

## **Evaluation of doctoral study - year 2012**

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In the following text, I will evaluate my first year as a Ph.D. student at the Masaryk University's Department of Sociology. The evaluation will be divided into three parts. Firstly, I summarize the courses which I attended during past two semesters while focusing on the relation of these seminars to my dissertation topic. Secondly, I briefly talk about conferences and other activities I took part in and finally, I shall assess the course of my studies regarding to my pre-set scheduled and sketch its future heading.

At the very beginning of the spring semester 2012, I enrolled for a course that helped me to enter the Ph.D. level and get my bearings in the new situation. In the *Dissertation Projects Workshop* led by Bernadette Nadya Jaworsky, Ph.D. and George Ligeti, (mainly first year) students were talking not only about their dissertation topics, but also about their plans and expectations when it comes to their academic career in general. The two lecturers outlined the issue of publishing (also known as "publish or perish") including possible obstacles faced by those willing to publish in international journals. Additionally, I received feedback about my project and the way I present them (both rhetorically and visually) on the academic soil. Within the following months, I entered two methodological courses. *Data Analysis - Qualitative Research: Introduction to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* was a five day course led by professor Jonathan Smith from Birbeck University of London. The classes were divided into two parts. During his lectures, prof. Smith was talking about the methodological approach introduced in his book *Interpretative*

*Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*, while in the seminars, we were trying to put acquired knowledge into practice. Although I do not plan to implement the interpretative phenomenological analysis into my dissertation research, I do find the seminar quite an exceptional and beneficial experience. First and foremost, prof. Smith seems to be a true expert in his field and the way he gives Ph.D. students an idea of how does the whole process of putting together a research projects and bringing it into live works is very educational and sharp. During the five days course, there was a lot of space for discussion not only with the lecturer but also among the students. Since the crowd was rather large and diverse (half of the students were Ph.D. candidates in psychology), one could put his or her own research into fresh perspective and receive an interesting impulses.

The second methodological course I have attended during the spring semester of 2012 was *Internet Based Research Workshop*. Since my dissertation is focused on the issue of new media, I have found this workshop not only interesting but also precisely fitting to my academic interest. Thanks to the course conducted by Bernadette Nadya Jaworsky, Ph.D., I got familiar with the literature covering Internet as a tool and object of research. The reading list included publications on methodology, namely *SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods* from (Fielding, Lee, Blank 2008), *Virtual Ethnography* (Hine 2000), or James and Busher's *Epistemological Dimensions in Qualitative Research: the Construction of Knowledge Online* (James, Busher 2009), but also covered the cultural sociology perspective with the article "The Rise and Fall of Cyberspace, or how Cyberspace Turned Inside Out" (Martin in Hall, Grindstaff, Lo 2010) and questions of ethics within internet based research. Additionally, I have spent spring semester

reading and discussing texts by Foucault, Gadamer, Adorno and Horkheimer within the *Texts from General Sociology* seminars.

During autumn semester, I have decided to devote less time to Ph.D. courses and focus more on different study activities such as reading relevant literature and attending conferences. I enrolled for two seminars, *Dissertation Thesis Seminar I.* and *Methodological Seminar*. Unfortunately, I must admit that out of three meetings that were held by professor Barša for the dissertation related course, I only visited one session. Due to the workload and then illness, I was unable to see two presentations of my colleagues with an exception of November session where Denisa Sedláčková presented her work on the relation between religiosity and Ukraine migrants. Hopefully, I will be able to attend all meetings during next semester when I enroll for the second part of the course. *Dissertation Thesis Seminar II.* requires students not only to attend their colleagues' presentations (and write text of their own) but also set up their own performance. At the *Methodological Seminar* meeting, I received valuable feedback from prof. Rabušic who gave advices to starting Ph.D. students. His main advice (or better said criticism) was that I shall narrow and clarify my research interest and (if possible) concentrate on local/Czech reality.

One of the most stimulating things I have experienced during the autumn semester was *Girls and Digital Culture: Transnational Reflections* conference. The event was organized by Department of Digital Humanities in cooperation with Department for Culture, Media and Creative Industries at the King's College London. With its focus on digital technologies in relation to gender equality issues, the conference precisely fit into my research interest. My paper „How to do Feminism? Blogging and New Media Activism as Contemporary Feminist Strategies“ which I presented within the section *Feminism in the Digital World* tightly correspond with the

thematic profile of the conference. Among other things, I mainly appreciate the great diversity of scholars and experts in the field who presented their work. Many papers dealt with slightly similar issue as I do but the rich variety of ways in which they approach these questions were undoubtedly inspiring. Last but not least, I had an opportunity to take part in many formal and informal discussions and establish several contacts which could be possibly beneficial in the future. Second conference which I attended (this time among the audience) was *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas in Sociological Research* in Bratislava. Additionally to completed courses and attended conferences, I was an opponent to five bachelor thesis and I supervised the organizational course of two bachelor state exams.

When it comes to comparison between my pre-set schedule and the actual course of my studies, I believe I have accomplished most of my goals. The only slight change I made to the schedule was that I chose to enrol for *Methodological seminar* instead of *Creative Writing in Sociology*. At the moment, I am working on the dissertation and getting ready for the presentation of my outcomes during a session which is organized by prof. Rabušić for those enrolled in *Methodological seminar*. The session will take place on 22th February 2013 between 9 am to 4 pm. Within the upcoming semesters, I intend to stick to the pre-set schedule when it comes to courses and seminars and work intensively on my dissertation. I also expect to attend more relevant conferences therefore I have recently submitted an abstract to the conference *Grounding Cosmopolitanism: Theory and practice through the prism of women's rights* that will take place at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul, Turkey.