WTMC | *Netherlands Graduate Research School of Science, Technology and Modern Culture*

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Information about the training programme for PhDs

Further Information

For information on the WTMC Graduate School and how to apply, please contact the administrator Elize Schiweck (e.schiweck@ utwente.nl).

For information on the programme of workshops, summer schools and Writeshops, please contact Alexandra Supper (a.supper@maastrichtuniversity.nl) or Andreas Weber (a.weber@utwente.nl).

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WTMC website

www.wtmc.eu

Many resources are available on the WTMC website, including overviews of core literature for STS and for each of the research clusters. The WTMC Series on Teaching and Learning contains detailed information about each of the training events organized by WTMC.

Mailing list

A mailing list connects the STS community in the Netherlands and provides up to date information on events, opportunities and funding in the area of STS broadly defined.

Introduction

WTMC is a collective effort of scholars based in the Netherlands who study the development of science, technology and modern culture from an interdisciplinary perspective. Members of WTMC have backgrounds in the history, sociology and philosophy of science and technology, and other interdisciplinary fields including innovation studies, gender studies, cultural studies, and governance studies. WTMC is pluralistic not only in terms of discipline, but also in terms of objects of study, methods and approaches used.

WTMC has four objectives:
1. to provide high quality, advanced training for PhD candidates who study science, technology and modern culture, and thus to create new generations of scholars with a solid background in this interdisciplinary field (often referred to as STS – 'Science and Technology Studies', or 'Science, Technology & Society')
2. to stimulate and coordinate high quality research about science, technology and modern culture
3. to contribute to societal debates about the role of science and technology in society
4. to promote the visibility of STS as a field amongst research funding agencies, universities and others concerned with research and education policy.

History

Collaborative training for graduate students in science, technology and society studies started in 1986, and was supported by a government grant until the early 1990s. Over the years, the graduate training network gained national and international recognition. In 1994, the graduate training network was transformed into a slightly different organisation: the Graduate Research School of Science, Technology and Modern Culture (WTMC). It was officially accredited by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) in 1995. Accreditation has been reconfirmed in 2000, 2005, 2011 and 2017.

Organisation

At present, the academic director of the school is Professor Stefan Kuhlmann from the University of Twente. Professor Harro van Lente, Maastricht University, chairs the board. Most of the other board members come from participating academic groups.
The co-ordination of the training programme is in the hands of Dr Anne Beaulieu (University of Groningen) and Dr Andreas Weber (University of Twente).

Establishing Institutions

Maastricht University, University of Twente, Utrecht University, Eindhoven University of Technology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Leiden University.

Participating Institutions

Radboud University Nijmegen, University of Amsterdam, University of Groningen, Erasmus University Rotterdam, and the Rathenau Institute (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, KNAW).

Research Clusters

WTMC is organised around three clusters that also form the backbone of the training programme. In addition to the clusters of key questions, the graduate school pays attention to relevant developments in its traditional disciplines, such as history, philosophy and sociology.

Diagnosis of the Modern Research System

This cluster focuses on the history of national research systems, and on the relationships between the different levels of the research system, and between science and society. The formation of new networks, systems and actors is a key aspect within this theme. This is studied from historical, sociological and cultural perspectives, using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Technological Development and Societal Regulation

This cluster focuses on the role of technology in society and the ways in which they are co-constructed. Key questions include: How do technical systems and technical artefacts emerge and develop? What is their role in modern society? These studies inform new perspectives on the politics of technological culture and new forms of technology assessment. The history of technology in the Netherlands has been an important topic.

Cultural Roles of Science, Technology and Rationality

This cluster focuses on the cultural, philosophical and normative consequences of the intertwinement of science, technology and modern culture. Questions related to this theme concentrate on the way in which boundaries between science, technology and society are generated, and how science and technology are represented and presented in philosophical and political writings.

Aims of the Graduate Training Programme:

- To obtain an overview of classical and contemporary approaches to the study of the relations between science, technology and society.

- To learn how to translate these insights into one's own research approach and research design.

- To obtain insight into the relationship between current STS studies and disciplines such as philosophy, sociology and history.

- To develop skills to use methodology and theory to study the relation between science, technology and society.

- To develop skills necessary to communicate with and present one's work to the international research community.

- To develop skills to translate societal and cultural issues into questions of science and technology studies and vice versa.

- To prepare for a professional career in which knowledge of the relations between science, technology and society plays a role.

