

Curriculum for the program Master in Critical Studies

Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna

Legal Framework

§ 1

(1)

The degree program of “Master in Critical Studies” at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna is instituted in accordance with Section 54 Subsections 1 and 2 of the Universities Act (UG, 2002). The program is a combination of academic and studio art components, of theoretical and practical courses in the fields of art and culture.

(2)

The legitimacy of the program’s profile is ensured by the educational goals and duties (guiding principles and duties) of universities as well as the analogous, fundamental equivalence of artistic and scientific study programs and the desirability of interconnections between them, which is expressed by Section 2 Subsection 2 and Section 3 Subsection 3 of the Universities Act (UG 2002).

(3)

The degree of Master in Critical Studies is a fine arts program in accordance with Section 54 (1) of the Universities Act (UG 2002).

(4)

The curriculum for this study program was accepted in a session of the Senate on June 30, 2011

Qualification Profile

§ 2

(1)

The Master’s program in Critical Studies is a combined fine arts and theory program in which theoretical and scholarly subjects, methods, questions, and bodies of knowledge are dealt with in greater breadth and depth and are taught with close reference to practical artistic work. As a result, the program not only offers scope for a wider range of questions and teaching methods tailored to the objectives of the course (Sec. 2 Subs. 2), but the course contents also acquire a specific internal architecture that aims to bring together heterogeneous fields from within the field of Critical Studies. The curriculum is interdisciplinary in a dual sense: It combines scholarly and artistic methods and contents, and it links the knowledge and methodologies of different liberal arts and fine arts disciplines with a view to acquiring not only critical methodologies and forms of knowledge, but also forms of knowledge that belong to the tradition of critical approaches to the arts and sciences. In addition to imparting in-depth academic and expert knowledge, the course also teaches and develops methodologies that will qualify students to enroll for the artistic/scholarly program PhD in Practice as well as for doctorates in other disciplines within the fields of liberal arts and cultural studies.

(2)

The Master’s program in Critical Studies has three main educational aims:

- To impart skills that will allow students to engage critically in contemporary discourses in art and architecture theory and artistic and cultural studies. Graduates will be qualified to participate in academic debates on aesthetics and art history, journalistic art criticism, and curatorial and communicational discourse;
- To enable students to continue their studies at a specialist fine arts or liberal arts faculty;
- To prepare students for doctoral studies in the liberal arts or architecture and for the artistic/scholarly program PhD in Practice. There is great need in particular for the latter throughout Europe.

Scope, Duration, and Structure of the Curriculum

§3

(1)

The Master's program in Critical Studies comprises a total of 120 ECTS points and has a standard duration of four semesters.

(2)

The Master's program in Critical Studies involves the development and realization of an artistic/academic project (Master's project) and the completion of the modules listed in Section 4.

(3)

The Master's project consists of an artistic and a theory/academic component. The latter must conform to the standards of a liberal arts or cultural studies dissertation in its use of sources and materials and counts for 30 ECTS points.

(4)

The Master's program in Critical Studies consists of the following modules:

1. Artistic practice, 15 ECTS points (3 x 5 ECTS points)
2. Project, 30 ECTS points (3 x 10 ECTS points)
3. Art theory seminars, 15 ECTS points (3 x 5 ECTS points)
4. Case studies, 15 ECTS points (3 x 5 ECTS points)
5. Propaedeutics, 15 ECTS points (3 x 5 ECTS points)
6. Master's Project, 30 ECTS points (2 x 15 ECTS points)

Notes on the Structure of the Curriculum

(5)

- In **Module I** (Artistic Practice), the students' art projects will be supervised and discussed both against the background of the artistic/academic character of the Master's program and with reference to the artistic autonomy and quality of the projects. Students will earn 5 ECTS points per semester for fine arts.

