THLE Project: Creating the Specialization in International Relations, Diplomacy and Conflict Studies

PURPOSE
The purpose of this project is to outline the issues that may arise when planning and carrying out an MA specialization. It covers the main challenges and tools for handling them. Based on experiences with creating and starting the Specialization in IR, Diplomacy and Conflict Studies at the University of Copenhagen, the project argues that the specialization format is particularly well fit for enabling deep learning as it provides an intensive and socially integrated learning room.

MOTIVATION
Drives to make the students finish on time, to attract international students and to create a more intensive and integrated student environment on the MA levels of Danish universities have sparked an increase in the creation of 1 year MA specializations. The specializations typically consist of a thematic approach to be covered in one semester and to be completed with an MA thesis in the second semester of the specialization. Creating such integrated learning format carries both opportunities and challenges crucial to be aware of when embarking upon such an ambitious project.

RELEVANCE
The project should be useful to colleagues who intend to begin an MA specialization as well as departments planning to implement MA specializations. The guide is based on experiences from the *Specialization in International Relations, Diplomacy and Conflict Studies* at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen, but can be applied across faculties.

The project first describes how the specialization came about and lays out the organizational structure of the specialization. Second, the alignment of the learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks are analysed. Thirdly, the main benefits and challenges experienced are discussed and ideas of encountering these are suggested. Finally the project provides a short guide of *How to do a Specialization.*

How the specialization came about?
This section describes the institutional grounding of the specialization and the academic and pedagogical purposes of creating the specialization.

INSTITUTIONAL GROUNDING AND ORGANIZATIONAL SETUP
In the Spring 2014 the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen made a call for MA specializations.

The department has a large, enthusiastic and internationally recognized international relations environment. It therefore seemed natural to make a proposal for an advanced MA in international relations (IR). In addition, Professor Ole Wæver had recently gained a large grant to establish the Centre for Resolution of International Conflicts (CRIC). The field of conflict studies had in Denmark laid silent since the 90s and students interested in conflict studies had to go to Sweden or other countries to follow their interests. From this new centre it also seemed natural to create a specialization in conflict studies. In addition, during the recent years the department had managed to gain funding for a large cohort of researchers in the field of International Political Economy; from these came another specialization. As the IR group met at the biannual research meeting it was communicated from the leadership team that three IR specializations were unlikely to be approved. As it was felt that the areas

of IR and conflict studies could be combined in an attractive and innovative programme, we decided to suggest a combined specialization: The Specialization in International Relations, Diplomacy and Conflict Studies.

Since we have a very strong IR tradition at the department and a great number of excellent students interested in international relations our point of departure was to create a specialization with an ambitious academic setup. We even put in the proposal that the specialization was *"for students who want to work harder, read more and think more."*

The specialization was driven by an academic and educational interest in offering our ambitious IR students better opportunities to engage with the vivid academic community in this field. In addition, the specialization should allow the students a more structured MA process and the possibility of specializing in a more specific field of studies. From the department the format was predefined as covering one year of MA studies: one semester of courses and one semester of MA thesis writing. The department allocated no predefined financial or hourly compensation for creating and carrying out the specialization.

The organizational structure was from the beginning loosely defined consisting of a team of four members who had been active in designing formulating the two specialization proposals. As such the group members were imagined to work in collaboration, contributing each their inputs into the specialization. It was, however, decided to have one designated project leader as overall responsible for carrying out the organizational setup of the specialization. Additionally, it was valued to have a relatively small team of researchers develop the specialization, each researcher representing his/her expertise to be covered in the specialization. The purpose of this was to limit disagreements and to allow the students to get relatively familiar with the researchers and approaches on the specialization. The combination of researchers at different academic levels was not deliberately planned, but I think this collaboration between researchers from different generations and experience generated a beneficial learning environment.

The team members are:
Project leader, Lise Philipsen, Postdoc
Ole Wæver, Professor in International Relations and director of CRIC
Rebecca Adler-Nissen, Associate professor in International Relations
Isabel Bramsen, PhD student

The specialization was passed in the study council to start from the fall 2015. The legal frame as given in the curriculum for the MA degree in political science is:

4.1.5 Specialisation in International Relations, Diplomacy and Conflict Studies

Successful completion of this specialisation gives graduates the right to use the title: MSc in Political Science with specialisation in International Relations, Diplomacy and Conflict Studies. Students who specialise in International Relations, Diplomacy and Conflict Studies must take exams in a compulsory course package consisting of one compulsory graded seminar – Approaches to International Conflicts: From Theory to Methods (15 ECTS credits), – and optional elements prescribed to a total of 15 ECTS credits approved by the co-ordinator for the specialisation. The course package for this specialisation is run in the autumn semester.

