

**MUO-E0023 Thesis Plan**

**Orientation 3 cr**

**WELCOME!**

# Who's talking?

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Languages: 🇫🇮 🇬🇧

Supervising: COID,  
advising: ARTS, AALTO



- Long experience teaching Thesis and strong involvement in the thesis process development
- You can always send me an email on anything that relates to the thesis, and I will either answer you or find someone who can

# THESIS PROCESS

In the Department of Design

# After Dieter Rams: 10 principles of good **MA Thesis**



1. Good **Thesis**  
is innovative.



2. Good **Thesis** is  
~~makes a product~~  
useful.



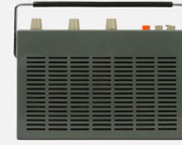
3. Good **Thesis**  
is aesthetic.



4. Good **Thesis** is  
~~makes a product~~  
understandable.



5. Good **Thesis**  
is ~~u~~obtrusive.



6. Good **Thesis**  
is honest.



7. Good **Thesis**  
is long-lasting.



8. Good **Thesis**  
is as thorough down  
to the last detail.



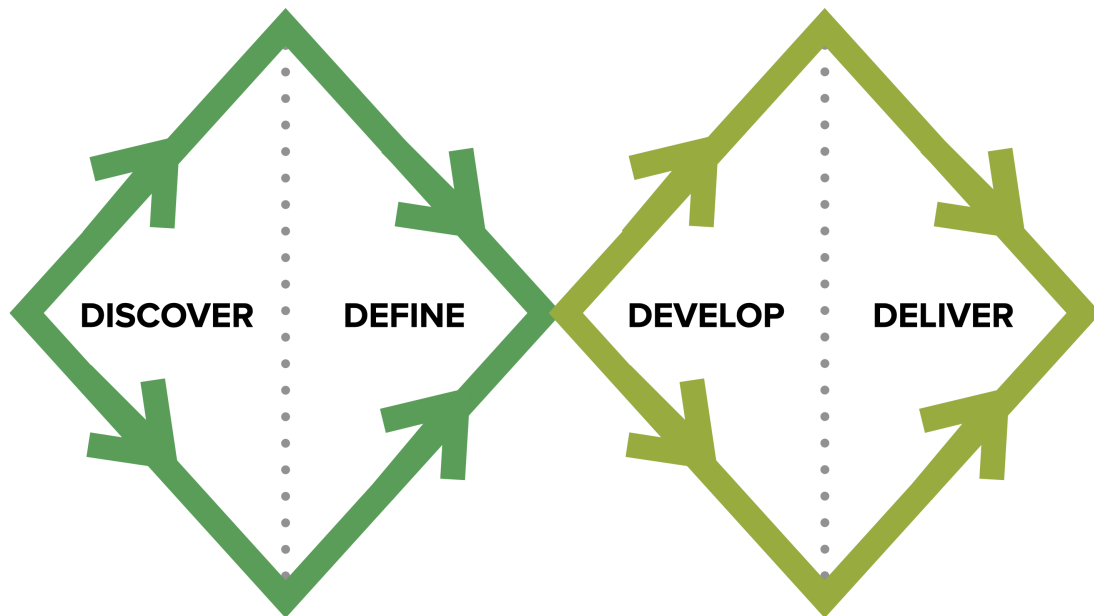
9. Good **Thesis**  
is environmentally  
friendly.



