

# **Curriculum for the Programme “International Joint Master’s Degree in Cultural Sociology”**

## **Introductory Section**

Scholars and policy-makers emphasise that social and economic development can be secured only if cultural values of a given social context are understood and taken into account. UN Millenium Development Agenda has recognised that economic development is not possible without human development. EU policy documents point out that culture helps to promote social inclusion and cohesion, as well as political participation and economic well-being. These ideas have been increasingly included into a large number of development documents at national, regional and local levels, in Europe and around the world.

In spite of this general recognition of the importance of human culture, there exists a lack of experts to analyse and interpret its role in the conditions of the present-day economic and social modernisation, taking place on a global scale. The knowledge such experts are expected to apply in their professional practice extends beyond the purely theoretical reflection and includes competences in both quantitative and qualitative empirical research. Equally essential are intercultural understanding, skills of coordination and project management, as well as an ability to work in the multi-level context of the convergent media.

The master’s programme in Cultural Sociology is launched in order to provide training to these much-needed experts in social and cultural analysis. It combines the strengths and specializations in teaching and top research of the partner universities, thereby offering the students a program recognized in the countries of the consortium partners as well as creating opportunities for further learning, reflection and research. In addition to acquiring competences crucial for employment in a fast-changing labour market and occupational profiles, the graduates will also create a solid theoretical and methodological grounding for a possible continuation of their studies at a PhD level.

The master’s programme in Cultural Sociology is an outcome of a long-standing collaboration between the universities of Graz and Zadar. Both universities are committed to high-quality teaching and research and to the jointly created curricula as an instrument for the creation of the common European Higher Education Area. The joint degree in cultural sociology is a fruit of institutional ties between the two universities that date back to the 1990s and that have especially intensified in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Following the contacts of individual researchers, collaboration so far has included student and academic mobility, guest lectures, participation in summer schools and conferences.

The Joint Masters Degree is strongly connected to two of the core research areas of the University of Graz “Heterogeneity and Cohesion” and “The Cultural History of Europe and Its Historical and Current Understanding”. The sociological analysis of culture is an important research topic inside these core research areas, because processes of social integration and exclusion can only be understood properly if cultural phenomena are taken into account. The principle of the Joint Masters Degree to connect research and teaching is secured by this interconnection with the core research areas.

The Joint Master’s Degree in Cultural Sociology connects well the core research area of the Department of Sociology (the relationship between culture and society) with the overall mission of the University of Zadar (research and education in the interest of regional development within a wider European context). The Department and the University are committed to the development of international joint degrees, facilitated by their organizational structure, fully integrated in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna Process.

For the University of Trento, the participation in the Cultural Sociology Degree derives from a long lasting collaboration at international level in the promotion of good practices in the double and joint

degree management. The common views in this field brought to the organization of joint seminars and workshops for the EAIE and to the decision of taking part to the Cultural Sociology Degree project, since there was a big scientific interest by the Faculty of Sociology in Trento. The University of Trento has an established expertise in cultural sociology. Various research groups at the University of Trento work on five clusters of topics that pivot around research in cultural sociology. The first research cluster focuses on language and society, social interaction, conversation analysis, media studies and the sociology of communication. A second cluster carries both theoretical and empirical work on the cultural dimension of migration studies. This cluster participates also in the activities of the Center for Cultural Sociology of Yale University since its establishment. A third research cluster focuses on science and society, public understanding of science, public opinion research, and public sphere studies. A fourth research cluster focuses on the cultural analysis of spatial phenomena. Last but not least, a fifth research cluster focuses on the sociology of religion, religious organizations and movements, and religion in multicultural societies. Several PhD dissertations falling under one of the previous headings have been defended recently, and undergraduate as well as graduate courses on the above topics are already active. The University hosts several post-docs pursuing projects in cultural sociology.