PURPOSES OF MAKING THE SPECIALIZATION
One of the main motivations of the specialization was to give the students access to research based teaching. With a vibrant and highly productive IR community among both scholars and students at the department, we felt we should offer the students the opportunity to follow this interest in a high

quality academic environment. Along these lines nurturing of the soil from which we breed IR scholars should also benefit the academic community of IR at the department and in Denmark in the future.

Another motivation was that the specialization would de facto be the first and only university education in peace and conflict studies in Denmark. The hope was here to create an internationally unique programme attracting students from all of Denmark and the world. It later turned out that study regulations to a very large extent impeded this purpose, because we are only allowed to accept students, who have a BA in political science equivalent to the one offered at the University of Copenhagen.

Also, better support in the area of training students at the MA to become more independent and comfortable academics capable of academic argumentation, structuring of research designs has been a felt need for many years in the department. Perhaps particularly in the area of IR, where students cannot as meaningfully create very schematic methodological setups – due both to the complexity of our empirical material and the high value we put on theoretical reflection. It has been a concern in the department that we often leave excellent students abandoned by not offering solid training in doing IR analysis. This focus on teaching students the link between theory and application has consequently been a general focus through the process.

Finally, a motivation was the felt need to create a more socially and academically coherent learning environment on the MA of the department. While the department in many ways sustains a closely knit community among the BA students where courses are pre-given and highly structured in terms of lectures and outcome, many MA students feel isolated and travel abroad to get the experience, both socially and learning wise, of being part of an integrated student community. Outside the specializations, the MA at the department consists of unconnected elective courses. Thus, following a specialization is the only way of taking a coherent package of courses with a particular thematic direction.

ACADEMIC CONTENT AND COMPETENCE GOALS

The format of the lectures was shaped in cooperation between the four key lectures. We met several times to discuss the purpose and format of the lectures. From the beginning the idea was to conduct the teaching along two tracks – one theoretical and one methodological.

The theoretical course with a substantive amount of reading and advanced theoretical abstraction runs along the semester in weekly lectures giving the students time to read and prepare. This course was mainly teacher driven and largely focussed on deductive reasoning, although not necessarily deductive learning.

The methodological "course" was shaped as two intensive week-long workshops. These workshops were largely student driven and with an emphasis on inductive learning.

The first workshop was focussed on tying together theory and practice –enabling the students to grasp and practice what practitioners working with conflict resolution and mediation do. Here students gained hands-on experience with and understanding of practices of addressing and diplomatically handling international conflicts. The second workshop emphasised the tying together of theory and analysis: enabling students to practice the skills of academics developing a research design. The workshop format provides the students with deeper knowledge and rehearsal of the analytical skills of academic conflict analysis, creation of a scientific argument, in addition to more methodological concerns of structuring a research project. Both workshops involved oral and written presentation skills.

While the lecture-based course was shaped in a more traditional sense, conventional teaching methods were challenged in both courses. First of all the theory course was envisioned as a highly ambitious programme with the ambition of letting the students practice understanding very different

approaches to understanding conflict, reflecting on advantages and disadvantages of these and potentially combining them. In the workshop format the traditional format of lectures was changed in order to inspire the students to work in depth and intensively with theories and cases.

Observations and Analysis: How the specialization worked out

During many and vivid discussions among the specialization team the intended learning outcomes were developed – although they were not always clearly explicated. This project should help do that. Hopefully enabling a clearer coherence between courses and classes and giving the students a clearer idea of the purpose of the different parts of the education.

ALIGNMENT OF INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES, TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENT TASKS

The specialization is developed from a constructivist learning strategy where the assumption is that students learn a theory by actively applying it. It is the activities of the students – not the teachers – who create learning.