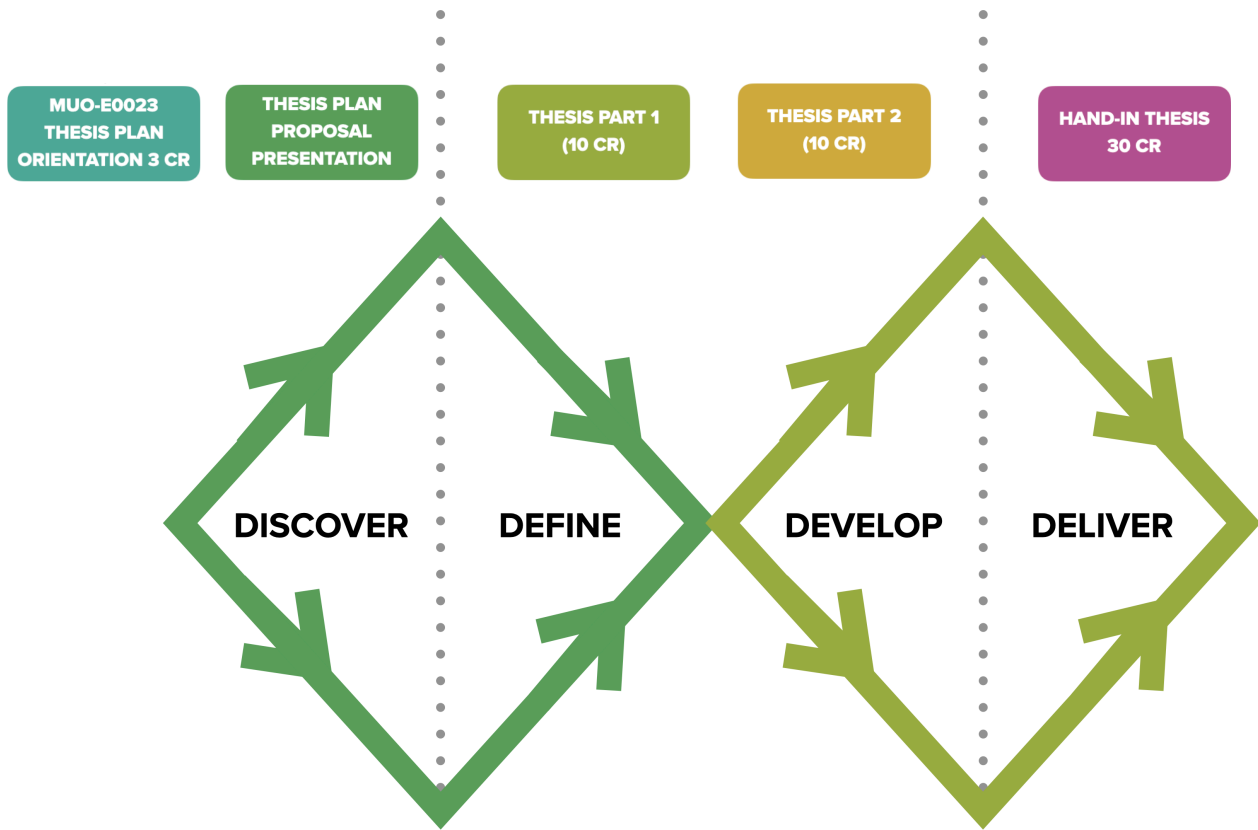
10. Good **Thesis**  
is ~~as little~~ design **project**  
~~as possible~~.

- We sometimes talk as if the Thesis is something alien and unfamiliar.
- Not true. Thesis is a design project and should be executed as such, following common design principles and process models.

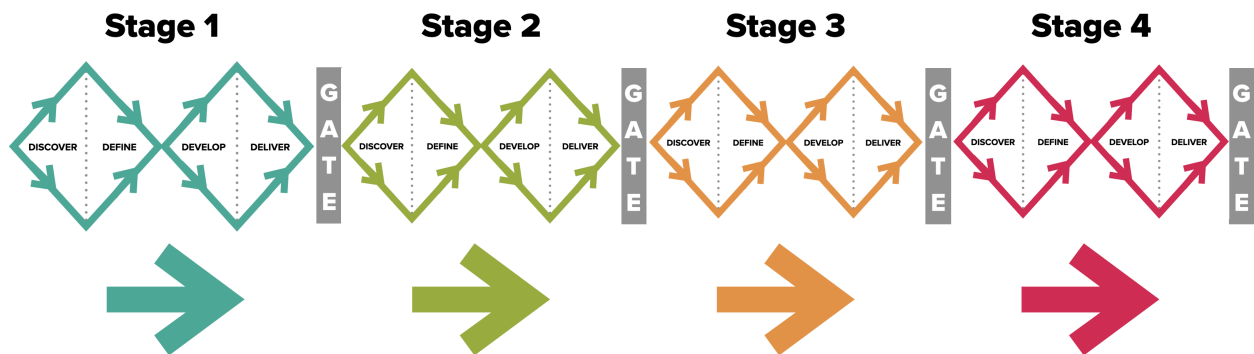
Photo: Adapted from Vitsoe.com  
photo



- Double Diamond is a simple rule-of-thumb depiction of a typical design process
- You find out about the problem space, decide the most promising direction and move to the solution space, where you explore options and come to a conclusion.



