**BA Thesis Trajectory 2022/2023**

Coordinator: Kristine Steenbergh

Email: k.steenbergh@vu.nl

Registration

* You must sign up for two courses at vu.nl:
* Bachelor Thesis Colloquium Literature and Society English, L\_ELBALESCOL, 3 credits. Registration is only possible once period 4 courses are open. The corresponding Canvas page will not be used.
* Bachelor Thesis Literature and Society English, L\_ELBALESSCR, 9 credits. Registration is possible year-round. Only this Canvas page will be used.

Two trajectories

* Two trajectories are offered, a Fall 2022 trajectory and a Spring 2023 trajectory.
* You can participate in only one trajectory per academic year.

Entry requirement

* In order to participate in the Fall 2022 trajectory, you must have successfully completed all BA year 1 and year 2 courses, plus all year 3 (non-thesis) courses minus one. The cut-off date is 5 September 2022.
* In order to participate in the Spring 2023 trajectory, you must have successfully completed all BA year 1 and year 2 courses. The cut-off date is 9 January 2023.

Trajectory phases

* The trajectory consists of two (in case of a re-sit, three) phases:
* Preparation phase (pp. 2-3)
* Writing phase (pp. 4-6)
* Re-sit phase (p. 7)

Exemption

* Requests for exemptions (e.g., from the entry requirement) must be sent via VU email to the coordinator, Kristine Steenbergh: k.steenbergh@vu.nl. Do not use the Canvas email system for this.
* Within ten working days, you will receive a decision via VU email.
* If you disagree with the decision, you can subsequently file an appeal with the Exam Board.

Questions

* If, after having read this syllabus, you have any questions regarding the thesis trajectory, contact the coordinator, Kristine Steenbergh, via VU email: k.steenbergh@vu.nl. Do not use the Canvas email system for this.

VU email

* Throughout the trajectory, regularly check your VU email inbox, since both the coordinator and your supervisor might contact you this way.

**I. Preparation phase**

Step #1: Read example theses

* On Canvas you can find three BA theses completed in previous academic years. Read these to acquaint yourself with the format.
* If you want to read more example theses, you can find them in the VU library thesis database: ub.vu.nl/en/ => University Library for Students => View past VU Master’s and Bachelor's theses.
* In general, the University Library offers great resources for the thesis trajectory: ub.vu.nl/en/ => University Library for Students => Take a free workshop or consult the online Libguides.

Step #2: Brainstorm about your topic

* On Canvas you can find a list of topic suggestions. You can choose to work on one of these topics. Alternatively, you can formulate your own topic.
* Your topic should reflect elements of what you have learned in the BA program. For instance, you could connect your topic to your BA year 3 specialization of choice, “Literature in a Changing World” or “Literature in a Visual Culture.”
* Note, however, that you cannot copy texts that you have written for other courses into your thesis. Instead, in order to avoid self-plagiarism, you must properly quote from and refer to your earlier work.
* You can write on literature (e.g., novels, plays, poetry, short stories) and comics, both fictional and non-fictional (e.g., memoirs, travel writing). You can include a comparison between these texts on the one hand, and film (e.g., adaptations) on the other.
* While media other than film (e.g., video games) intersect with literature and comics as well, they are not taught in the BA program and therefore you cannot treat them for your thesis.
* Likewise, you cannot study (English translations of) non-English texts, since these are not taught in the BA program.
* As a rule of thumb, texts that you find slightly puzzling result in better theses than texts that you find straightforward (e.g., young adult fiction).
* If you have participated in the thesis trajectory in a previous academic year, note that you cannot write on the same topic again.

Step #3: Read primary and academic materials

* Familiarize yourself thoroughly with your primary texts of choice: read and reread them while taking notes.
* Find all academic sources on your topic available via the VU library catalogue (ub.vu.nl/en), and acquaint yourself with them: read them and summarize their arguments.

Step #4: Submit your pre-proposal

* Write out a pre-proposal, including research question/statement, topic, theory, chapter division, and list of relevant academic sources.
* If you are still considering several topics, write out the idea that is currently most viable to you (and hold on to the other ideas).
* The pre-proposal can include questions and hesitations on your part.
* Download the pre-proposal form from Canvas; fill out the form on a computer; upload the form as a Word document to Canvas.