When designing an education it is beneficial to think about the extent to the intended learning outcomes align with the teaching and learning activities and the forms of assessment – so called constructive alignment (Biggs and Tang 2007: 59; Biggs and Tang 2011: 95 ff). Constructive alignment is the *"alignment between the skills, knowledge and understanding that are important to the subject"*(4). In such outcome based teaching you ask: What do I intend my students to be able to do after my teaching that they couldn't do before, and to what standard? How do I supply learning activities that will help them achieve those outcomes? How do I assess them to see how well they have achieved them? (Biggs and Tang 2009)

In terms of the SOLO taxonomy this means moving from the *unistructural ability to* memorize, identify, recite, describing and classifying to comparing and contrasting to explaining, arguing, analyzing and finally theorize, hypothesize, reflect and improve, invent and generalize (Biggs and Tang 2009).

Using intended learning outcomes consistently for planning lectures and assessment tasks may also help to engender deep versus surface learning (Samball et al.: 11). The teaching designs and methods should here be aligned to the intended learning outcomes.

AIMING FOR DEEP LEARNING

Our main approach to teaching on the specialization was devoted to deep learning – an attentiveness to teaching the students to really understand the theories of the course on a sophisticated and applied level.

The characteristics of the deep learning approach is to search for meaning by relating ideas to previous knowledge and experience, looking for patterns and underlying principles, examining logic and argument. Deep learning builds on a constructivist learning approach focussing on how students' won practices generate learning in opposition to surface learning where teaching is seen as a one way distribution of information from teacher to student (Biggs and Tang 2007, Richardson 2007). This stands in opposition to surface learning, which focuses on learning as reproduction of facts unconnected to each other and strategic learning directed at achieving the highest possible grade (Entwistle et al., 2001). The main point is activating students by going beyond one-directional learning (Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse 1999).

These qualities manifest themselves in student performance as:

1. Enhanced understanding (Bodner 1986);
2. Enhanced comprehension (von Glaserfield 1987; Leonard and Penick 2000);
3. More spontaneous venturing of ideas (Chin and Brown 2000)

4. More elaborate explanations that describe mechanisms and cause–effect relationships (Entwistle and Hounsell 1975) or refer to personal experiences (Brookfield 1985)
5. Questions that focus on explanations and causes, predictions, or resolving discrepancies in knowledge and engaging in theorising (Chin and Brown 2000); and
6. Constructing more elaborate, well-differentiated knowledge structures (Pearsall, Skipper, and Mintes 1997).

Our approach to deep learning was a combination of deductive and inductive strategies. Specific attention was devoted to theory understanding at a sophisticated level combined with problem-based learning, taking its point of departure in different conflict cases to be understood and analysed by the taught theories.

Problem-based learning begins when students are confronted with an open-ended, ill-structured, authentic (real-world) problem and work in teams to identify learning needs and develop a viable solution, with instructors acting as facilitators rather than primary sources of information (Prince and Felder). Here the examples of Syria, Nagorno-Karabaksh, Mali, and others were analysed. In the mediation exercise in workshop 1 a hypothetical land conflict (Palmyra) was used. In some instances the cases were chosen by the lectures to enable maximum theoretical value, whereas in the more intensive workshop sessions they were chosen by the students in order to take students' own motivation into account.

CREATING AUTHENTICITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES
The most successful teaching outcomes are created when teaching and learning materials, tasks and experience are authentic, real-world and relevant; constructive, sequential and interlinked; require students to use and engage with progressively higher order cognitive processes; are all aligned with each other and the desired learning outcomes; and provide challenge, interest and motivation to learn (Meyers and Nulty: 567).

While it is clear that authentic assignment are motivating and easier to comprehend it is not always so easy to say what an authentic task in IR is, as IR is a highly theoretical academic field.

We did however stress authenticity in three different ways. The most obvious one was in the first workshop where the students made stakeholder analyses along the lines of what policy analysts, for instance in the UN system, would make. They also practiced conflict mediation. In the second workshop the students practiced academic analysis. This is an authentic tasks for IR scholars – and I think it is important that the student practice academic analysis and scientific argumentation in its own right: Conducting good, consistent academic analysis, I would argue, is the most authentic tasks one can conduct within this field. As a third way of generating authenticity lectures highlighted how each theory was used by different practitioners drawing on concrete examples of policy and anecdotes, helping the students reflect on how theory shapes practice and political choices.

Group work is another learning activity we used to a large extent. The first groups were formed to create more student involvement in the lecture driven course approaches. Surprisingly, the use of groups in these lectures worked less well. It was as if students felt they had to thread on ground they did not yet feel qualified to. This raises the question of how much independence you can expect from students when you embark on difficult and complicated academic material and how early. How to sustain deeper understanding of such complicated material, for instance by repetition and returning to the material, is an aspect that could be developed further in the specialization.