The programme builds on a well-established tradition of research and teaching in the field of cultural sociology at Masaryk University's Department of Sociology. The points of interest range from organizational and popular culture to religion and urban studies, yet the two topical areas which give the programme its particular profile are the study of *ethno-national boundaries* (including, e.g., migration and transnationalism) and the study of *collective memory* (including, e.g., generational memory and collective trauma). Today, the research and teaching activities in the field evolve around the Department's *Center for Cultural Sociology*. Although the *Center* was formally instituted only in 2008, its foundation already reflected the many courses – focusing, for example and besides the above mentioned topics, on civic culture, identity formation, gender and sexuality, race, anti-Semitism and protest culture – which had long been offered by the Department in its various study programs. Many of the *Center's* activities draw on a close cooperation with the *Center for Cultural Sociology at Yale University*, along with, other prominent academic institutions worldwide, including Konstanz University. Since 2008, the cultural sociological orientation of the Department has also been furthered within and through the international doctoral program *Euro Joint PhD Program in Social Representations and Communication*.

The joint degree represents an instance of collaboration between European Union members and a candidate country whose membership is expected soon. The program is open to cooperation with other partners around the world.

## § 1 General Regulations

### (1) Status of Co-operation Partners

The following four universities have jointly developed an “International Joint Master’s Degree in Cultural Sociology”

- **Karl-Franzens-University Graz** (Austria, coordinating university), represented by Univ.Prof. Mag. Dr. Manfred Prisching (academic representative), Institute of Sociology, Universitaetsstraße 15, A-8010 Graz, Austria
- **University of Zadar** (Croatia), represented by Prof. dr. sc. Inga Tomić-Koludrović, Department of Sociology, Obala Kralja Petra Krešimira IV, Br. 2, 23000 Zadar, Croatia.
- **University of Trento** (Italy), represented by Univ. Prof. Giolo Fele, Faculty of Sociology, via Verdi 26, 38122 Trento, Italy
- **Masaryk University** (Brno, Czech Republic), represented by Doc. PhDr. et Ing. Radim Marada, Ph.D. (academic representative), Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Studies, Jostova 10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic.

### **(1.1) Consortium**

The following four universities constitute the “consortium”

- **Karl-Franzens-University Graz** (Austria), legal representative: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Christa Neuper, Rector.
- **University of Zadar** (Croatia), legal representative: Prof. dr. sc. Ante Uglešić, Rector.
- **University of Trento** (Italy), legal representative: Prof. Davide Bassi, Rector.
- **Masaryk University** (Brno, Czech Republic), legal representative: Doc. PhDr. Mikuláš Bek, Ph.D., Rector

commonly conferring a joint degree.

The rights connected with these degrees will be acquired from each of the participating states. (Compare Cooperation Contract, § 2)

### **(1.2) Mobility Partners**

Universities may join the project as mobility partners offering parts of the curriculum that are automatically recognized as part of the study program. For details refer to the contracts between the mobility universities and the consortium. (Compare Cooperation Contract, § 2)

## **(2) Aim of the International Joint Master’s Degree in Cultural Sociology**

The mission of the International Joint Master’s Degree in Cultural Sociology is to provide an international master’s programme of highest quality which enables participants to contribute as researchers and policy makers to the societal transformation and development in the conditions of an increasingly interconnected and globalised world.

The international joint master’s degree has been jointly developed and recognised by the partner institutions. Students have to spend a part of their studies at participating institutions. These periods are automatically recognised in the home institutions. The teaching staff of the institutions works out the curriculums together, formulates regulations for admission and examination conditions and also teaches at other institutions. Upon completion of the study programmes, students receive a degree which is jointly conferred by all or several of the partners.

The master’s degree places a strong emphasis on research in the service of social, cultural and economic development. It promotes the capability for theoretically and methodologically sound research, necessary for social and cultural analysis in a complex global setting, characterized by an interplay between the simple and advanced forms of modernity. The aim of the programme is to develop students' capacity for independent, critical and creative thinking with a view to the production of original research.

Apart from the opportunity to continue their studies at a PhD level, employment opportunities for graduates include a wide range of options in the public, semi-public and private sector, as well as NGOs. Public bodies include EU, national, regional, and local governments, university management and administration, and various public and semi-public agencies and think-tanks. Private employers include various consultancies in the areas of opinion research and marketing, the media and creative industries. Opportunities of employment in NGOs cover a range of roles extending from project management to research and evaluation of projects.

