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TALLINN UNIVERSITY

BALTIC FILM, MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION  
SCHOOL

GUIDELINES

for the

formatting, presentation and defence

of a **Creative Work (final project) BA thesis**

within the Crossmedia in Film and Television curriculum

Tallinn 2016

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## **THE PROCESS OF WRITING A CREATIVE WORK BACHELOR'S THESIS**

### **Selection and approval of the supervisor and topic**

A creative work bachelor's thesis is a student's individual work that presents and discuss the final crossmedia or transmedia work developed during the course of studies. The creative work bachelor thesis is written under the supervision of an academic supervisor. The role of the supervisor is to be a guide. The supervisor helps in selecting the topic and compiling the research plan, recommends literature, monitors the progress of the thesis and ensures it is in compliance with the content requirements, verifies that the requirements for compilation and formatting established by the crossmedia department are complied with in a timely manner.

As a general rule, the members of the teaching staff of the TU Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communication School supervise bachelor's theses'. Having a supervisor coming from a different institution is possible, but the students will previously have to discuss such possibility with the curriculum curator, and will have to obtain written confirmation prior to the declaration of the thesis topic at the end of October.

The supervisor of the bachelor's thesis holds a MA degree. The supervisor may appoint a co-supervisor, usually from the same university or an external consultant from outside of the university, in cases where this is required due to the specificity of the thesis.

Usually the supervisor of a bachelor's thesis shall be approved at the beginning of the academic year. The student shall participate in the information hour dedicated to writing bachelor's theses, which is announced by the crossmedia study specialist. The information hour takes place in the first week of the autumn semester according to the academic calendar. Alternatively, the student will familiarize himself/herself with the information provided by the study specialist. The student shall submit a standard application that indicates the topic and their choice of supervisor no later than the end of the first period of the autumn semester. The application shall be submitted to the crossmedia office. The curator of crossmedia study program reserves the right to change: the supervisor indicated by the student on the application form; the thematic seminar with respect to the workload of the teaching staff involved; the specificity of the topic chosen by the student.

Based on the student's application, the final topic of the thesis, supervisor and co-supervisor shall be accepted by crossmedia study program curator and are approved by an order of the director of BFM no later than the deadline set out in the academic calendar (generally by the end of the first period of the autumn semester).

### **Submission, defence and assessment of the bachelor's thesis**

The dates for submitting theses are set out in the TU academic calendar.

The thesis shall be presented to the supervisor for final amendment proposals on the date determined by the curator of crossmedia study program. The student shall have one week in which to make any final amendments according to the supervisor's proposals.

The student shall submit the thesis to the crossmedia office by the deadline given in two bound versions (one paperback and one hardback copy) and one electronic version in PDF format (on a CD or a flash-drive). The thesis must not be submitted by e-mail. Together with the thesis the students shall submit of the internet links to the project, the audiovisual materials making the project and any other element (digital or not) part of the presented crossmedia or transmedia project. These parts will be retained by the university of showcase purposes. The project will have to be properly archived as per Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communication School guidelines and regulations.

The thesis will have to be accompanied by a signed non-exclusive licence to reproduce the thesis and make it available to the public (Annex B). The thesis must include the supervisor's consent for allowing the thesis to be submitted. The supervisor shall give his or her written approval by signing both a declaration and the thesis, which was submitted on paper.

The thesis shall be registered and given to reviewers for reviewing. The curator of the study program shall appoint the reviewer, taking into consideration the avoidance of conflict of interest.

The thesis shall be transmitted to the reviewer for writing a review. The reviewer shall send a written review to the academic unit no later than three working days before the defence. The review shall include an assessment (not a grade) of whether the thesis is in compliance with the requirements established by the academic unit and questions for academic discussion.

The student has a right to see the review of the thesis no later than one working day prior to the defence.

The defence of a bachelor's thesis is open to the public and takes place in the presence of the Defence Committee in the form of an oral presentation, with the order being announced previously by the crossmedia study specialist. It is recommended that the defender use illustrative material in the presentation. The oral presentation of the defender, together with the questions and debate, shall take 20-30 minutes. The defender must inform the crossmedia study specialist of the necessary requirements for technical aids when submitting the thesis.

Bachelor's theses are graded. The Defence Committee shall assess the thesis and the grade is determined on the basis of the thesis and the scholarly discussion that takes place during the defence.

