



WTMC

Netherlands Graduate Research School of Science, Technology and Modern Culture

Information about the training programme for PhDs

Further Information

For information on the WTMC Graduate School and how to apply, please contact WTMC (wmmc@vu.nl).

For information on the programme of workshops, summer schools and Writeshops, please contact Alexandra Supper (a.supper@maastrichtuniversity.nl) or Evelien de Hoop (e.de.hoop@vu.nl).

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WTMC website

www.wmmc.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. To sign up for the mailing list, please contact WTMC.

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, philosophy, and anthropology 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 & 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 received financial support from the government until the early 1990s. Over the years, the graduate training network gained national and international recognition. In 1994, this network was transformed into the Graduate Research School of Science, Technology and Modern Culture (WTMC). WTMC is the proud recipient of the 2016 STS Infrastructures Award by the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S).

Organisation

At present, the academic director of the school is Professor Teun Zuiderent-Jerak (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam). Professor Harro van Lente, Maastricht University, chairs the board. In addition, the board consists of PhD representatives and representatives from member institutions. The co-ordination of the training programme is in the hands of Dr Alexandra Supper (Maastricht University) and Dr Evelien de Hoop (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam).

Member institutions (alfabetisch)

1. Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
2. Radboud Universiteit
3. Rathenau Instituut
4. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
5. Universiteit Leiden
6. Universiteit Maastricht
7. Universiteit Twente
8. Universiteit Utrecht
9. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Research Clusters

WTMC is organised around the following three clusters that indicate the interdisciplinary breath of the school. The clusters are dynamic themes that consider recent and cross cutting developments and that also have various connections with actors and developments in policy and society.

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.

Technological Development and Societal Regulation

This cluster focuses on the role of technology in society and the ways in which they are co-constructed, both historically and in the present. Key questions include: How do technical systems and technical artefacts emerge and develop and what is their role in modern society?

Cultural Roles of Science, Technology and Rationality

This cluster focuses on the cultural, political, philosophical and normative dimensions of science and technology. Questions focus on the intertwinement of science, technology and modern culture (including norms of rationality and efficiency) and the implications and consequences of this entwinement for public values such as justice, equity, and legitimacy.





The WTMC training program supports PhD students in:

- Reviewing and assessing relevant theories and approaches to study the relations between science, technology and society.
- Designing and applying analytical and methodological approaches in research.
- Communicating with and presenting one's work to the international research community.
- Connecting research findings to relevant debates and developments in policy and society.
- Forming peer networks with fellow PhD students.
- Preparing for a professional career in or outside academia.

Workshops and Summer Schools

Every year, WTMC organizes 1 residential workshop, 1 online workshop and 1 residential summer school. Ideally taken during the first two years of the PhD, these events introduce participants into the broad field of studies of the relationship between science, technology and society, and provide training in particular skills. They offer opportunities for students to present their work, reflect on theoretical and methodological approaches and on their own research design and findings, and develop research skills. For the summer schools, WTMC invites a research leader in the field to act as an anchor teacher.

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.

The residential activities are held at a suitable conference centre that offers board and bar service, and that is easily accessible by public transport. Online workshops may include hybrid elements.

Writeshops

WTMC organizes two Writeshops a year for advanced PhDs that have followed at least 4 training events (i.e. workshops and/or summer schools). During the writeshops, PhD candidates 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.

Participation and fees

PhDs working in the domain of the school can register for the WTMC training program if they are supervised by one or more WTMC members and if they are registered at a Dutch institution with a PhD program. It is also possible to register for individual training activities, but PhDs that follow the full program have priority access. According to membership, different fees apply for the program and individual training activities. More information can be found on the WTMC website.

Examples of recent workshop themes:

- The Powers of Expertise
- The View from Somewhere: Geographies of Knowledge and STS
- Routines and Disruptions
- Infrastructures Across Borders

Anchor Teachers of Previous Summer Schools

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Donald MacKenzie (1987) | Tom Gieryn (2000) | Steven Epstein (2013) |
| Harry Collins (1988) | Aant Elzinga (2001) | Gary Downey (2014) |
| Roy Porter (1989) | Steve Woolgar (2002) | Mark Brown (2015) |
| Helga Nowotny (1990) | Lucy Suchman (2003) | Ulrike Felt (2016) |
| Steve Shapin (1991) | Andrew Webster (2004) | Christine Hine (2017) |
| Bruno Latour (1992) | Tom Misa (2005) | Elizabeth Shove (2018) |
| Brian Wynne (1993) | Susan Leigh Star (2006) | Michael Guggenheim (2019) |
| John Law (1994) | Steven Yearley (2007) | Pierre-Benoît Joly (2021) |
| Trevor Pinch (1995) | Andrew Feenberg (2008) | Sabina Leonelli (2022) |
| Karin Knorr-Cetina & Ted Porter (1996) | David Nye (2009) | Tarleton Gillespie (2023) |
| Donna Haraway (1997) | Michael Lynch (2010) | Sharon Traweek (2024) |
| Sheila Jasanoff (1998) | Geoffrey Bowker (2011) | Tahani Nadim & Juno Salazar Parreñas (2025) |
| | Helen Verran (2012) | |

Local and National Component

PhD students working in the domain of WTMC can register to follow the WTMC training program. The training consists of a local component that is provided by their own institution and a national component provided by WTMC. The local component includes supervision and training in general academic and research skills. The national component aims to make students familiar with theories, methodologies and approaches to studying the interaction between science, technology and society. It also stimulates interaction and learning among PhD students.

The WTMC training program consists of:

- Two residential Summerschools
- Two residential Workshops
- Two online Workshops
- Two Writeshops

When students have followed a minimum of two summerschools and three workshops, they are eligible to receive the WTMC certificate