The carrying out of the Joint Degree Programmes as part of the Bologna Process is an important instrument in the creation of a Common European Educational Area. By co-operations on Joint Degree Programmes, joint quality assurance as well as mutual recognition of academic degrees and qualifications are increasingly ensured. In addition, Joint Degrees contribute to more transparency and

to bringing the European study programme systems into line with each other, promote student and teaching staff mobility and increase the international "employability" of graduates. Besides the strengthening of the European and international dimension of the study programmes, the increase in the attractiveness of the European educational area is also of particular importance.

### **(2.1) Educational Goals:**

According to the Dublin Descriptors the Master's degree will be awarded to students who are able to:

- understand the dynamics, complexity and interaction between social, cultural and economic processes and systems
- analyse topics within the field of cultural sociology by applying different theoretical and methodological approaches
- apply comprehensive competences in conducting qualitative and quantitative social research
- use appropriate working methods and instruments for scientific research and application
- apply their knowledge and scientific skills in inter- and trans-disciplinary teams on complex issues,
- apply the according social skills, such as writing, debating, conflict management, teamwork, project management in order to make a substantial contribution to the transition to a more equitable and sustainable society
- conduct independent research projects and put the results of an investigation in the form of a scientific publication or provide an expertise for institutions or the broader public.

### **(2.2) Scientific Perspectives**

Different specialisation perspectives are offered by the partner universities. Within each perspective, the allocation to the perspective and thus the possible specialisation of the students depends on their specific undergraduate education (see module descriptions in Annex 1).

### **(2.3) Professional Fields: Relevance of the Programme for the Labour Market and further Academic Study**

Professional fields for which competences are developed are strongly determined by the specialisation module chosen definitely including the public, semi-public and private sector. Typical occupational fields and institutions for graduates are

- Cultural policy
- Cultural management
- Inter-cultural communication management
- Cultural marketing
- Media and creative industries
- Quality Management
- Regional and urban planning
- Innovation Management
- Training and continuing education
- Academic institutions
- Government and non-governmental agencies
- International Organisations
- Community development and organization
- Public opinion research

### **(3) Duration of the Programme**

Students are allocated ECTS credit points for the work done, which includes both self-study and contact hours. The master's degree comprises 120 ECTS credits, which corresponds to a minimum

period of study of four semesters or two years, per the respective regulations governing the partner institutions.

At least 60 ECTS credits have to be earned at the home university. Students are required to complete at least 30 ECTS credits at one of the partner universities.

#### **(4) Academic Degree**

Students completing the “International Joint Master’s Degree in Cultural Sociology” earn the master degree “Joint Master of Cultural Sociology” that is equivalent to the master degree in the countries of the partner universities as follows:

Austria:	Master of Arts	MA
Croatia:	Magistar/Magistra sociologije	Mag. soc.
Italy:	Laurea Magistrale in Sociologia e Ricerca sociale (LM 88)	LM
Czech Republic:	Magistr/ Magistra sociologie	Mgr.

#### **(5) Formal Modes of Study**

These modes of study include lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical courses and other forms, per the respective regulations governing the partner institutions.

University of Graz: Statutes of the Legal Regulations on University Studies (*Satzungsteil Studienrechtliche Bestimmungen*) §1 (3)

University of Zadar: The Statute of the University of Zadar (Part VII, *Studiji na sveučilištu*, Articles 109-134)

University of Trento: The Statute of the University of Trento (Article 33) and the University Regulation for academic issues

Masaryk University: The Statute of Masaryk University: Section 13; Masaryk University Study and Examination Regulations: Section 4 and 5. .

#### **(6) Limitation of Places in Courses**

Limitations on the number of participants in the individual types of classes may apply for educational and/or safety reasons, and shall be determined per the respective regulations governing the partner institutions.

#### **(7) Teaching and Learning Methods**

In addition to regular classes at the partner universities, jointly prepared forms of supplementary teaching (e.g. summer or winter schools, intensive programmes) can be used to complete the Joint Programme and may be counted towards the 30 ECTS credits requirement.

#### **(8) Target Group and Admission**

The target group for the participation in the “International Joint Master’s Degree in Cultural Sociology” are highly qualified and motivated students interested in issues of society and culture.

