



Middle European
interdisciplinary
master's programme in
Cognitive Science

MEi:CogSci Learning Contract

for the Mobility Semester



Erasmus+

1 Student Information

Student name	Zoe Viola Bergmann
Home University	University of Vienna, Austria
Student ID Number (Home University)	12215015
Degree Programme Code (Home University)	UA 066 013
Host University	University of Ljubljana

This learning contract ensures that the ECTS credits the MEi:CogSci-student acquires at the host university will be recognised at the home university. In order to make this contract valid, please follow the procedure below:

A) Preparation phase

1. **Planning of studies and courses at the host university:** Student fills out the semester contract in negotiation with local coordinator.
2. **Negotiation of Special Topic of Interest Module(s)/Mobility Project:** The student negotiates the *special topic of interest* (i.e., a cognitive phenomenon) they want to study and how (i.e., a combination of courses, lab work, self-study, literature used) with the supervisor.
3. **Concrete plan of the project:** The student specifies the work-plan for the module (elements of module, milestones, deliverables, dates,...).
4. **Acknowledgement:** The supervisor checks the contract and gives their OK;
 - a. The **student sends the LC to the local coordinators at the home and host university** (+ cc to the supervisor)
 - i. with the agreement sentence: "I agree to this learning contract"
 - ii. as a **.pdf only**
 - iii. adding their name to the title of the document, e.g. **SurnameName_LC_Mobility**
 - iv. with an email head of this format only: LC_ < student surname, first name> _ <supervisor surname>
 - b. **Supervisor acknowledges that they accept the proposal by replying to the email (reply to all).**
5. **Approval by the home university:** The local coordinator at the home university approves it or requests changes (go back to step 2)

B) Mobility phase

6. **In case of changes in project/planned courses:** the student has to inform the coordinators at the host and home universities immediately.
7. After finishing the project, the supervisor grades, signs and stamps the document.
8. Graded, signed and stamped Learning Contract is sent to the coordinator of the host university **within the specified deadline**.

C) Grading & recognition phase

8. **Final grading & recognition:** Original signed contract & certificates/transcripts are returned to coordinator at home university for grade recognition after the project has been finished.

2 Semester Contract

S-I-CS New Trends in Cognitive Science Module: 10 ECTS				
Course Title	Course Type	ECTS	Grade (host)	Grade (home)
Trends in Cognitive Science	Lectures, Seminar, Journal Club	10		
Module Grade				

S-I-PJ Special Topic of Interest (Project) Module: 15 ECTS				
Project Title	Supervisor	ECTS	Grade (host)	Grade (home)
The Lived Body In Menstruation	doc.dr. Toma Strle / assist. prof. and Maruša Sirk (M.Sc.)	15		
Course Title	Course Type	ECTS	Grade (host)	Grade (home)
Module Grade				

S-I Special Topic of Interest Module: 5 ECTS				
Course Title	Course Type	ECTS	Grade (host)	Grade (home)
Seminars in clinical neuroscience	Seminar	5		
Module Grade				

W-D-C Elective Module: 0 ECTS				
Course Title	Course Type	ECTS	Grade (host)	Grade (home)
Module Grade				

Date, Stamp & Signature of Local Coordinator
at **Host** University

Date, Stamp & Signature of Local Coordinator
at **Home** University

2.1 Additional ECTS

In case a student wants to acquire more than 30 ECTS during the mobility semester, the modules and courses need to be indicated on this page.

Module: A-D-PHI ECTS: 5				
Course Title	Course Type	ECTS	Grade (host)	Grade (home)
Creative movement and dance pedagogy (pef.uni-lj.si/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Creative_movement__Schmidt_Gersak.pdf)	Seminar	5		
Module Grade				

Date, Stamp & Signature of Local Coordinator
at **Host** University

Date, Stamp & Signature of Local Coordinator
at **Home** University

3 S-I-PJ Special Topic of Interest (Project) Module

Learning Outcomes*

Subject specific

- Advanced knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon from the perspective of at least two disciplines

Methodological

- Ability to approach a phenomenon in an interdisciplinary manner

Generic/Instrumental

- Ability to write and follow a project plan

Systemic

- Interdisciplinary work/thinking
- Project-oriented work and organisational skill
- Critical evaluation of approaches & methods
- Quick orientation & navigation in mother and/or novel complex field
- Change of viewpoint/perspectives (intellectual mobility)
- Phenomenon-oriented thinking
- Problem-solving abilities