- Thesis process as a simple Double Diamond could look something like this
- simplistic visualisation.



Another common visualisation of a process called "Stage-Gate" or "Phase-Gate"

a process where the work is done in stages or phases, and each stage has to be successfully completed before the project can move to the next stage.

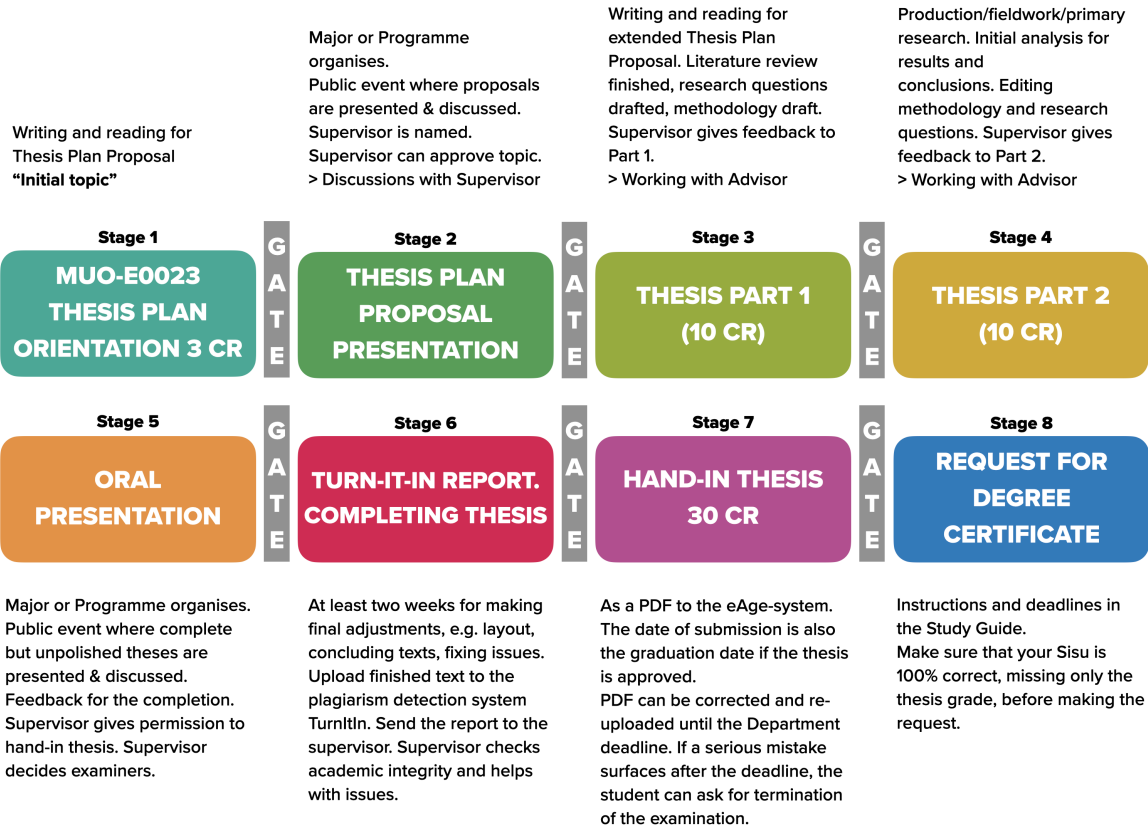
Each of the steps in the process involves working in a manner that can be visualised as a Double Diamond.