Any student who is interested in taking the master’s programme has to go through an admission procedure (Compare Cooperation Contract, § 5). The Selection Committee plays a key role in that procedure. The deadlines for submitting applications for admission are announced each year on the programme website ([www.jointdegree.eu](http://www.jointdegree.eu)).

### *General conditions for admission*

For applicants who hold a first cycle degree in sociology, social sciences or the humanities with a solid background in qualitative and quantitative methods, theory of the social sciences, application of social sciences.

Cultural Sociology is a subject that requires an inter-disciplinary perspective. For this reason, the International Joint Master's Degree in Cultural Sociology welcomes individuals holding an academic degree of at least 180 ECTS credits (bachelor's degree or equivalent programme of at least 180 ECTS) who can demonstrate their knowledge of the social sciences, research skills and a general insight in the subject of cultural sociology. The selection committee decides in uncertain cases, in accordance with the local procedures for immatriculation of the home universities.

### *Language*

An interest in languages will be presupposed. Large parts of the programme will be offered in English, especially the modules chosen for the mobility semester, as well as summer schools. However, students have the opportunity and are encouraged to take courses taught in the local language. However, examinations can be done in English even if the course language is another one depending on the professor's prior consent. Because large parts of the programme are conducted in English, the Selection Committee requires proof of the applicant's proficiency in English.

## **§ 2 Structure of the Programme**

### **(1) Overview**

It is a four-semester master's programme, which includes 30 ECTS credits per semester, a total of 120 ECTS credits. The first two semesters are used (in spite of more or less respective prior knowledge of the participants) to give an introduction to the specific field of cultural sociology and cultural studies, including the methodological procedures and instruments. It is therefore intended that only the third semester will obligatory be spent at one of the partner universities. The fourth semester, which is centered on the preparation of the master thesis shall again be spent at the home university.

The structuring of the studies is carried out in several packages and modules. The *packages* describe thematic standard qualifications that can be filled at the partner universities through different courses.

In the first two terms there are the two theoretical packages:

- Classical theories of culture and society (5-8 ECTS)
- Contemporary theories of culture and society (5-8 ECTS)

and the two social research packages:

- Advanced Quantitative Methods (5-8 ECTS)
- Advanced Qualitative Methods (5-8 ECTS).

The fifth package addresses the broad horizon of the analysis of contemporary societies:

- Global Change and Culture (8-15 ECTS).

In the first three semesters a package of free electives is added (12-18 ECTS). These can be freely selected from the range of courses provided at the respective university, but it is recommended that with the perspective of studying abroad at least basic knowledge of the language should be acquired, as well as a supportive course about sociological / social science

/ scientific writing. These courses are mentioned as an alternative in the context of the free electives package in order to draw special attention to these options.

In the second and third terms, respectively, a *module* in the extent of 15-18 ECTS credits is part of the curriculum. In contrast to the packages in which substantial congruence between the universities is aspired, the aim of the modules is opposite: use the substantive differences of the partner universities. The partner universities will provide major modules, consisting of several courses, where they can display their particular strengths. Each partner university will offer two modules as follows:

- Graz: Fictions and Realities: Art and Literature; Global Cultures
- Zadar: Cultural Theories and Methods; Culture and Identities
- Brno: Time and Change; Boundaries
- Trento: Public Opinion; Communication and Culture.