The group work in workshop 1 and 2 was conducive both for generating ideas, creating projects, doing analysis, providing feedback and for discussion and debate. Group work seems particularly apt when employing such intensive weeklong learning sessions and in this setting seemed to work very fruitfully.

FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT TASKS: USING FEEDBACK FOR LEARNING
Ramsden points to how the focus of students is primarily on the exam and getting a good grade (Ramsden 2003: 3). For this reason it is important that the exam is aligned to the kind of learning you wish to achieve. As Meyers & Nulty point out learners' progress often results in, and is motivated by, the realization that one's current level of understanding is inadequate in some way. However, as a result of an exam this information is often lost, because the student's feelings of disappointment impede their ability to use criticism as a motivator for further learning. Often exams are also followed by a holiday, break in studies, or even shift in academic direction. These are all things that hinder feedback from being used constructively in future learning.

Different assessment formats were chosen for the two courses. For the lecture based course the exam was a free written graded exam. The assessment tasks for the workshop sessions were more process oriented with several oral and written assessments both individual and group based. The course is graded as a pass/fail course based on active attendance and passing two written assignment amounting to a total of minimum 10 pages.

In terms of teaching development, I devoted particular attention to the second workshop. In my experience, the ability to combine theory and methods in a substantial, reflexive and coherent research design is a felt need among both students and lecturers in the department. This creates a lot of unfruitful frustration and insecurity, which could be used actively as a driver for research. Hence the purpose of designing the second workshop as student driven and with a whole week devoted to developing a research design, in groups and individually.

The pedagogical purpose of the second workshop was to devote explicit attention and time to the process of developing a coherent research design. This design was then to be used in writing the substantial free written paper for the theory course. However, this kind of exercise does not correspond to the study regulations, because it does not generate finished individual research papers based on predefined literature, for this reason we have now changed the formal organization of the courses. This enables that the workshop format can be used to devote substantial time and resources to generate a project design, that literature can be chosen according to this specific research problem, and that the assessment tasks can be shaped as group work and poster presentations.

The workshop based kind of learning integrates and shifts between the processes external interaction process between the learner and his or her social, cultural or material environment, and an internal psychological process of elaboration and acquisition both crucial to learning (Illeris 2009: 8). Peer assessment has been shown to be very efficient and stimulating for students (Williams 1992). It challenges the students to assess each other according to the criteria they feel are important – which can then be discussed, allowing the student a familiarity with the aims. Peer assessment was particularly used in the second workshop with great success. The group work and feedback enabled students to more efficient build on each other's ideas. More ideas for inspiration were generated and more opportunities for deep supervision were enabled – all contributing to deep learning (Burnett et al 2003). This setup enabled students to practice explicating theories and research design and strengthened their argumentation, which became clearer and more scientific. In this way peer feedback facilitates self-regulation by making the students explain research designs to each other, clarifying inconsistencies and answering critical questions from peers and supervisors (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2005).

The table below sums up how the intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks were aligned.

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Learning goals[1]	Teaching and learning activities	Feedback and assessment tasks
Deep learning Supporting learning as a continuous process	• Working intensively with one author/theory at the time • Using smaller assignments that are followed up on subsequently (the workshops in particular)	• Free written assignment (Approaches course) • Feedback on different smaller assignment to be used prospectively to generate further knowledge rather than evaluatively
Applied analysis How to tie theory to methods in academic work. Application of theories.	• Rehearsing application in the workshops • Reflecting on political implications of the different theories	Workshop projects 1. Applied conflict and stakeholder analysis 2. Development of research design
Reflection	• Learning as a process between: • Development of ideas: individually and then in groups. • Formulations of research questions and designs: In groups and then individually • Group discussions with researchers	Feedback: • As selfdirected in group (discussion of research designs and questions) • On poster presentations from peers and supervisors • On individual papers in peer groups and individual written comments from supervisor.

Reflections and Suggestions for Future Practice

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SPECIALIZATION

One of the main benefits of carrying out the specialization in a team of lecturers was that a common platform for pedagogical discussion amongst colleagues was created. This allowed for interesting discussion, continuous development of the specialization and learning from more experienced lecturers, as well as from other fields. For instance, the specialization team learned how practioners' work and conflict mediation could be integrated in teaching. This was a particularly fruitful aspect of developing the education.

