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Master programme

Spatial Designs and Society

Roskilde University

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Do you want to become a design consultant and consumer researcher?

Spatial Designs and Society (SDS) is concerned with design in relation to consumer objects, places and design processes. We draw on human geography, anthropology, sociology and design studies.

You will conduct ethnographic fieldwork and become an expert in analyzing uses of designed objects and designed places out in the real world. The ethnographic training involves various qualitative social science methods as well as the use of photography, film and new media. Additionally, you will develop visualisation, mapping, design thinking and presentation skills. The programme collaborates with consultancies, strategic and innovation agencies, architectural offices, design studios and municipalities, and you will learn how to conduct research and write reports according to commercial briefs. You will acquire unique analytical and communicative skills, understand consumer practices, detect emerging trends, and advise on user needs, and learn to make your research relevant and usable for practitioners and design processes.

SDS will prepare you to work in the world of human centered design, on making designs more sustainable and places more liveable.

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Study structure

During your studies, you will have the opportunity to organise your own individual learning profile and your own independent specialisation in line with the problem-oriented, interdisciplinary and project-oriented approach to teaching at Roskilde University.

THE FORM OF STUDY IS A COMBINATION OF:

- › Problem-oriented group project work
- › Courses that take the form of classes in small groups, where active learning based on theories, methods, and relevant issues takes place, in an interaction between the teacher and the students.

Project work and guidance is given a high priority at RUC. It is also emphasised that you should gain experience with the production and processing of empirical data and the practical application of theory and methodology. In the Spatial Designs and Society programme you will also have the opportunity to work and cooperate with companies in both project work and courses.

All master's programmes offer the possibility of project-oriented internships and/or credit-bearing studies at other universities in Denmark or abroad.

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Structure and content

1. semester

Design objects and designed places in a consumer perspective

Courses:

- Experiences and Designed Places
- Ethnography and Spatial Analysis
- Consumption and Use of Design in Everyday Life

Project Work

2. semester

Design processes and social change

Courses:

- Design as a Socio-Technical System
- Design Processes and Entrepreneurship
- Optional such as GIS or Critical Urban Studies

Project work

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3. semester

Studies of design in practice

Courses:

- Live Cases: Consultancy in Practice
- Ethnography and Visualisation
- Optional such as Design Thinking

Project work or internship

4. semester

Specialisation – Master Thesis

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Student project and thesis examples

- › Light On! Light-based Art and the Making of Space
- › The City from Beyond: An Ethnographic Action-Based Approach to Drones, Telepresence and the Tourist Gaze.
- › The Effects of Urban Park Renewal in Gellerup-parken
- › Design at Work: A Spatial Analysis of a Journal Room at Hvidovre Libdrary
- › Co-Designing with Children
- › The Act of Waiting: An Enquiry of Waiting in Late-Modern
- › The Design Process of Cityringen
- › Biowaste in Copenhagen: An Evaluation of the Implementation
- › Verkstan: A Study of Co-creation Ideals in a Temporary Space Activation Project
- › A Designerly Dilemma: An Ethnographic Account of an Architectural Design Process
- › Research through Design: An Analysis of the

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Development of Options for an Architectural Competition

- › Using Ethnography in the Design Process: A Study of how Ethnographic Methods Contribute to the Design of a Shelf
- › The Lapee Experience: A Study of the User Experience of the Female Urinal Lapee at Roskilde Festival 2019
- › The Athletic Experience: Sports Facility Design in Scotland
- › Representing Visitor Experiences in Naturpark Amager
- › 'Unbox' Downsized Living: Understanding Living in Upcycled Student Dwelling through Material Culture Studies

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“Studying Spatial Designs and Society at Roskilde University, I learned concepts and methods to understand design processes and their relation to spatial situations. This helps me in evaluating new projects and is a useful background to support innovation processes. While studying, I especially enjoyed the applied character of the programme, the possibility to tailor the programme to my own interests through extensive project work and the low student-teacher ratio. The progressive urban development in Denmark was great for doing research during my studies, but also as a stand out point when applying for jobs outside of Denmark.”

Birk Diener

Project Manager Smart City, Swiss Federal Railways (SBB)

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Competences

WHAT COMPETENCES WILL STUDENTS GAIN?

Spatial Designs and Society will prepare you for jobs in a world where spatial designs are used to develop societies and make them more sustainable and liveable. Spatial Designs and Society gives you the skills to become a consultant, who can complete social scientific analyses of design processes in companies and to know how consumer objects and designed places are experienced and used by humans.

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Career options

SDS educates graduates able to act as consultants, researchers and managers and they find work within consultancies, research institutions, design agencies, municipal planning departments and cultural institutions, etc. Typical tasks include research and development, advising, project management, creative process facilitation, business development and communication. Given that the graduates will be fluent in English, they will be attractive to companies that work with international clients.

Jobs

- › Consumer Researcher
- › Project Manager
- › Design Consultant
- › Communications Officer
- › Process Consultant
- › Business Developer
- › User Experience Designer
- › Design Researcher

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‘Studying my masters at Spatial Designs and Society, I became increasingly curious of architecture and its surrounding social networks. I studied architecture from both the designers’ and the users’ perspectives. At one of Denmark’s largest and best renowned architectural offices, Henning Larsen, I now use this curiosity to bridge the gap between clients, users and architects. Among many things, interview techniques learnt at SDS enable me to understand both sides of architecture in an acquisition process.’

Liv Reese Bjarrum

Business Development Coordinator Scandinavia, Henning Larsen Architects

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Your education at Roskilde University

The 7 principles of PPL

Our educational model combines traditional course instruction with problem-oriented project learning (PPL). This educational structure allows you to fine-tune your education as you progress.

PPL is based on seven principles, which form the common benchmarks for the degree programmes at RUC.

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Princip #1 **Project work**

Project work teaches you to:

- Manage projects
- Manage time
- Think critically

Princip #2 **Problem orientation**

Problem orientation teaches you to:

- Define and identify challenges
- Use academic knowledge to solve problems

Princip #3 **Interdisciplinarity**

Interdisciplinarity teaches you to:

- Combine several areas of expertise
- Consider problems from new angles

Princip #4 **Participant control**

Participant control teaches you to:

- Clarify and convey your message
- Draw on other people's knowledge
- Give constructive feedback

Princip #5 **Exemplarity**

Exemplarity teaches you to:

- Apply your experience when tackling new and different challenges
- Establish a connection between the specific and the general

Princip #6 **Group work**

Group work teaches you to:

- Collaborate
- Build on your fellow group members' strengths

Princip #7 **International insight and vision**

International insight and vision teaches you to:

- Create value from academic and cultural diversity
- Understand your role in a global world

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Would you like to know more?

If you have any further questions about the programme,
you are welcome to contact us: sds-info@ruc.dk

You can also reach Study Guidance

Mail: vejledning@ruc.dk

Phone: +45 4674 2424

Monday – Friday 10.00 – 11.30

Udgivet af Roskilde Universitet

Department of People and Technology

Layout Malene Henssel

Fotos Lisbeth Holten, Colourbox, Jørgen Ole Bæhrenholdt

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Februar 2020