The Thesis process involves Double Diamond features but, as a process, follows Stage Gate-logic, with one important difference: **in the thesis process, you can go back to the previous stages and work on them until the final deadline for the project, the hand-in of the thesis.**

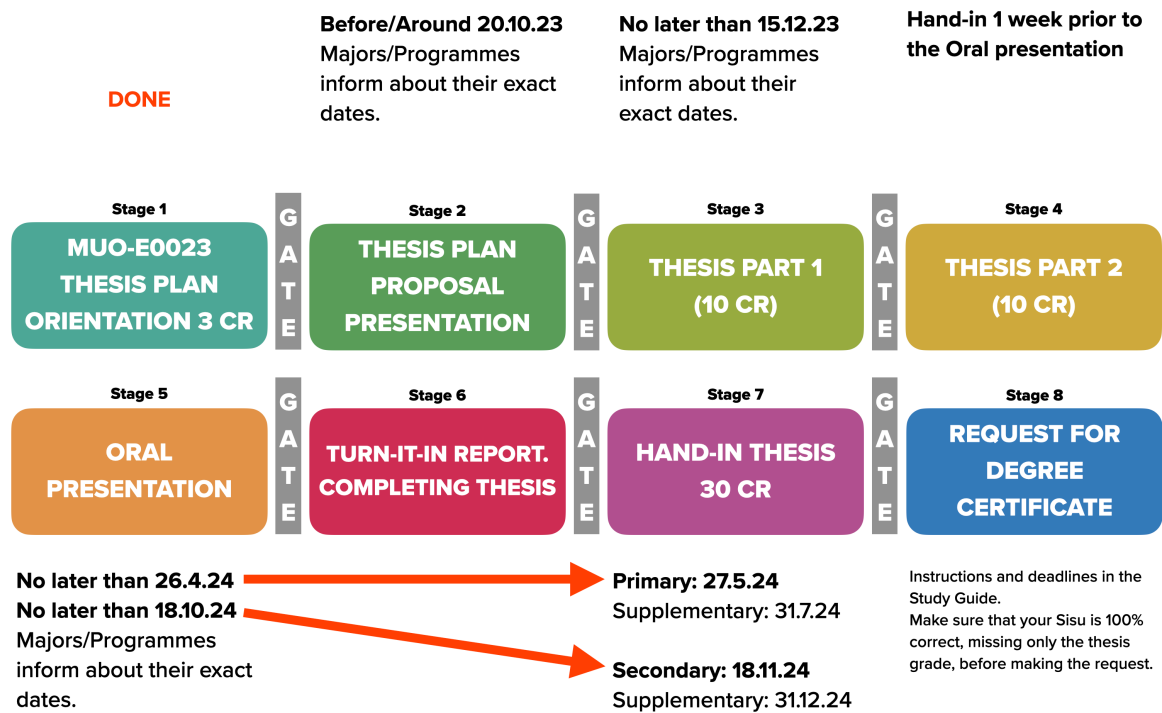


- The Thesis phases or stages proceed in this order.
- You are now in stage 1. In TPO, you will write a Thesis Plan Proposal, where you outline your plans for your Master's Thesis.
- Completing TPO opens the gate to the next stage, where you present your Thesis Plan Proposal in your Programme or Major.
- Your supervisor will act as a gatekeeper for the rest of the process and, for example, grades and offers feedback to the Thesis Part 1 and 2





– Here's the same Stage Gate with some written explanation.



– Timetable. More detailed timetable will be in Study Guide soon.

# QUIZ!

Today we aim at answering the following questions

1) How many credits is the MA thesis? How much time does it mean?

2) What is the length of a thesis text?

3) What is the length, and what are the qualities of a good thesis plan proposal?

4) What are the components of a good thesis plan proposal?

5) What is the use of the thesis plan proposal in the thesis process?

6) What is the name of the university? And school?

7) What is the name of your MA programme? And Major (if you have one)?

8) What happens after this TPO week?

# Thesis Plan Proposal

- Approval for topic
- Playground for ideas
- Process guide
- Application training
- Problem solver:

Thesis Plan Proposal is...

Document with which you seek approval for your thesis topic in your Major or Programme, after only a small amount of work

Your "knowledge creation platform" and playground for ideas

Guide through the thesis process, which you will edit as the work progresses

Excellent training for application writing for PhD studies or any funding

Helps to avoid common thesis problems:

# The most common problems:

- Poor awareness of context
- Poor research question
- Poor choice of research methods

**Poor awareness of context.** A good plan is aware of the field of studies. There are links to literature, practice, and history. Limitations and boundaries are clearly communicated and justified. In a poor plan, there's a random set of notes or no context and limitations at all.