The most important implication to be drawn from the experience of developing the specialization in IR, Diplomacy and Conflict Studies is the unique learning room that a specialization provides. With relatively small means a closely-knit student community can be generated. Socially and academically the advantages of such student community are huge.

A social and academic network: Firstly, the students gain a network of fellow students with whom they can join different events related to their common academic interests. This not only provides them information of relevant academic events, but also extra incitements for attending (and perhaps arranging) them, as well as a platform for academic discussion of subjects related to this academic field. In my opinion, one of the best ways to practice analytical skills is precisely such kind of knowledge generation, construction of arguments in relation to academic positions, debates and deliberation.

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[1] This section can be expanded by detailing intended learning outcomes of a more specific character.

Development and reflection on teaching methods and outcomes: Secondly, the specialization has allowed us as teachers to develop academic thoughts and experimenting with different ideas. By sharing knowledge in a team of lecturers we have expanded our scientific horizons, gained new knowledge and ideas. And we have learned from different ways of teaching. This was possible because the team of teachers on the specialization each contributed particular expertise and enthusiasm, as well as a willingness and ability to bring this into play with other fields of knowledge - in addition to a not insubstantial amount of time for developing and discussing the format of the specialization.

Deep learning: Thirdly, by employing a combination of deductive and inductive learning strategies with an explicit focus on 'learning by doing' the student were able to gain familiarity with the art of academic analysis and reflection on a sophisticated level and to practice concrete methods and tools for generating and structuring a research design. That the students were independently able to create novel research designs and reach new academic insights indicates deep learning.

Academic learning and exploration: Fourthly, and as a result, the students have provided interesting insights and novel theoretical frameworks, which have inspired our work academically providing us with knowledge of how different theories work in different ways and how they can be utilized in combination with each other. This enables us as academics to work with students as partners and to embark on genuine dialogue with students to the advantage of students and researchers alike (Cook-Sather et al: 2014).

IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE SPECIALIZATION

Constructive alignment: While I feel the intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks were well aligned, the specialization could be improved by making these more explicit and repeating them in each class. This would create more coherence across lectures, which was one of the main points of criticism from the students on the specialization. It would also be interesting to co-create learning outcomes with the students. The specialization assumes that students lack training in practicing applied analysis. Here the students' pre-knowledge could have been utilized better to make student preferences clear.

Addressing student motivation: We did not explicitly seek to identify student motivation, but addressed it in assuming that the students had an interest in practicing their analytical skills and an interest in contemporary conflict theories. However, as this is described in the course description, we can assume that the students have an interest in these theories. Here we used our own research as motivation along the lines of enabling research driven work. We could perhaps have directed the lecture based course more to the interests of our students, rather than our own research interest. Instead, we placed value on the students being able to be part of our academic reflection practices and on delivering real time research based teaching. While this allows for a lively and dynamic teaching environment, one disadvantage is that teaching in this inductive manner is much less structured. This evidently frustrated the students.

Diversity in students' academic level: The specialization built on the assumption of our students as active, hardworking and academically sophisticated. Most of the students lived up to these characteristics, but some did not. We largely failed to address this diversity in student skills. This is another issue, which could be encountered by involving students' pre-knowledge more actively. On the other hand, I also feel there is a potential to utilize the competences of excellent students more, for instance by integrating their knowledge in a more structured way in classes.

Organization of the specialization: When the practical format and time schedule was developed advice from the specialization in public management was invaluable. At the same time it quickly became clear that the two specializations consist of very different students, fields and lecturers. This makes a huge difference. In the first year of the specialization content was prioritized over form. While

the academic content of the specialization was the main motivation for the lecturers and they felt quite comfortable with the loose structure, the students were clearly less comfortable with it.

Here it is crucial that you are aware of your own (lack of) organizational skills. Ideally a specialization should have a non-academic administrator. Unfortunately, resources in the department do not allow for this. In the absence of such organizational support it is crucial that tasks and responsibilities are clearly designated at the beginning of the programme and that authority follows responsibility so that decisions made are not questioned at a late(r) stage by other team members – in particularly not in class. Most importantly it has to be established who has the authority to make decisions.

HOW TO DO A SPECIALIZATION

The following is a short guide of things worth considering when doing a specialization.