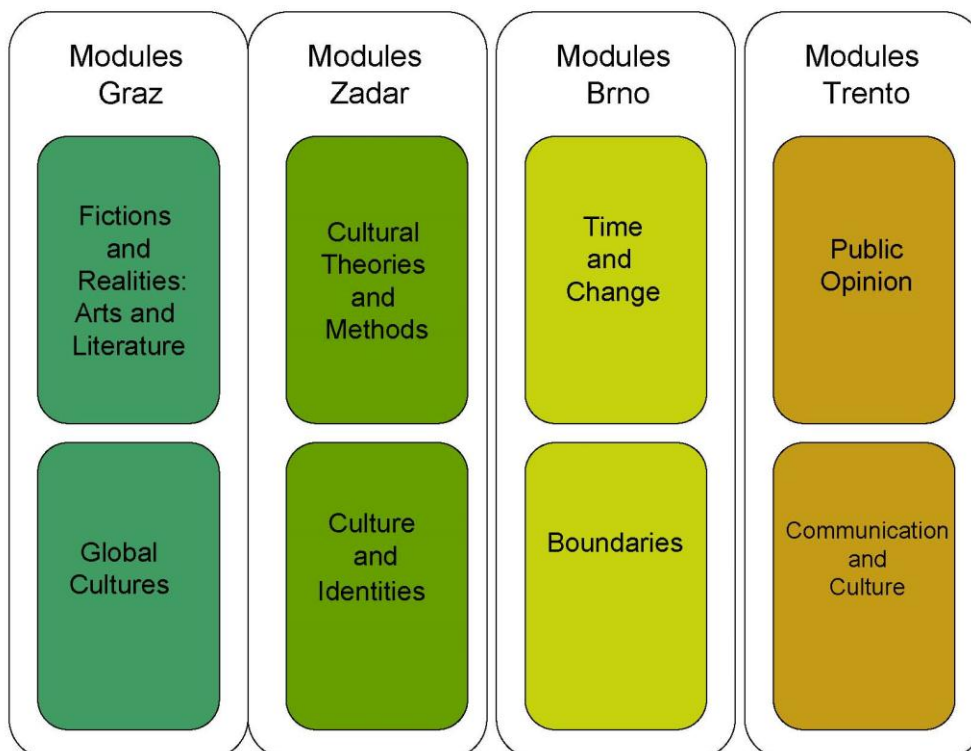
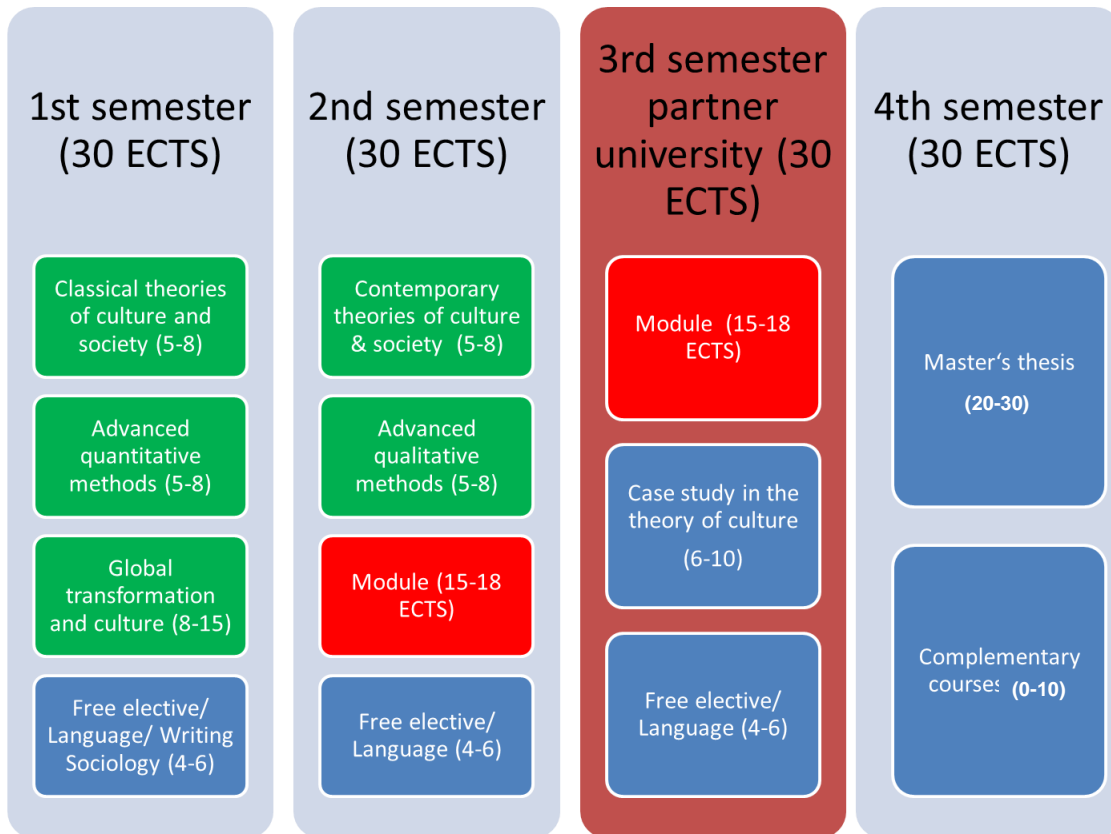
Therefore, the students have the choice between different regions and universities, but they also have a choice between certain key contents. Logically, one of the modules will be passed at the home university, the other module at the mobility university. Each partner university will offer one of the two suggested modules in the second and third semester.

