The scientific approach of the DSSC is based on the recognition that the social participator only exists in problem situations, consequently he or she needs to acquire a combination of skills, abilities and forms of knowledge owing to communication. Such approach defines the term *communication* as denoting the totality of complex processes through which the individual perceives, experiences and understands, i.e. acquires his or her own sociocultural environment and as a result becomes capable of cooperating with others according to such rules or even of changing the rules. In this particular context, the category of *sociocultural environment* also refers to the fact that the human environment –society and culture- consist of symbols and the use of symbols.

In our view the process during which the individual becomes a member of society cannot be grasped through traditional socialization theories: it should rather be examined in a complex manner. The program of the DSSC therefore, besides offering sociological and psychological knowledge, is geared to the combination of the particular accents of the theories, paradigms, hypotheses, methods, and problem orientation of cultural studies, communication and media sciences, as well as historical social sciences, placing strong emphasis on *critical*, *global* and *interdisciplinary* approaches. The production and use of signs, the historically defined social patterns, prejudices and stereotypes, symbols and the related cultic acts, media and the social practices generated by the media, aesthetic and artistic creativity and acquisition, the processes of scientific knowledge generation and consumption, the critical analysis of the communicational aspects of political, economic power and the power of knowledge all form key areas of the scientific approach represented by the DSSC. Education is centred on research activities conducted with exacting methodology. Coursework serves to prepare, to lay the foundations thereof.

The DSSC is seen as a space of knowledge generation. Professionals obtaining a doctoral degree at the School, besides becoming actors of the Hungarian and international scientific research community and higher education, may find a high-level position in public administration, in national, regional, transnational or global policy-making institutions pertaining to the School’s profile, in civil society or grassroot organizations, in the print, broadcast or networked media as well as in applied social research into these spheres.
Accredited Master studies ensuring the operational criteria and the student base of the Doctoral School

MA in Communication and Media Science
MA in Theoretical Linguistics
Ma in Film Studies
MA in Psychology
MA in Sociology
MA in any other social science
MA in other sciences subject to the decision of the Council of the DS

Structure of subjects taught:

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Subject descriptions

1. **Communication Theories** (6 credits)
   The aim of the course is to highlight the various means of descriptive, interpretative and analytical thinking by which the notion of communication can be defined. The course does not follow a chronological order, it is phenomenon-oriented. It seeks to render complex societal-social events, phenomena and processes discussable, conceivable, describable and critically approachable. Communication as theory and practice, as *techne* and identity, as rite and culture are all ingredients of the course, just like the conceptualization, contextualization and politicization of communicative phenomena. By completing the course, students will become capable of understanding new, deepened aspects as well as applying the related terminology and method for scientific purposes.

2. **Social Transformation** (6 credits)
   The doctoral seminar gives an overview of the basic intellectual issues of the study of social transformation from the aspect of comparative historical sociology. The focus is on the
concept of *modernity*, with the course mainly based on excerpts and illustrations from scholarly literature and other sources taken from English language social science literature. The key to the success of the class is the students’ active and constructive participation. The reading of the required literature and the submission of homework are both subject to deadlines. The subject was conceived on the assumption that students enter the Doctoral School with an active and relevant intellectual program.

3. **Quantitative Methodology** (6 credits)

In its broadest terms the objective of sociology is to explain social phenomena. Why does the frequency of suicides increase in villages? Why is neurosis more common in women than in men? Why do poor children enter higher education more rarely than the children of well-to-do parents? Social scientists seek to answer such questions. In doing so, they work out various concepts, which are often referred to as theories, about the motives and driving forces behind the individual’s actions as well as the social factors influencing his or her behaviour. These concepts may be plausible, they may be of utmost likelihood, the decisive question, however, is whether they are correct and correspond to the facts. This subject attempts to show how one could address this issue, that is, how one can ascertain the empirical validity of one’s theories. During the semester the students will get a comprehensive picture of the general logic of scientific research, the procedure of checking the empirical validity of scientific explanations. In the meantime, they will also get familiar with linear regression analysis, the most widely used statistical method in empirical sociological research, and gain experience in applying it.