The bachelor's thesis and its defence are assessed based on the following criteria:

1. Clarity and justification of the posed problem and clear wording of the objective
2. Novelty and actuality of the theoretical and statistical information which is reflected in the thesis and adequately presented
3. The author's original intellectual input
4. Build-up of the thesis and connectedness of the parts (compliance of the content with the title, compliance of the method with the objectives, compliance of the summary with the treatment of topic, etc.)
5. Knowledge of the literature and theoretical approaches corresponding to the topic
6. Mastery of the research methods (if applicable) used in the thesis
7. Format of the thesis (compliance with the APA standard and the current guidelines)
8. Linguistic level of the thesis (grammatical, orthographic and terminological)
9. Volume of the thesis (Does the content of the thesis justify its length? Does the thesis correspond to the number of the required working hours?)
10. Presentation of the viewpoints described in the thesis, argumentation and ability to answer questions during the public defence
11. Appropriate presentation at the defence of the material treated in the thesis by using modern IT tools or other aids

Generally, in writing the review of a bachelor's thesis, the above-mentioned points should be followed. The review should include a critical analysis and general evaluation of the thesis, as well as questions for the author if necessary.

A written review shall be presented orally at the defence by highlighting the main points. The author shall answer the reviewer's questions during the defence process.

The procedure for notification of the grade and entering the results in the minutes is established in the TU Study Regulations.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONTENT OF A BACHELOR'S THESIS**

### **Structure of a thesis**

The structure of a bachelor's thesis is as follows:

1. **Title page** – must include the signature of the supervisor proving that the thesis is allowed to proceed to assessment/defence. *A sample title page is given in Annex A.*
2. **Author's declaration** – includes a text in which: the student confirms that the thesis is in compliance with the valid copyright requirements; gives permission to store the thesis in the repository of TU Academic Library and make it available to the public; and the author's signature and date. *A sample author's declaration (non-exclusive licence to reproduce the thesis and make it available to public) is given in Annex B.*
3. **Abstract** – a short summary of the project, which correctly reflects its objectives and content (the length of text should be approximately 100-120 words).
4. **Table of contents** – presents all subsections of the thesis in exact accordance with the headings given in the thesis and the page number on which the corresponding subsection starts. The resume, abstract, introduction, summary, review of literature, list of abbreviations, tables and graphs, and annexes are listed in the table of contents, without pagination. All annexes are listed in the table of contents individually with headings. Page numbers should be at the upper right-hand corner of the page, starting from the second page of the introduction. The table of contents shall be formatted after pagination; it is recommended that pages are numbered only after the whole thesis is ready, in order to avoid confusion when numbering.

5. **Introduction** – (p. 1-3) sets out a presentation of the project, the importance of the problem, the purpose of the thesis, an explanation of what motivated the author to write on the given topic. The theoretical location of the thesis on the project landscape and the relevance of it are indicated. The introduction is not a chapter of the thesis; therefore, the text should not contain excessive data.
6. **The structural arrangement of the content** and the number of chapters depend on the type of project being presented (either crossmedia or transmedia project). The core part of the thesis must form a whole and be in a logical order. A brief overview of important thematic approaches and studies is given in the core part of the thesis.
  - *Theoretical part* – a brief overview of important thematic approaches is given (the theoretical research published around crossmedia and transmedia storytelling). The student must rely on original sources in the theoretical overview. It is recommended to select one main theory involving the whole topic and then contribute to this with other supporting theoretical approaches for a more thorough theoretical analysis of the topic. At the end of the theoretical part, an overview shall be given of the creative work.
  - *The creative part consists of two sub-parts:*
    1. General description of the project design and justification for the its choice, including the type of selected platforms; method of distribution; market analysis, target audience etc.
    2. Discussion and Reflexive Considerations - in this part, it is important that the project is analyzed in relation to the theoretical approaches of the thesis. In a bachelor's thesis, it is important that the author is able to critically analyse its own production together with the theoretical part. In a bachelor's thesis, it is acceptable for a descriptive-analytical treatment to be dominant, however the use of existing analytical models should be considered. If the student has made an important new discovery in the process of writing the thesis, then it shall be explained in detail in this part.
7. **Conclusion** – provides an opportunity for a brief generalization of the project and the arguments treated in the thesis. The conclusion should point out the strength and

weaknesses of the project, the limitations and significance together with the author's opinion with regard to further continuation of the project.