In the third semester, the semester abroad, the module will be complemented by a

- Case Study in the Sociology of Culture (6-10 ECTS).

In this case study, depending on the configuration of the partner universities, concrete work (including empirical work) shall be done in any subjects or objects: scientific research with a special emphasis on cultural topics.

The fourth semester is primarily devoted to the creation of the master's thesis, which is classified in the extent of 20-30 ECTS credits. Complementary courses are intended as electives that are to be chosen from the range of cultural and social science courses of each university in a sensible complement to the topic of the thesis.





## **(2) Master's thesis module**

The master thesis module comprises 20 to 30 ECTS. The thesis reflects the student's capacity for independent study and research. The thesis must include a summary both in English and in the local language of the home institution per the respective regulations governing the partner institutions.

### *The importance of a master's thesis*

The master's thesis plays a central role in the master's programme. It is the proof of the student's mastery and academic development to a sufficient level. The thesis certifies that the graduates are qualified. It also guarantees that the final attainment levels of the master's have been met.

The master's thesis provides essential training. It involves a large number of academic activities: formulating a research objective and a research question after surveying the literature; sorting, interpreting, and synthesizing information; collecting/analyzing measurements/observations; and presenting verbal/written reports on the findings.

### *Master's thesis topic*

Students must determine their master's thesis topic in consultation with a supervisor according to the regulations at the respective home university. Students have to write a proposal (including problem description, research goals and questions, research methods, theoretical perspective, expected outcomes, time schedule, bibliography) that has to be approved by the supervisor and a second reader. It must be possible to finish the thesis within 6 months after the agreed starting time.

### *Assessment*

The final master's thesis is assessed by at least the supervisor and a second reader. The judgment of any other (external) supervisors who might be involved will be taken into consideration. The final assessment is reached according to the rules of the respective university.

## **§ 3 Assessment**

### *Assessment types, procedures and methods*

Student achievement is assessed by a variety of methods including examination and written and oral work per the respective regulations governing the partner institutions. Criteria must be identified for students in the syllabus distributed at the beginning of a course.

### *Grading systems*

Every university will use its own grading system. A conversion table will be provided (Annex 2). All consortium partners will provide a grade point average for students at the end of their studies.

### *Auditing and Evaluation*

In order to maintain quality assurance across all aspects of the programme the members of each institution of the consortium will be asked regularly to monitor and audit samples of syllabi and student work from across the consortium. This will be one of the tasks of the annual meeting of representatives. The General Programme Board is responsible for the overall management and quality assurance of the programme. Results of the quality assurance procedures have to be discussed by the General Programme Board once a year. The evaluation of courses will concentrate on objectives, content, didactic presentation and examination.

#### **§ 4 Obligatory Study Abroad**

Students are required to spend the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester at a partner university. Places are allocated by the General Programme Board according to available resources.

It is assumed that the general and specific university academic entrance requirements are satisfied upon nomination by the home institution.

If a student fails a course during mobility, the ECTS credits can be made up at a summer or winter school if an appropriate course is offered by the consortium or recognized by the General Programme Board. Pre-accreditation of summer or winter school courses by the home university is required. Exams can be retaken per the respective regulations governing the partner institutions.

#### **§ 5 Additional Study Abroad**

Students may spend an additional study period at any of the partner universities, whether for a semester of registered coursework or for a short period of study for research reasons. In this case the approval of the General Programme Board is required. Financial subsidies can be applied for through existing mobility programmes and grants.

#### **§ 6 Coming into Effect of the Curriculum**

The present curriculum comes into effect at the four partner universities mentioned above according to their commitment at the beginning of the academic year 2012/2013 following its approval by the respective responsible authorities.