**Poor research question.** A good research question is clearly expressed and has motivation. Poor question is unclear, or changes throughout the plan or thesis.

**Poor choice of research methods.** In a good plan, a research question is targeted with a sensible set of methods that produce enough data to reach a satisfying level of confidence. Unethical methods, studying wrong people, unexplained emphasis on personal experience, and lack of motivation for decisions are indicators of poor planning.

# USEFULNESS OF THE THESIS

- Thesis has a purpose: Trains in independent research and project management, evaluation, writing, communication, creativity and imagination, because it's demanding and challenging enough independent project.

# Size of the Thesis

- 30 credits
- About 810 hours of working
- About 22 weeks of 5x8h working  
weeks = 108 days
- About 3 full courses
- About half a year of full-time work =  
4,5 months



# The text

- 25-70 pages of text
- Between 50 000 - 140 000 characters (including spaces)

# All of these are good:

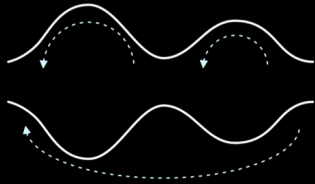
- Long text + small or no production
- Demanding production + short text
- Text and production are balanced

# Thesis contributes to the design field

- Every good thesis brings forward aspects and issues previously not pointed out

## Where design and law meet

An empirical study for understanding legal design and its implication for research and practice



Xiaoyu Ji

# A?

Aalto University  
School of Arts, Design  
and Architecture

## A systems approach to sustainability in higher education:

*Analysis of undergraduate architectural education in Kazakh Leading Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering in Kazakhstan.*

**Nurgul Nsanbayeva**

MA in Creative Sustainability, Aalto University

MASTER'S THESIS 2017  
AALTO UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARTS, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE  
FASHION AND COLLECTION DESIGN  
EUGENIA SMIRNOVA

## COLOURS IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

EMPLOYING NEW TEXTILE  
TECHNOLOGIES IN CONCEPT  
DEVELOPMENT WITH  
CIRCULAR APPROACH

It can be about how something works,

# Urban Food Production for Socio-Technical Transformations

*The Helsinki Metropolitan Region  
Urban Food Production Niche and  
its potential for transitions towards  
more sustainable food production  
systems*

**ANDREA GILLY MÁRQUEZ**  
MA Creative Sustainability 2019



## Beyond Plastic

Marina Baranova  
Master of Arts Thesis 2019 / Aalto University  
Collaborative and Industrial Design

