

Sensor guidelines for MEVIT/JOUR 4000

The aim of MEVIT/JOUR 4000 is to enable students to get started on their MA-thesis. Students who start early are more inclined to establish a good working routine and complete their theses on time.

Teaching for MEVIT/JOUR 4000 is partly in the form of lectures and participatory exercises and partly through working in groups with a supervisor. The course in 2018 began with a three-day kick-off and introductory lectures. Students were then assigned to groups based on topics chosen by students.

To pass the course, students must have passed a mandatory assignment and receive a passing grade on their project description. Students will then be assigned a supervisor for their thesis.

There are several formal criteria for how the project description should be. The assignment is presented here for the 2018 course:

https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/imk/MEVIT4000/h18/term_paper_mevit4000_jour4000_h18.pdf

General requirements to pass the term paper (project description):

- The project description is readable and understandable, the text is coherent (not just bullets points or an early draft).
- The project description shows that the student has a basic grasp of research design and the genre of project description. The different parts are connected, and the text is balanced between different parts.
- The project description must be focused on a specific study and should demonstrate that the student is able to carry out that study, within the time frame of an MA and using the indicated methods/approaches.
- The project description includes all seven items required.
- Formal requirements are in place: language, length, bibliography etc.

In addition, there are specific requirements:

1. *Working title:* The title is understandable, covers the subject area, and is relevant to media and communication research.
2. *Description of the research topic or area of interest:* The topic is described coherently, and its relevance for media and communication studies is clear. The description of the topic should show that the student has a good grasp of essential information and correct understanding of facts. *NB: Nordic media students must include a Nordic element (for example a comparative study, Nordic empirical material, theories/ideas about the Nordic model etc.). Journalism students must have a journalism-relevant topic.*
3. *Literature review [Review of relevant academic literature/Theoretical or academic context]* should create a scholarly/academic context for the thesis through a review of literature. A general requirement is that the literature review includes at least 5 (relevant) journal articles. The literature review can describe items of literature one by one, but it is an advantage if the discussion is integrated into a coherent text. The review shall show that students can find relevant literature and account for some key ideas, topics, and/or types of studies in the relevant field(s). A good review is systematic, discusses the literature independently, and uses the review to narrow down the topic and/or research questions.
4. *Research questions and/or hypotheses:* The project description must have suitable research questions. The questions/hypotheses may need of refinement, but a list of

(more or less) random questions is not acceptable. Beware of research questions that are too broad or normative, i.e. which do not point to a specific investigation. It should be possible to start the project with the research questions or hypotheses listed.

5. *An indication of possible methods and information about empirical data/material* must be included, at least on a cursory level. Methods and material must be specific to the project and not just general comments about methodology.
6. *Ethics*: A brief account of ethical issues must be included. Items will vary according to the methods chosen, but all should show some ethical awareness. If the project is going to include data about informants, most studies will need permission from NSD.
7. *Literature-list* with the literature used in the project description must be included. The bibliography shall follow the chosen standard. The list must include at least 5 journal articles. The list (or a separate list if the literature list is not sufficient) shall show that the student has self-selected literature of 400-600 pages. If journal articles or other items are missing, the rest of the review must be of high quality to get a passing grade.