Step #5: Attend colloquium meeting A

* Diederik Oostdijk hosts colloquium meeting A for all thesis students. Attendance is mandatory.
* During this session, you will rigorously analyze and reflect on your pre-proposal, which will help you to recognize both the potential and the pitfalls of your topic before embarking on the writing phase.

Step #6: Submit your proposal

* Taking into consideration the feedback on your pre-proposal, you write out your actual proposal.
* Download the proposal form from Canvas; fill out the form on a computer; convert the form from a Word document to a PDF file; sign the form; upload the form to Canvas.
* Based on your proposal and staff availability, the coordinator decides who will act as your supervisor and who as your second assessor.
* Your supervisor informs you via VU email about the date, time, and place (offline/online) of colloquium meeting B.

Step #7: Attend colloquium meeting B

* Your supervisor hosts colloquium meeting B for all her thesis students. Attendance is mandatory.
* You receive instructions from your supervisor on the contract, writing phase, and assessment criteria.

Step #8: Submit your contract

* The end of the preparation phase is formalized in a contract.
* Download the contract form from Canvas; fill out the form on a computer; convert the form from a Word document to a PDF file; sign the form; upload the form to Canvas.
* Your supervisor and second assessor will then sign the thesis contract as well.

**Deadlines preparation phase**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fall 2022 trajectory | Spring 2023 trajectory |
| #1: Example theses | June 2022 | October 2022 |
| #2: Brainstorm topic | July 2022 | November 2022 |
| #3: Read materials | August 2022 | December 2022 |
| #4: Pre-proposal | 5 September 2022, 2 p.m. | 9 January 2023, 2 p.m. |
| #5: Colloquium meeting A | 12 September 2022,10 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. Via Zoom | 16 January 2023,10 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. Via Zoom |
| #6: Thesis proposal | 3 October 2022, 2 p.m. | 6 February 2023, 2 p.m. |
| #7: Colloquium meeting B | 10 October 2022\* | 13 February 2023\* |
| #8: Thesis contract | 17 October 2022, 2 p.m. | 20 February 2023, 2 p.m. |

* Read dates marked with an asterisk as “week of …”
* Late submissions are not accepted.

**II. Writing phase**

Step #9: Three individual supervision meetings

You meet three times with your supervisor to discuss a draft text. Since your supervisor receives a limited number of hours for supervising your thesis, there is a meeting protocol in place:

* Two weeks prior to the meeting, you upload your draft text as a Word document to Canvas. Late submission or submitting a text that has not been carefully edited (paragraph construction, grammar and spelling, MLA guidelines) means no feedback and no meeting (nor a chance to reschedule the meeting).
* One week prior to the meeting, your supervisor sends you their written feedback via VU email. The feedback focuses on the content of your text; only on the first page of the text are writing mistakes marked.
* During the meeting, you ask specific questions about the written feedback for max 30 minutes. If you have no specific questions, the meeting ends prematurely.
* A draft text on which you have received feedback cannot be re-submitted in revised form for a later meeting.

Step #10: Submit your stop/go-report

* For the third supervision meeting, you also submit a stop/go-report, in which you provide an overview of your progress so far.
* Download the stop/go-report form from Canvas; fill out the form on a computer; convert the form from a Word document to a PDF file; sign the form; upload the form to Canvas.
* Based on your stop/go-report, your supervisor gives you a stop/go-advice.
* A go-advice indicates that your supervisor thinks it is possible for you to complete your thesis within the allotted time and with a pass grade.
* A stop-advice indicates that your supervisor thinks it is unlikely that you will complete the thesis within the allotted time and with a pass grade.
* If you receive a stop-advice, you can nonetheless choose to continue working on the thesis.

Step #11: Submit your thesis

* Your thesis must be between 7,000 and 10,000 words (excluding appendices, footnotes, Works Cited list, and illustrations).
* On the title page, you list:
* The title and, if applicable, the subtitle of your thesis.
* The name of the university: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
* The name of the faculty: Faculty of Humanities.
* The name of the program: Bachelor’s program Literature and Society: English.
* Your name.
* Your student number.
* The name of your supervisor.
* The name of your second assessor.
* The date of submission.
* After the title page follows a signed declaration of originality. You can find the format on Canvas.
* You upload your thesis as a PDF file to Canvas.

Step #12: Grades

You receive two grades:

* Colloquium grade: L\_ELBALESCOL, 3 credits.
* Thesis grade: L\_ELBALESSCR, 9 credits.