*as defined in the MEi:CogSci curriculum

3.1 S-I-PJ Special Topic of Interest (Project) Module – Project Specifications

3.1.1 General Project Information

Title of Specialisation Project	Supervisor	ECTS
The Lived Body In Menstruation	doc. dr. Toma Strle / assist. prof., Maruša Sirk (M.Sc.)	15
Course Title (if applicable)	Course Type	ECTS
Teamwork/Co-Student (if applicable)		

3.1.2 Summary of Topic/Phenomenon (3000-4000 characters)

The experience of menstruation (hereafter also referred to as *menstruating/to menstruate*) has been of interest to researchers related to the field of cognitive science for decades, focussing on the intersections of biology, psychology, and neuroscience (Bancroft, 1995; Barbosa et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 1987; Dye et al., 1995; Roney & Simmons, 2017; Yao et al., 2022), as well as on philosophical, cultural and political perspectives (Frank, 2020; Hennegan et al., 2019, 2020; Kelland et al., 2017; Koutroulis, 2001).

Although scientists have identified diverse experiences related to menstruation worldwide, no study up to date has examined the *daily lived body experience of menstruation* using phenomenology. The few studies that incorporated phenomenological perspectives (Kelland et al., 2017; Koutroulis, 2001) or used phenomenologically informed interview techniques (Alkhatib et al., 2023) have focussed primarily on the social and cultural context of menstruators' experiences and the socially constructed embodied and embedded meaning of menstruation. Also, certain interest lies in experiences in formerly colonized countries where menstruation management and period poverty prevent severe cases for menstruators¹ (Alkhatib et al., 2023; Hennegan et al., 2019, 2020; Kelland et al., 2017). Another corpus of research on menstruation using phenomenology is specifically interested in period pain, also named dysmenorrhea, or in pain perception (Ní Chéileachair et al., 2022; Serrahima & Martínez, 2023).

However, this research project is interested in *what the lived bodily experience is like during menstruation*. Due to the use of descriptive methods in phenomenology and its certain interest in the lived experience as well as the lived body (Merleau-Ponty, 2012), a phenomenologically inspired approach to the research interest at hand presents an interesting venture. This research project is not interested in predefining the research interest any further and aims at exploring the phenomenon as it unfolds from the perspective and for the co-researchers².

Besides the phenomenon of menstruation itself, a focal point of this research project is an elaborate involvement with phenomenological research methodologies, such as descriptive experience sampling (DES; (Hurlburt, 2006; Hurlburt & Heavey, 2001) and micro-phenomenological interviews (Petitmengin et al., 2019). A rough plan for the research design is the following. Approximately seven to ten co-researchers are included in the study. Before diving deep into the lived bodily experiences, a first qualitative interview, inspired by a narrative interview (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016), is conducted with each co-researcher. By that the main researcher can get an overview of the co-researchers' menstrual history and their attitudes and beliefs towards menstruating and menstruation. Afterward, the co-researchers are asked to describe their bodily experiences during their next menstrual days in journal entries (min. once a day) and in notes, if possible, during the day. Lastly, on one of the last days of the co-researchers described menstrual days, a second interview is conducted which will be focussing on specific episodes of *what is it like to be a menstruating body* (inspired by micro-phenomenology). The decision on what aspect, situation, or notion to focus upon is yet to be made.

References

- Alkhatib, A., Wu, W., Alshikh Ahmad, H., Pakwan Suwal, R., Ni, Z., & Li, X. (2023). The experiences of menstrual symptom changes among international students studying in China during the acculturation period: A phenomenology study. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 10(2), 221–229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2023.03.004>
- Anderson, C., & Kirkpatrick, S. (2016). Narrative interviewing. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38(3), 631–634. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-015-0222-0>
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- Dye, L., Warner, P., & Bancroft, J. (1995). Food craving during the menstrual cycle and its relationship to stress, happiness of relationship and depression; a preliminary enquiry. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 34(3), 157–164. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0165-0327\(95\)00013-D](https://doi.org/10.1016/0165-0327(95)00013-D)
- Frank, S. E. (2020). Queering Menstruation: Trans and Non-Binary Identity and Body Politics. *Sociological Inquiry*, 90(2), 371–404. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soin.12355>

¹The term “menstruators” is used to prevent assuming gender and sex identification of co-researchers and potential readers who could imagine relating to the experiences examined.