## CONDUCTING USABILITY EVALUATION OF A MULTI-PURPOSE DEVICE FOR EXPERT USERS

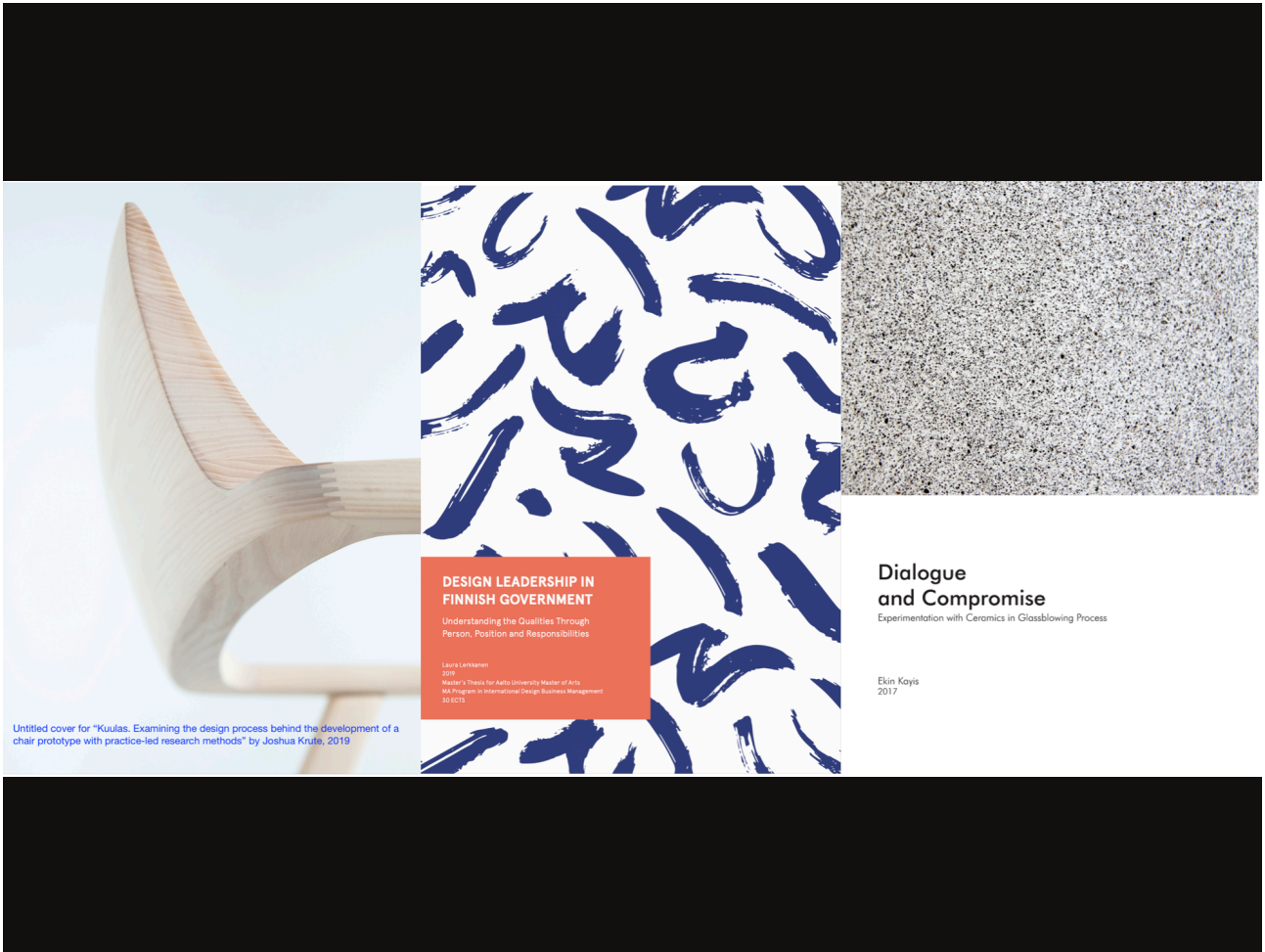
Case ABB ship control interface  
Niilo Aho 2019



how things can be done or



how we might think about something,



it can be about the design process

## Shades of Finnishness:

Challenging the construct of Finnish national identity with the aim of designing more inclusive policies.

Riita Šerpytyte  
Collaborative and Industrial Design  
Department of Design  
Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture  
Master's thesis  
2022

## Designers' Roles in the Founding Team

Lisa Gerkens  
Master's Thesis

Collaborative and Industrial Design  
Department of Design  
Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture  
2017

ADELAIDE DONGAH KIM

## WEAR THE ROAD:

The role of clothing in promoting women's transport cycling in motor-dominated societies

Master's Thesis for Master of Arts  
Fashion & Collection Design  
School of Arts, Design and Architecture  
Aalto University  
2016

Or questions about the identities and roles of both designers and the outcomes of design work.

# Thesis contributes to the design field

- Every good thesis brings forward aspects and issues previously not pointed out
- A good thesis participates in the accumulation of design knowledge and understanding

- That's why abstracts are online for anyone to read, and all theses can be either read online or ordered from our library.



# INNOVATIVENESS OF THE THESIS

- There are a couple of features in a Master's thesis that might make it innovative.
- there's always something new in a thesis
- A good Thesis is so focused that new points/findings/notions are possible. This focus is created by planning the thesis.

# Thesis Plan Proposal: IN GENERAL

3-6 pages

Sharp, to the point

Clear, well-structured

Grounded, reasoned, framed, contextualised

On a topic worth investing time

On a topic relevant to the field of design

With framing that makes the plan doable

# Thesis Plan Proposal: IDENTIFIERS

- Working title
- Language of the thesis (EN, FI or SV)
- Your name and study major or programme
- Supervisor (if known)
- Advisor(s) (if known)

# Thesis Plan Proposal: SUBSTANCE

Typically, the longest part of the proposal

Motivations and justifications for the topic

Outline of previous research (= summary of literature)

Academic and artistic research goals

Outline of production (if any)

Methodological choices. How are goals achieved?