Organizational setup

The who of the specialization is extremely important in getting your specialization accepted among leadership and the study council. It is also worth considering in how the academic setup of the specialization is to be constructed. The different researchers that run the specialization are decisive in shaping the content and form of the specialization. In my opinion, it is a good idea not to have too many members in the specialization team. In this case, the people involved in carrying out the specialization was made up as a combination of mixing different academic abilities, balancing contributions from the fields of IR and conflict studies, and who had an interest in contributing to the specialization. It is evident that cooperation will benefit from a team who enjoy working together.

Structures of power

Connected to this a major theme to consider is the structures of power involved in the specialization in combination with the tasks of each of the team members. The most important thing is here to make sure that authority follows responsibility. Often a less senior researcher will be responsible for the organizational structuring and carrying out of the programme. Together with this responsibility should follow the authority to make decisions on behalf of the team and not be questioned on these. Try to think in advance of what problems may arise and how they could be solved in a fruitful manner.

Structuring of time

If at all possible, the department should allocate a number of hours devoted to administering and developing of the specialization. This needs to be covered in order to plan what resources can be spent to improve the specialization. Are there resources for collaboration and coordinating with other courses at the department? What about guest lectures and other events outside the formal teaching of the program? Is there allocated extra time for developing new courses and for innovative teaching methods for instance extra feedback?

In alignment with this, a time schedule with deadlines for each task of each member of the specialization team should be agreed upon and followed. One way of dealing with slipping deadlines is to work with dual deadlines, one for when material must be ready internally, and one where all material from the different lectures must be collected and finished for distribution to the students. If internal deadlines are not met, a plan B on how to handle this should be agreed upon. One way of diminishing these problems is to avoid collaboratory teaching, but despite the organizational challenges that are inevitably a part of this, experiences from the specialization suggests that the added value of collaboratory teaching weighs out the organizational hurdles.

Formal rules and procedures of acceptance

Find out what the formal rules of acceptance given by the department are so that you do not waste your own or students' time advertising in irrelevant forums. Also, when planning the courses of the specialization be aware of whether the formal rules will suit the educational setup and aims you want to achieve. Keep in mind how many of the same type of exams and when your students can expect. In this specialization we experienced that many students had three large written exams due in mid-December, almost immediately after lectures end. This is not helpful if you want to encourage careful reading of texts and a more thought through process ahead of project deadlines. On this specialization we changed the formal structure from two courses to one, even though the format with one theoretical course and two workshops was maintained. This allows us to work accumulatively with developing research design across courses and to use group work and peer feedback as part of the assessment tasks. This structure also means that students have only one major written assignment as part of the specialization, where the work from the workshops can be used cumulatively in writing this final project paper.

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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES
It is a good idea to make a schedule of activities and plan accordingly already from the beginning of the year. Here is one proposal, which may be followed for a specialization that runs in the autumn semester.

To do before the specialization begins:

- Time schedule for planning the specialization
- Description of the study design ready and passed in the study council
- Courses format (seminars or courses, number of ECTS, electives accepted as part of the specialization etc.) decided
- Deadlines for final version of lecture plans/syllabus established
- Tasks, time allowance, authority and responsibilities of the different team members of the specialization must be clearly allocated and detailed

January: Master thesis supervision sessions begin.

February: Intensive work in the MA thesis groups.

January – March: Introduction meetings. Establishing/updating Facebook page. PR in relevant settings: e.g. posters, folders and info messages to be posted on student forums at the relevant university educations. Contacting student advisory centres to ask if they will distribute information about the specialization. Be aware of what students can be accepted to the specialization.

March – June: Answering questions related to joining the specialization.

June 1: Deadline for applications.

June: Assessment of applications, acceptance into the specialization and acceptance letters to be sent out. Creating a Facebook group for accepted students.

August: Welcome letter and perhaps introductory arrangement. Planning of lectures and workshop including contacting and finishing arrangements with guest lecturers. Finished lecture plan and syllabus to be distributed. Workshop 1 syllabus finished and distributed. MA theses handed in.

September: Introductory lecture, dinner for students, beginning of classes. Conducting workshop 1.

October: Workshop 2 syllabus finished and distributed. Lectures continue. Feedback on first workshop assignment. A couple of afternoon/evening events. Perhaps a class where MA thesis writers present their projects from the course and how they use(d) their learning from the courses in their MA thesis.

November: Second workshop including feedback and deadline. A couple of afternoon/evening events. Intensive work with workshop projects. Setting down of feedback groups and group meetings to structure this process.

December: Deadline for main exam assignment: Free graded written paper.

January: Assessment of written papers and feedback on these.