This chapter is for sharing the author's thoughts, conclusions, interpretations, etc. It must be kept in mind that the reader will look for alternatives to the conclusions drawn in the thesis. The author should anticipate this and be open to other possibilities as well.

8. **Review of literature** – a list of all sources referred to in the thesis. The number of references depends of the scope of the topic and the number of existing literary sources in the field. However, there should be at least 15 sources mentioned. In addition to classical theoretical approaches, it is also recommended that the author use as much new material as possible, i.e. material that has not been published any earlier than during the last 10 years. The author of a bachelor's thesis should use academic articles received from databases available at the TU Academic Library that are not older than 5 years. Exceptions to this are theses that rely only or for the most part, on classical theories.
9. **Annexes** – additional and illustrative results of data analysis (including tables and/or graphs, sample texts of interviews, pictures, etc.) that are necessary for understanding and assessing the thesis. Annexes must be referred to in the thesis. Annexes are listed as follows: ANNEX A, ANNEX B, etc. (annexes are not given page numbers) and their headings are given in the table of contents. Each annex begins with a new page.

### **Academic and ethical norms**

The final thesis must be in compliance with the American Psychology Association (APA) ethical guidelines for research publications ([www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)). Some important additional rules, which are also directly related to student papers, are given below:

1. Data, texts and citations of other authors must not be used without referring to the original source. Plagiarized papers shall not be allowed to proceed to assessment/defence. If plagiarism becomes evident during the defence, the author of the thesis shall be removed from the defence. Submission of another person's written work under your name or submitting your previously submitted work or parts of it without proper academic reference (plagiarism) is considered to be unethical behaviour and a disregard of academic practice.

2. The author of the thesis must have the permission of the owner or co-authors of data if he/she uses or analyses data collected in the framework of some other research work in his or her thesis (including situations where the author of the research paper participated in the research group or data collection).
3. Participation in a survey is voluntary. Each participant has the right to either not participate or to terminate their participation in a survey. This information must also be available to the participant, for example in the introductory text of a questionnaire.
4. In order to publish personal data, photos, video recordings, drawings and other materials, the author of the paper must have the written consent of the respective person or his or her authorized representative.

## **PRESENTATION STYLE OF A BACHELOR'S THESIS**

### **Page layout**

White A4 paper shall be used to present the thesis in written form. The text shall be typed on one side of an A4 page using line spacing set at 1.5. A line spacing of 1.0 is recommended for table headings, captions of graphs, long citations and in references (except between references). Font style should be Times New Roman with font size set at 12 points. Top, bottom and right side margins should be at least 2.5 cm; it is recommended that the left side margin should be at least 3 cm. The text alignment should be set to "justify text". The page numbers (regular text) shall be located at the upper right-hand corner of the page, beginning at the second page of the Introduction.

Emphasis on a word may be achieved by using "bold face" print, "italic" print or by use of extended spacing. The words must be emphasized systematically in the paper (if one term is stressed by "bold face" print, then another term should not be stressed using "italic" print). Do not over-emphasize.

### **Headings and titles**

The wording of a title should be as short as possible, but at the same time should accurately describe the content of the section.

It is not necessary to repeat the text of a more general title in the sub-headings.

The paper is divided into chapters and sections, which shall be given headings and the main part of the paper (chapters and sections) will be numbered hierarchically and with Arabic numbers (Chapter 1, Section 1.1, Subsection 1.1.1, etc.). The maximum depth of the chapter hierarchy is 4.

The headings of the main sections, introduction, review of literature and annex(es) shall be written in capital letters (except in the table of contents), the sub-headings in small letters (except the initial capital letter). There is no period at the end of a heading and hyphenation is not used. If there are two sentences in the heading, there is a period between the sentences, but not at the end of a line.

The main parts, resume, abstract, introduction, summary, literature review, annex(es) shall begin on a new page.

Two line spaces shall be left between the heading of the main part and the following text (1.5 line spacing each), two line spaces shall be left before and one line space after a sub-heading. The heading shall be moved to the following page if at least two lines of the text do not fit on the same page as the heading.

### **Thesis length**

Using a font style of Times New Roman, font size of 12 point and line spacing set at 1.5, the recommended volume of a final bachelor's thesis should be 40-60 pages or approximately 80,000 - 120,000 characters (without spaces).