²Since this phenomenologically oriented research project requires intense involvement and work by the most-often called “participants” or “research subjects”, the term “co-researchers” will be used in order to acknowledge their crucial role for the research process.

- Hennegan, J., Kibira, S. P. S., Exum, N. G., Schwab, K. J., Makumbi, F. E., & Bukenya, J. (2020). 'I do what a woman should do': A grounded theory study of women's menstrual experiences at work in Mukono District, Uganda. *BMJ Global Health*, 5(11), e003433. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-003433>
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- Yao, F., Zhuang, Y., Shen, X., & Wang, X. (2022). Attentional bias towards appealing and disgusting food cues varies with the menstrual cycle. *Appetite*, 175, 106063. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2022.106063>

3.2 Project Plan

The parties are aware that the project has to be finished by 16.02.2024.

Information on deadlines at host and home universities is available on the MEi:CogSci websites.

3.2.1 Project Steps

Literature Research			Total Working Hours (WH)/ECTS: 45 wh / 1,8 ECTS		
Working-package (WP)	Start – End	WH / ECTS	Activities	Resources required	Milestones (M)
WPL1	18.09. – 04.10.2023	25	Preliminary literature research, finding and defining research interest (RI) and approach	Laptop, access to internet and literature, Notebook, MS Word	M1
WPC2	07.07. – 04.10.2023	7	Meetings and digital forms of communication	Laptop, access to internet and literature, Notebook	M2
WPL1	05.10.2023 – 05.11.2023	13	In-depth literature research on the previously defined RI	Laptop, access to internet and literature, Notebook, MS Word	M1

Planning Means of Data Acquisition			Total WH/ECTS: 45 wh / 1,8 ECTS		
Working-package (WP)	Start – End	WH / ECTS	Activities	Resources required	Milestones (M)
WPPD1	05.10. – 25.10.2023	15	Planning of methodology and data acquisition, prepare data privacy documents	Laptop, access to internet and literature	M3
WPC2	04.10. – 31.10.2023	10	Meetings and discussions with Toma and Maruša regarding best scientific approach	Time and space	M2, M3
WPPD2	16.10. – 20.10.2023	10	Interview of myself (done by Toma and Maruša) to prepare and gain in-depth insights, study interview afterwards	Time and space	M4
WPPD3	06.11. – 20.11.2023	10	Get acquainted with the methods of micro phenomenology, supervised by Toma and Maruša	Laptop, access to internet and literature	M7

Data Acquisition/Collection				Total WH/ECTS: 70 wh / 2,8 ECTS	
Working-package (WP)	Start – End	WH / ECTS	Activities	Resources required	Milestones (M)
WPDC1	24.10. – 10.11.2023	25	Data Acquisition Phase 1: qualitative, narrative Interview with each participant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation + After-Care Mid – end of October 2023 	Laptop, recorder	M5
WPDC2	24.10. – 31.12.2023	20	Data Acquisition Phase 2: experience sampling via diary entries by each participant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation + After-Care Diary entries during one menstruation (approx. November and/or December 2023) 	Laptop, MS Word, access to the internet, and a video channel (both for communication; e.g., Zoom)	M6
WPDC3	27.10. – 15.01.2023	25	Data Acquisition Phase 3: pending but most probably micro-phenomenological inspired interviews with each participant about specific experiential episodes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation + After-Care Microphenomenologically inspired Interview in November/December 2023 	Laptop, recorder, access to the internet and the data acquired	M7

Data Analysis/Interpretation				Total WH/ECTS: 145 wh / 5,8 ECTS	
Working-package (WP)	Start – End	WH / ECTS	Activities	Resources required	Milestones (M)
WPDP1	25.10. - 01.12.2023	20	Preparing the data acquired in phase 1, interview transcription	Laptop, recorder, data acquired, MS Word, digital device that supports interview transcription	M8
WPDA1	25.10. - 01.12.2023	30	Data analysis phase 1: review and work with data acquired in the first qualitative interviews; potentially specify research interest and structure phases 2 (& 3) further	Laptop, access to internet and literature, data acquired, MS Word	M8
WPDA2	01.11. - 31.12.2023	30	Data analysis phase 2: review and work with data provided by co-researchers on their menstrual experiences – structure phase 3 and decide on micro phenomenological interview structure and interest	Laptop, access to internet and literature, data acquired, MS Word	M9