**Framing and research design are talked about on Friday!**

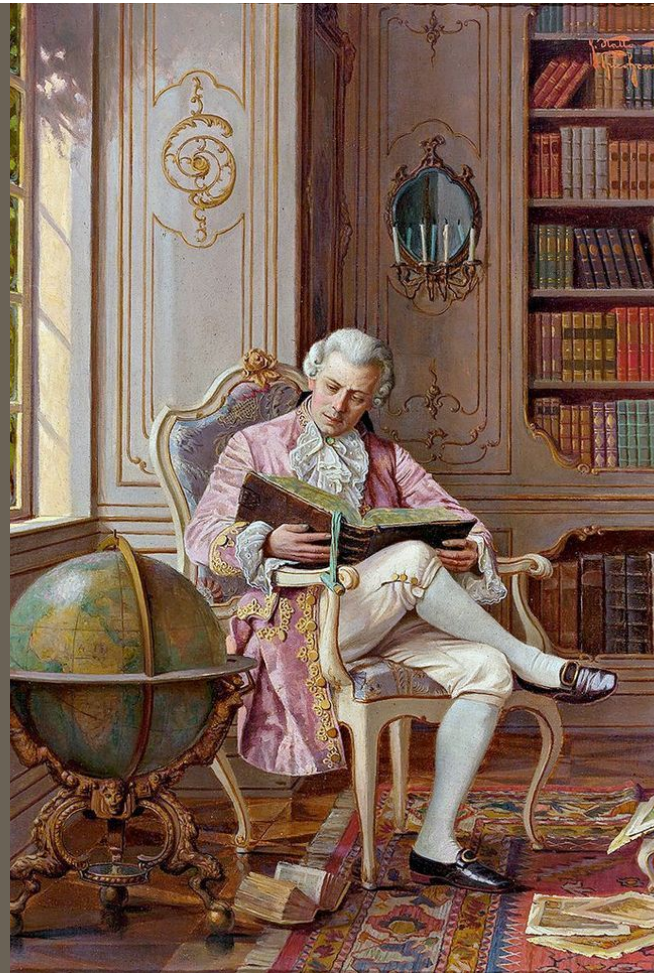
# Thesis Plan Proposal: PRACTICALITIES

- Financing plan, if needed
- Ethical considerations, if needed
- Possible risks which would make the topic too difficult or prevent you from completing the thesis on time

# Supervisors and advisors

Supervisor (*valvoja*) looks over your thesis process and approves advisor(s)

Advisor (*ohjaaja*) works with you. Supervisors would be delighted if you could suggest someone!



Thesis is independent work but also a teamwork in the sense that you have to have a **supervisor** who - looks over your thesis process, - monitors the academic quality of the thesis

offers feedback for Thesis Part 1 and 2 + grades them (pass-fail). - Usually supervisor also examines the thesis (together with someone else) and proposes a grade.

The supervisor has to be the Department of Design faculty. Majors and Programmes have a pool of Supervisors, and one is appointed to you.

Your thesis also has one or two **advisors**, depending on your needs. Your supervisor can also act in both roles: supervisor and advisor. The more you have people in your team, the more you will have meetings.

Advisor can be anyone who's an expert in the topic of your thesis. Supervisor approves advisors. You can suggest an advisor.

When there are two advisors, typically, one advises on production and the other on writing.

Outside experts are paid for 10 hours of work; Aalto faculty are not paid for advising and will do it "a reasonable amount of time".

Painting: Lesender Gelehrter im Rokokohabit in einer Schlossbibliothek neben großem Globus by Alois Heinrich Priechenfried (Austria, 1867-1953)



- Working with an advisor follows the same process as the entire thesis.
- Establishing a point of view, framing, structure, and methods = Part 1
- Conducting research/project/production = Part 2 + Oral presentation for feedback about what still needs to be done.