Local and National Component

PhD students participating in one of the academic groups affiliated with WTMC obtain their training locally in their own institution and nationally from the Graduate Research School. The local component is provided by the home institution and in particular by the supervisor responsible for the PhD student. The local component includes supervision and training to compensate for gaps in students' prior training, such as academic language skills. The national component is organised by the Graduate Research School WTMC. The national component aims to make students familiar with classical and recent theories, methodologies and approaches to studying the interaction between science, technology and society. It also stimulates interaction and learning among the PhD students of the School.

Workshops, Summer Schools & Writeshops

The PhD programme has two parts. The first two years of the programme introduce students into the broad field of studies of the relationship between science, technology and society, and provide training in particular skills. During each of these first two years, students attend two workshops and one summer school. Workshops are organised around specific themes (linked to the three clusters of questions around which WTMC is organised), while the summer school is organised around both a theme and an anchor teacher. The anchor teachers are leading scholars from the field.
WTMC workshops and summer schools are residential.

Examples of recent workshop themes:
Science and Citizenship
Critical Theory of Technology
Future-Making
Doing Comparison
Assessing Technology Assessment
The Nature of Nature
Postcolonial STS
Open Science

Anchor Teachers of Previous Summer Schools

Donald MacKenzie (1987)	Andrew Webster (2004)
Harry Collins (1988)	Tom Misa (2005)
Roy Porter (1989)	Susan Leigh Star (2006)
Helga Nowotny (1990)	Steven Yearley (2007)
Steve Shapin (1991)	Andrew Feenberg (2008)
Bruno Latour (1992)	David Nye (2009)
Brian Wynne (1993)	Michael Lynch (2010)
John Law (1994)	Geoffrey Bowker (2011)
Trevor Pinch (1995)	Helen Verran (2012)
Karin Knorr-Cetina &	Steven Epstein (2013)
Ted Porter (1996)	Gary Downey (2014)
Donna Haraway (1997)	Mark Brown (2015)
Sheila Jasanoff (1998)	Ulrike Felt (2016)
Tom Gieryn (2000)	Christine Hine (2017)
Aant Elzinga (2001)	Elizabeth Shove (2018)
Steve Woolgar (2002)	Michael Guggenheim (2019)
Lucy Suchman (2003)	Pierre-Benoit Joly (2021)

Prior to the workshops and summer schools, students receive a programme with texts and assignments to prepare in advance. Students are expected to spend 40 hours preparing for each workshop and 80 hours for the summer school. All workshops and schools are in English and often attract international participants. All students present their work at least once during the first two years of the programme.

In the next phase of their PhD research Writeshops are organized twice a year. These are the occasion to discuss and receive feedback from senior academics and peers on their writing (dissertation chapters or articles). Texts are distributed in advance. The total amount of preparation depends on the number of participants. Each Writeshop ends with a dinner enabling PhD students to maintain and extend their network of contacts with peers and senior scholars in their field.

Acquiring academic and professional skills is an important component of the WTMC graduate training programme. Workshops and summer schools invite students to reflect critically on theoretical and methodological approaches and on their own research design and findings. Interaction among the students is crucial, and that is why the workshops and summer schools are residential. In addition to a selection of research skills (such as textual analysis, network analysis, and ethnographic techniques), there is training in skills such as structuring the thesis, writing review articles, composing abstracts for conferences, writing research proposals for funding, and the art of redrafting.

Requirements for the certificate of the national component:

First phase PhD training: 4 three-day workshops & 2 five-day summer schools.

Second phase PhD training: The 4 one-day Writeshops are a service to advanced students who have concluded the first phase. The Writeshops are not compulsory.

Profile of Regular Participants

Participants should have a Masters degree, preferably in the study of science, technology and society or a degree with a sufficient basis in the social sciences and/or humanities. They must have been accepted as a PhD candidate by a professor at a Dutch university. Preferably, participants are already familiar with the key literature as defined by the WTMC Board. If not, participants are expected to read these classics in the first phase of the programme. Close reading exercises during workshops and schools will help them to do so.

External Participants

The Graduate Research School accepts PhD students from institutions not affiliated with WTMC. The same requirements hold and the academic director will review the request in terms of its relevance to WTMC. Alternatively, external students can participate in workshops and summer schools on an ad hoc basis. Participants from affiliated institutions always have priority over external participants.

Locations and Fees
The workshops and summer schools of WTMC are held at a suitable conference centre. The location offer board, a bar service, and is easily accessible by public transport.

Each year, two workshops are organised (in Spring and Autumn), a summer school in August / September, and two Writeshops (Spring and Autumn). The schedule may be modified depending on circumstances.

External students pay a fee for the workshops and summer schools in which they participate. Fees correspond to the amount paid by the affiliated institutions for the regular PhD students. External students who are members of EASST are entitled to a slight discount.

More information on the WTMC website (www.wtmc.eu).