Data Analysis/Interpretation				Total WH/ECTS: 145 wh / 5,8 ECTS	
Working-package (WP)	Start – End	WH / ECTS	Activities	Resources required	Milestones (M)
WPDP3	27.10. - 31.01.2023	25	Preparing the data acquired in phase 3, interview transcription	Laptop, recorder, data acquired, MS Word, digital device that supports interview transcription	M10
WPDA3	01.12. - 15.02.2023	40	Data analysis phase 3: review and work with the data acquired in the second round of interviews with the co-researchers	Laptop, access to internet and literature, data acquired, MS Word	M10

Project Documentation				Total WH/ECTS: 70 wh / 2,8 ECTS	
Working-package (WP)	Start – End	WH / ECTS	Activities	Resources required	Milestones (M)
WPD1	01.10.2023– 16.02.2024	15	Writing the LC and report on the project as required	Laptop, access to internet and literature, MS Word	M11
WPD2	01.02. – 16.02.2024	55	Extended project report	Laptop, access to internet and literature, data acquired, MS Word	M12

Abbreviations

M: Milestone(s)

WPL: Work Package Literature Research

WPC: Work Package Research Collaboration

WPPD: Work Package Planning Means of Data Acquisition

WPDC: Work Package Data Acquisition/Collection

WPDA: Work Package Data Analysis/Interpretation

WPD: Work Package Project Documentation

3.2.2 Project Milestones

Mile-stone	Result/"Product" and/or Deliverables
M1	Literature research and review of the current state of the art in feminist phenomenology and embodiment as well as exploring research on menstruation.
M2	Working collaboratively on the research design and the specification of my personal research interest; guidance by experienced researchers.
M3	Planning data acquisition in the realms of phenomenology, circling DES, phenomenological interview techniques (e.g., micro phenomenology).
M4	Gathering experience to be interviewed on the phenomenon of interest, menstruation; preparation for being the main researcher while being aware of the crucial role of the co-researchers.
M5	Choosing a suitable interview technique to start data collection phase 1; preparing and conducting qualitative interviews with co-researchers; coordinating and functioning as the main contact person.
M6	Getting acquainted with descriptive experience sampling and preparing the data collection 2 phase; coordinating and functioning as the main contact person.
M7	Getting acquainted with micro-phenomenology as interview technique and preparing the data collection 3 phase; preparing and conducting qualitative interviews with co-researchers based on their diary entries/ phase 2; coordinating and functioning as the main contact person.
M8	Preparing the data (esp. transcribing the qualitative interviews) and analyzing the data of phase 1.
M9	Preparing the data (esp. getting acquainted with how to work with the DES inspired data) and analyzing the data (diary entries) of phase 2.
M10	Preparing the data (esp. transcribing micro phenomenologically inspired interviews) and analyzing the data of phase 3.
M11	Planning and specifying a research project and writing the ERASMUS learning contract.
M12	Writing up the main project results and scientific insights gathered within the research project, incl. overview of literature, methods, data, and personal learnings.

3.3 Short Project Report (~1 page, 3000-5000 characters)

To be written.

Final grade for the project

____ / ____

Host Grade / **Home** Grade
(see grade conversion matrix on last page)

Date, Stamp & Signature of Supervisor (Host University)

Grade Conversion Matrix

BRAT		BUD		LJUB		VIE		ZAG	
A	výborne (excellent)	5	jeles (excellent)	10	odlično (excellent)	1	sehr gut (excellent)	5	odličan (excellent)
B	vel'mi dobre (very good)	4	jó (good)	9	prav dobro (very good)	2	gut (good)	4	vrlo dobar (very good)
C	dobre (good)	4	jó (good)	8	prav dobro (very good)	2	gut (good)	4	vrlo dobar (very good)
D	uspokojivo (satisfactory)	3	Közepes (fair)	7	dobro (good)	3	befriedigend (satisfactory)	3	dobar (good)
E	dostatočne (sufficient)	2	Elégséges (satisfactory)	6	Zadostno (sufficient)	4	genügend (sufficient)	2	dovoljan (satisfactory)
F	nedostatočne (insufficient)	1	Elégtelen (fail)	5	nezadostno (insufficient)	5	nicht genügend (insufficient)	1	nedovoljan (insatisfactory)