects and scenarios. 3D experiences will be the main focus of this course. Through building students will gain an extensive understanding of VR and an insight into the activities of virtual communities. During live sessions, students and lecturers will meet with avatars in various virtual reality environments.

Online Learning

The M.A. Visual and Media Anthropology is one of the leading Online Master's programs in Visual Anthropology worldwide. Founded in 2008, the MA program employs an outstanding teaching staff. It engages the latest e-learning technologies to prepare students worldwide with theoretical knowledge and practical skills for a successful career in visual and media anthropology and its related fields. The whole program is facilitated via e-learning.
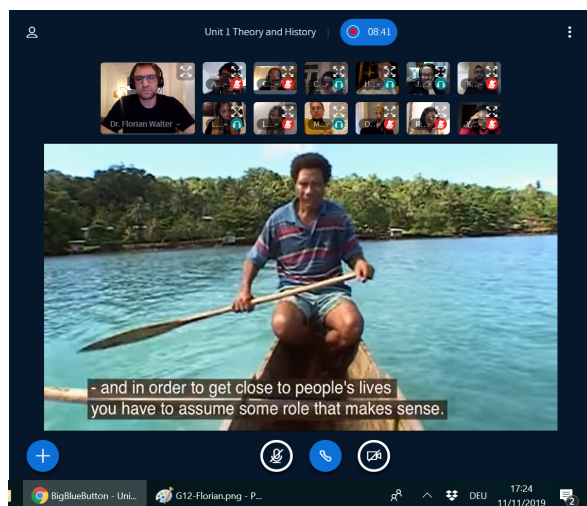
The VMA program uses a world clock meeting planner to find the best meeting times for students and lecturers from different continents. Our professors' lectures are either live or delivered as recorded video lectures, making it possible for students with difficulties attending classes to stay current.

The program licensed Canvas LMS, one of the premier Learning Management Systems, and Synthesia.io for AI-generated video production. Students can find a course calendar, course content, readings, films, assignments, announcements, and grades on our Canvas platform. They can also upload files and communicate with each other and their lecturers.

The program uses a combination of four different e-learning methods.

1. CANVAS LMS

The course calendar and the online modules with content, readings, audiovisual media, and assignments are presented online via one of the world's learning management systems, LMS Canvas.
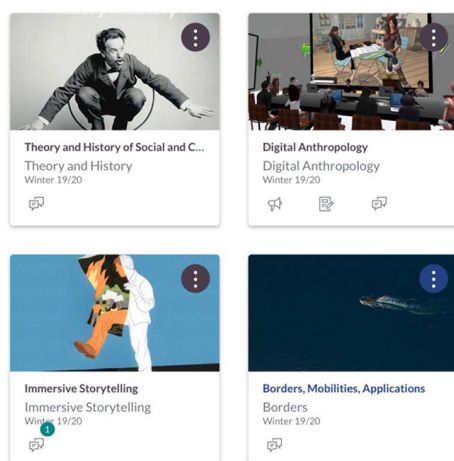
2. Synthesia: AI-generated Videos

MEDIA UNIVERSITY licensed Synthesia.io, a software for ai-generated video production, which our administrative staff uses to introduce the semester schedules and our lecturers to create exciting learning videos.
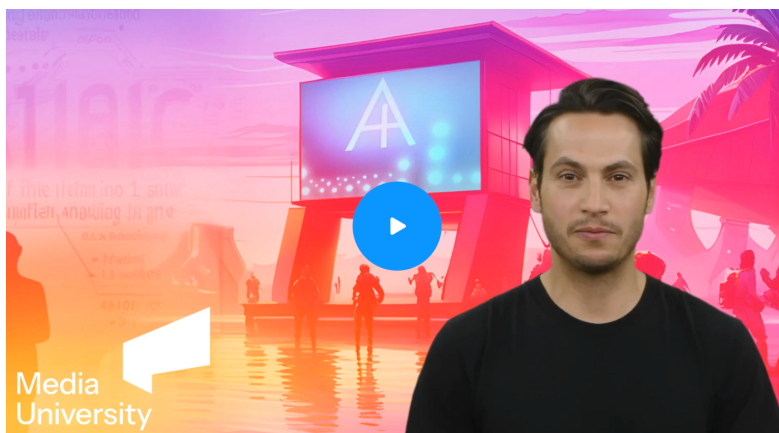
3. Horizon Workroom with VR Headsets

Image 1 Introduction to Meta Quest 2 VR class MEDIA UNIVERSITY.
Image 2: horizon workrooms ©Media University

In the Immersive storytelling, AI Chatbot, virtual environments, and artificial intelligence classes, students and lecturers of the VMA program meet on campus and online with avatars. MEDIA UNIVERSITY has a pool of Meta Quest VR headsets for students to borrow. Students will become adept in using a professional VR headset and participate in Horizon Workrooms. Students learn to navigate an avatar in different virtual environments and conduct ethnographic research online. MEDIA UNIVERSITY offers courses with VR headsets, which students can borrow from MEDIA UNIVERSITY to learn how to navigate with an avatar, build in VR, and construct immersive 360-degree scenarios.

4. Video-Conference Software

One central part of the program is real-time webinars for students, with webcam, voice-chat, and text-chat functions via Zoom video conference software. In addition, we offer virtual classes across devices, including mobile learning iOS (iPhone, iPad), Android, and desktop, with no client downloads for learners.

Our lecturers go live on Zoom for our students. Students can actively join the discussion and give presentations online. Students can also watch the recordings of the daily classes. The screen-sharing function is used for film editing classes. Students can discuss their video editing steps with their lecturer. We follow strict rules of data privacy. All videos are deleted after the course.

Further Information:
www.media-university.de

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