The theoretical and empirical parts should be of more or less equal length.

### **Language**

The thesis is written in the language prescribed in the study program (English).

### **Style**

In writing a scholarly work, the text must be matter-of-fact, easily comprehensible and should not contain ambiguous expressions. Excessive eloquence and useless repetitions should be avoided. On the other hand, a laconic style might also make the text harder to understand.

As a rule, a scholarly text is presented in the passive voice (...was studied in, ...was used for measuring). The first-person form is used to give a personal opinion or stress personal input. As a rule, the third-person form is not used ("the author of the thesis posed the hypothesis....").

In writing, the student should keep in mind the following general requirements:

- Wording must be correct and logical;
- Use clear and exact language, generally recognized and established terminology;
- Expressions must be natural and simple;
- Do not exaggerate with foreign words;
- Avoid mistakes in translation;
- Avoid excessive use of words in a sentence;
- Avoid repetitions and complex vocabulary;
- Write as little as possible and as much as necessary;
- Avoid slang, the use of clichés and overly emotional phrases;
- Avoid excessive influence of foreign languages on the text of the thesis;
- It is recommended to use only generally known abbreviations, such as no., p., etc. Before creating an abbreviation, define it first through its complete spelling.

It is recommended to ask a fellow student or a colleague to read the thesis before submitting it. During the writing process the text becomes too familiar, thus contradictions, incomplete explanations and typos might go unnoticed.

NB! Before submitting the thesis, the thesis shall be given to the supervisor, who will give the final permission for submitting the thesis.

### **Tables and graphs**

Tables and graphs are numbered in sequential order (separately) and located in the text in the correct place after the corresponding reference in the text. The tables shall be given headings and graphs captions. The caption and heading text starts with a capital letter and there is no full stop at the end.

### **Annexes**

Annexes are marked with a capital letter in alphabetical order: Annex A, Annex B1, Annex B2 etc. If an annex includes tables, these are numbered respectively as *Table A1*, *Table A2*, etc.

Even if there is only one annex, the letter A is used in front of the number of the table to separate it from the table located inside the text.

The pages of annexes are not individually numbered; the number of the page on which the annexes start is noted in the table of contents where the headings of annexes are also listed.

## **Referencing**

A final thesis of Tallinn University should follow the American Psychological Association style, which is the most commonly used style in research publications and other publications:

- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). APA: Washington, D.C., fifth edition, July 2001. ISBN 1557987912

Use the most recent edition of the manual; the older editions do not include information on citing Internet and multimedia sources. The on-line versions of the style manuals can be found through search engines.

For an overview of referencing from the APA (6th edition) visit:

<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/referencing-tool/apa-6>

Referencing avoids conflict with copyright laws, allows the reader of the thesis to verify the correctness of the presented data and to follow the way in which conclusions presented in the thesis were reached. The information from the publications of other authors is mainly transmitted (referred to) in two ways - as a reference and as a citation.

Citing is authentic reflection of an original text in the original language or as a translation. A citation is presented in quotation marks or italics.

Referencing is a presentation that copies and/or comments on content from another author or source in free form (in your own words). Quotation marks are not used in referencing.

Plagiarism or theft of intellectual property is the publishing of another author's research or part of it, under your own name. Plagiarism may also constitute the use of other authors' sentences, thoughts, ideas or data, including electronic documents and Internet sources without proper referencing.

A reference within a text is included in the sentence; it does not exist outside of a sentence, not after a full stop but in front of it.

Sources that are used in writing the thesis and referred to in the thesis shall be mentioned in the review of literature. All data are taken from the title page of the source. If this data is incomplete or there is no title page, data are taken from other parts of the source.

The sources are presented in alphabetical order according to the authors' names.

Referencing is different inside the text and at the end.

**ANNEX A**

**Title page**

**Tallinn University**  
**Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communication School**

**First name and surname**

**TITLE OF THESIS**

**Bachelor's thesis**

**Supervisor:** *first name and surname*

**Approved for defence:** *supervisor's signature*

**Tallinn 20....**

**ANNEX B Non-exclusive licence to reproduce a thesis and make it available to the public and author's declaration**

**Author's declaration**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_)  
(name of author)

1. hereby declare that the thesis is the result of my independent research and that the research of other authors, major views in literature and data from other locations has been properly referenced.