- **Module II** (Projects) comprises thematically dictated, artistic/academic and communicational tasks that must be developed within a framework to be prescribed on a per-semester basis. In addition to projects, this module also focuses on learning to carry out scholarly research, working on project topics, and cooperating with external individuals and institutions. For this purpose, "projects" are defined as tasks for which students must perform independent theoretical/academic research using both classical and experimental methods. Students will earn 10 ECTS points per semester.

- **Module III** (Art Theory Seminars) consists of three phases: 1. Introduction to aesthetics; 2. Issues in international art criticism; 3. Contemporary discourse in art studies and communication. Students will earn 5 ECTS points for successful participation in the seminar.
- **Module IV** (Case Studies) will consist of workshops given by experts from the fields of art and technology, law, and journalism both in academia and the working world, where preference is given to those working on the fringes of their disciplines. 5 ECTS points will be awarded for each workshop.
- **Module V** (Propaedeutics) will teach fundamental methodological and material knowledge. For the purposes of this module, the term “propaedeutics” refers to the function of the Master’s program in Critical Studies for preparing and qualifying students to go on to a PhD in Practice or a doctorate in Architecture or Philosophy. The module will teach the basics of academic writing by means of (1) introducing students to the most important schools of (philosophical) discourse and (2) examining socio-critical theories. Finally, a colloquium will prepare students for producing their own elaborations of academic arguments, choosing topics, etc. The courses in the module take the form of seminars, which count for 5 ECTS points per semester.

Overview

(6)

Module I 3x5 ECTS pts.	Module II 3x10 ECTS pts.	Module III 3x5 ECTS pts.	Module IV 3x5 ECTS pts.	Module V 3x5 ECTS pts.
Artistic Practice I	Project I	Introduction to aesthetics	Case Studies	Propaedeutics I (schools of discourse)
Artistic Practice II	Project II	Issues in international art criticism	Case Studies	Propaedeutics 2 (social theories, theories on the public sphere)
Artistic Practice III	Project III	Contemporary discourse in art studies	Case Studies	Colloquium (in preparation for the Master’s Thesis)

Module VI

Master’s Project, 30 ECTS points (2 x 15 ECTS points)

(7)

The program of studies culminates in the presentation of the Master’s project. The project should be jointly supervised by one artistic and one academic faculty member. The Master’s project is an artistic/academic project which must be independently completed by the student within one semester. The project includes a written academic component and an artistic component. Each component is worth 15 ECTS points, for a total of 30 ECTS points.

(8)

The tuition languages are German and English.

Admission criteria

§ 4

(1)

Prospective students who apply for the Master’s program in Critical Studies must have a university degree in a related subject. Each applicant’s individual suitability for the course

will be assessed in an admissions procedure which aims to verify and guarantee that the candidates have the ability to express artistic thinking and an awareness of problems in art in the appropriate academic and theoretical language.

(2)

As prerequisites for admission to this program, applicants must present proof of a related university degree and of their competence in German and English during the admissions procedure. Applicants should submit the necessary documentation together with their application.

(3)

The application documents should include a written theoretical outline of a possible Master's project as well as documentation of the applicant's previous artistic and/or academic work relevant to his or her projected research project.

(4)

The application documents must be submitted in German or English. They may be sent either by post (date of postmark counts) or electronically (email) or submitted in person.

Required documents:

1. The application form, completed in full;
2. A curriculum vitae and documents that reflect the applicant's artistic and theoretical/academic interests.

(5)

The application procedure will take place before the start of the semester.

Examination Rules

§5

(1)

Candidates who are successful with the application procedure will be accepted into the study program. (see Section 4).

(2)

Students who have attained all the ECTS points required for the prescribed courses are eligible to take the final examination, which takes the form of a presentation of the student's Master's project. The project and the presentation will be evaluated by a committee, which must give a positive assessment for the student to receive a passing grade.

(3)

The degree of Master in Critical Studies (Master of Art) is acquired by passing the final examination.

Commencement

§6

This curriculum comes into force at the start of the academic year 2011/12.