*Colloquium grade*

* The requirements for successful completion of the colloquium are:
* Registration for both thesis courses.
* Participation in colloquium meetings A and B.
* Timely submission of pre-proposal, proposal, contract, and stop/go-report.
* You receive a letter grade for the colloquium:
* NVD (“niet voldaan”): you do not meet the requirements.
* VD (“voldaan”): you meet the requirements.
* There is no option to re-sit the colloquium or submit an additional assignment.

*Thesis grade*

* You receive a number grade for the thesis:
* NS (No Show): You do not submit your thesis or you submit your thesis after the deadline.
* 0.0-5.0: You submit your thesis; it is assessed as insufficient.
* 5.5-10.0: You submit your thesis; it is assessed as sufficient.
* If you submit a thesis, you receive an email from your supervisor with your thesis grade and the assessment forms.

The colloquium grade and the thesis grade are interdependent: you cannot receive a pass grade for one if you do not also receive a pass grade for the other. This results in the following matrix of possible outcomes:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Thesis: NS | Thesis: 0.0-5.0 | Thesis: 5.5-10.0 |
| Colloquium: NVD | Fail | Fail | Fail |
| Colloquium: VD | Re-sit | Re-sit | Pass |

* Fail: You must start on a new trajectory (different topic, different supervisor) in the next academic year.
* Re-sit: You go on to the re-sit phase.
* Pass: Congratulations! You have successfully completed the BA thesis trajectory.

**Deadlines writing phase**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fall 2022 trajectory | Spring 2023 trajectory |
|  |
| #9: Submit draft 1 | 24 October 2022, 2 p.m. | 27 February 2023, 2 p.m. |
| #9: Feedback supervisor | 31 October 2022\* | 6 March 2023\* |
| #9: Meeting 1 | 7 November 2022\*  | 13 March 2023\* |
|  |
| #9: Submit draft 2 | 14 November 2022, 2 p.m. | 20 March 2023, 2 p.m. |
| #9: Feedback supervisor | 21 November 2022\* | 27 March 2023\* |
| #9: Meeting 2 | 28 November 2022\* | 3 April 2023\* |
|  |
| #9: Submit draft 3 | 5 December 2022, 2 p.m. | 10 April 2023, 2 p.m. |
| #10: Submit stop/go-report | 5 December 2022, 2 p.m. | 10 April 2023, 2 p.m. |
| #9: Feedback supervisor | 12 December 2022\* | 17 April 2023\* |
| #10: Stop/go-advice | 12 December 2022\* | 17 April 2023\* |
| #9: Meeting 3 | 19 December 2022\* | 24 April 2023\* |
|  |
| #10: Submit thesis | 23 January 2023, 2 p.m. | 22 May 2023, 2 p.m. |
| #11: Receive grades | 6 February 2023\* | 5 June 2023\* |

* Read dates marked with an asterisk as “week of …”
* For the Fall 2022 trajectory, the Christmas break (2 weeks) has been taken into account.
* For the Spring 2023 trajectory, the May break (1 week) has been taken into account.
* Late submissions are not accepted.

**III. Re-sit phase**

Step #12: Additional supervision meeting

* If you submitted a thesis and received a fail grade, there is a fourth supervision meeting with your supervisor to discuss their feedback on your thesis.
* If you did not submit a thesis or submitted late, and thus received a No Show, there is no written feedback and hence no fourth supervision meeting.

Step #13: Submit your re-sit thesis

* Same as step #11 above.

Step #14: Re-sit grades

* Same as step #12 above.
* The matrix of possible outcomes for the re-sit is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Re-sit: NS | Re-sit: 0.0-5.0 | Re-sit: 5.5-10.0 |
| Colloquium: VD | Fail | Fail | Pass |

* Fail: You must start on a new trajectory (different topic, different supervisor) in the next academic year.
* Pass: Congratulations! You have successfully completed the BA thesis trajectory.

**Deadlines re-sit phase**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fall 2022 trajectory | Spring 2023 trajectory |
| #12: Meeting 4 | 13 February 2023\* | 12 June 2023\* |
| #13: Submit re-sit | 6 March 2023, 2 p.m. | 3 July 2023, 2 p.m. |
| #14: Receive re-sit grades | 13 March 2023\* | 10 July 2023\* |

* Read dates marked with an asterisk as “week of …”
* Late submissions are not accepted.