4. **Media and Communication** (6 credits)

The combination of the disciplines of media and communication draws attention to the fundamental issues of publicity and publicness: to the phenomena of technology, social power structures, sense-making, sense-giving and transmission. In the context of the complex economic-technological process that is often referred to as the fourth industrial revolution, the conceptualization and research of the media by social sciences has gained enormous significance. The description of discursive spaces created by the media, the analytical exploration of medialization/mediatization, the examination of the connection between the logic of the media and reality, media and culture, old and new media offer an opportunity to come to terms with a number of approaches and methods within the framework of the course. The primary aim of all this is not only to come up well-founded scientific statements on predictable/expected changes, but rather to be able to formulate relevant questions that can be integrated in a research plan.

5. **Global Structures** (6 credits)

This doctoral seminar reviews the historical literature in social sciences on the connections between the world’s largest and most significant societies for the future of mankind. It is a ground course that is based on the critical approach to such key concepts as “development”/“underdevelopment”, “world system”, “hegemony”, “empire”, “colonialism” and “coloniality”. The main aim of the subject is to gain a basic understanding of the literature in the field, to develop critical thinking, as well as to inspire autonomous interdisciplinary
research covering political economics, geopolitics and the contemptuous representation of “Others”.

6. **Qualitative Methods of Communication Research** (6 credits)
   After reviewing the various qualitative methods applied in communication research the subject focuses on two major themes. Within the framework of the subject offline and online qualitative individual and group interviews will be addressed, as well as the software-based analysis of qualitative data (mainly texts). Text analysis methods will be illustrated by numerous online cases, applications. Besides issues related to the analysis of offline content, websites, news portals, forums, blogs, Twitter and Facebook content will also be analysed. The various ways of examining the effect of different types of communication content, among them qualitative methods, will be addressed. The course will place strong emphasis on practice: many practical assignments will be given, video excerpts will be analysed in focus groups, online focus group simulations will be conducted, software will be tested etc. The objective of the course, to be attained by using innovating teaching methodology, is to transmit knowledge that can be easily applied in practice.

7. **Analysis and Interpretation of Communication** (6 credits)
   The aim of the course is to analyse the psychological background processes of the participants in communication as problem-solving, as well as to explore the potential link between such processes. Within the multi-level approach, besides the interpersonal processes, phenomena relating to the group, organization and society level are explored, and the intercultural context as well as the dynamic interaction between the various levels is interpreted. Besides such analyses, the current focuses of psychology as a branch of science will also be surveyed: the emotional and cognitive processes at the level of the individual, the evolutionary interpretative framework of communication, neurobiological correlates, as well as the determinant factors of the social and cultural contexts of communication. The aim of the course is to gain an understanding of currently researched issues in the different social contexts, as well as to become familiar with the research methods and techniques applied to them.

8. **Sociological and Communication Theory Paradigms of Modernity and Late Modernity** (6 credits)
   The aim of the lectures is to provide an insight into the work of a few important authors of twentieth-century social science, to define the characteristics of the relevant paradigms, as well as to illustrate the key features of approaches resulting from the emergence of *interdisciplines* drawing on the various modern disciplines. The first couple of lectures will offer an introduction, in terms of the theory of science and the sociology of knowledge, to the study of a number of topics, and will dwell on the masculine dominance of sociological thinking as well as on two major 20th century authors in the social sciences, Norbert Elias and Claude Lévi-Strauss. In the second half of the semester the developments of the last third of the 20th century will be addressed. First, the communication theory of Jürgen Habermas, then the strategies of understanding Gender Studies and Cultural Studies representing novel
approaches in an exemplary way. The focus will finally be shifted to the issues raised by Surveillance Studies emerging at around the turn of the Millennium.

**Elective subjects:** (a total of 12 credits)

**Quantitative Research Methodology:** advanced level (6 credits)
Linear regression analysis is a most versatile, flexible method that does not contain any limitations with regard to the type of explanatory variables, their measurement level, and therefore can be applied in a number of research situations. Such flexibility, however, is not infinite: although the explanatory variable may be either numerical or categorical, the *dependent* variable must always be numerical. In sociological research one can frequently come across cases in which the dependent variable is not numerical, but categorical. During this semester, therefore, methods by which data analysis can be extended to categorical dependent variables will be addressed. Two such methods will be discussed in detail: *contingency-table analysis* and *logistic regression*. Owing to these two methods, the scope of problems that can be studied has been broadened significantly. Using a combination of traditional linear regression, contingency-table analysis and logistic regression opens the door to the empirical study of a wide range of relations between the variables.

**Alternative subjects**
to be defined

Budapest, 5 September 2016