2. I hereby grant Tallinn University a permit (a non-exclusive licence) to reproduce for free and make public in the repository of Tallinn University Academic Library, the Bachelor's thesis/Master's thesis:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Title of thesis)

written by me and supervised by \_\_\_\_\_,  
(name of supervisor)

3. I am aware of the fact that the author also retains the rights mentioned in Clause 2.

4. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe the intellectual property rights of other persons or the rights arising from the Personal Data Protection Act.

Author of thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

(Digital) signature and date

The thesis has been approved for defence.

Supervisor: (first name and surname, academic degree) \_\_\_\_\_

signature and date

The defence of the Bachelor's/Master's thesis shall take place in public before the Defence Committee of the Tallinn University Baltic, Film, Media, Arts and Communication School on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) 20... (year) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) in Tallinn, at the address \_\_\_\_\_ in the room \_\_\_\_\_.

## ANNEX C

### Evaluation Criteria for creative BA Theses of Crossmedia in Film and Television

#### Idea development - Transmedia bible (10% of the grade):

- **originality**
- **complexity**
- **social or artistic value**

**Originality:** assessment of the originality, newness and personality of the idea and approach of the transmedia project (depending on genre, format, means of storytelling and expression);

**Complexity:** assessment of the validity of the artistic, stylistic and technical means chosen for implementation of the transmedia idea and creative intention; coherence of the story world; capacity of sub-stories to stand alone; logic of migratory cues.

**Social value:** assessment of the project ability to engage audiences on various forms of interaction and/or participation depending on the genre of the transmedia experience.

#### Transmedia bible annex - Pre-production Document (10% of the grade):

- **content of the pre-production book**
- **meeting formal requirements, style and presentation**

**Content of the pre-production document:** assessment of the completeness, informativeness and content quality;

**Meeting formal requirements, style and presentation:** assessment of maintaining formal requirements, clarity and thoroughness of the various parts making up the document.

#### Implementation and execution of the Transmedia project (50% of the grade):

- **overall result and outcome**
- **platforms quality**
- **impact and artistic value**

**Overall result and outcome:** overall assessment of the creative quality and outcome of the transmedia work, realisation of the intentions from main important aspects (depending on platforms - writing, directing, camerawork, editing, producing), creative, artistic, journalistic etc. The highest grade could be considered for works what meet the level to be shown on crossmedia/transmedia festivals such as Filmteractive (accepting not fully implemented projects and student projects)

**Platform quality:** assessment of the technical quality of the work. Depending on the platform the commission would evaluate elements such as visuals and sound for audio-visual works and overall quality of both the writing and the 'packaging' of works such as books, board games, ARGs etc..

**Impact:** assessment of the artistic and functional impact of the work. The functional impact refers to the overall, and single platforms, project's effectiveness at engaging audiences in both in interactive and participatory elements.

**Final thesis (30% of the grade):**

- **content of the thesis**
- **quality of the critical-analytical and self-reflection part**
- **meeting formal requirements, style and presentation**

**Content of the thesis:** assessment of the completeness, informativeness and content quality; special attention will be given to the coherence of the overall thesis. Does the theoretical part shows a good understanding of the field? Is the selection of arguments well introducing the practical and reflective part of the thesis?

**Quality of the critical-analytical and self-reflection part:** assessment of the thoroughness of critical professional self-reflection; Particular attention would be given to question such as , does the self-reflection part well reflect the points brought forward in the theoretical part? Does the self-reflection offer critical and analytical considerations or does it presents just descriptive arguments?

**Meeting formal requirements, style and presentation:** assessment of maintaining formal requirements, clarity and thoroughness of the presentation.

Points, given by the members of the defence commission are summarised and arithmetic mean will be taken. The actual mean points are corresponding to following grades:

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| A 90-100 points -     | the student has performed an outstanding work   |
| B 80-89 points -      | the student has shown very good performance   |
| C 70-79 points -      | the student has performed well, but there are certain insufficiencies regarding the details                                 |
| D 60-69 points -      | the student has shown satisfactory performance, but there are certain insufficiencies regarding some basics and in details  |
| E 50-59 points -      | the student has shown weak performance, but has produced a work what still satisfies the minimum level required for passing |
| F 49 points or less - | the student has not produced a satisfactory piece as required   |