



ALUMNEPORTRÆTTER

KOGNITIV SEMIOTIK

Fem portrætter af færdiguddannede fra Kognitiv Semiotik og deres karriereveje. Hvordan arbejder man (også) som færdiguddannet fra Kognitiv Semiotik, og hvad kan DU bruge din uddannelse til, når du er færdig med studiet og skal have et job?



AARHUS
UNIVERSITET

Full name: Kashmiri Stec

Job title: UX researcher

Currently work for: Bang & Olufsen

Degree: MA Cognitive Semiotic

Bachelor course: Linguistics & Cognitive Science from UC Berkeley, USA

Year of graduation: 2011

What was the journey to your current position?

I finished the MA program early so that I could start a PhD position in cognitive science in the Netherlands. I intended to stay in academia, but halfway through my PhD realised I needed to do something else: real world impact was not only extremely important, but necessary. So was work-life balance. At that time, most of the industry positions I could find required an engineering de-gree or a coding skillset I lacked, so I figured I'd have to use my training in another way -- business consulting, non-profit work (e.g. program evaluation) or UX. I found my current position about a month after moving to Struer, which we did for access to sweet nature (hello work-life balance). I wanted a position which took full advantage of my cognitive science skillset and paired it with re-al-world impact: UX Research does all of that in an extremely satisfying way. Plus it's a sweet 5k bike ride to work along the Limfjord.

What does your daily work life entail?

Jeg elsker at arbejde hjemmefra, så de fleste dage begynder på hjemmekontoret med kaffe og et overblik over dagens opgaver. Jeg har to faste kunder, som jeg styrer sociale me-dier og oversætter fra svensk for. Herudover skriver jeg tekster og læser korrektur for andre soloselvstændige og små virksomheder. Jeg slutter arbejdsdagen kl. 14, så jeg kan hente mine børn tidligt og være sammen med dem, mens de er små. Jeg har et naturligt drive for at være selvstændig og foretrækker selv at kunne styre tempoet, men det med at skabe balance, ro og smidighed i familielivet har også været afgørende for min beslutning.

What topic or skills have you acquired during your studies that are most relevant to your current work?

Directly, anything to do with methods and structure. The more, the better -- and the more flexibly you can raise questions and approach difficult problems. Framing. Gesture studies. CogSci 101, statistics (and how to mask data with them; all of the PhDs have unmasking hidden stats as a side job) and neuroscience 101. R.

Indirectly, conceptual metaphors, conversation analysis, phonetics and phonology, and anything else related to "how people think", "what people understand", "what's meaningful and why" and "how that makes us human". In my company, I'm the reality check on the crazy ideas business and engineering have. And the source of opportunity. Most of my day-to-day work indirectly draws on what I learnt in cogsci and cogsem, but outside of the direct contexts noted above, I would have a hard time pointing to the source.

What advice would you give to current students?

Pick up all of the transferable skills and experiences you can. If you have the opportunity to do a cool research project or to get relevant industry exposure, don't think twice! Just do it. Also, real-ise that when it comes to finding work, the industry is rapidly changing -- but the safest bet is that no job is going to ask for someone with your degree, so you're going to have to create opportunities to shine above the heads of the engineers or visual designers most companies are looking for. Younger companies will recognize your value and will often be able to vault you into other positions. NEVER stay somewhere where you feel like you're stagnating or where you don't come home happy 3-4 days out of a given week.

Would you like to add any more details?

Many of the big companies you already know have research arms; that can be a good way to transition from academia to business. Alternatively, start-ups in centres like CPH or Berlin, where someone with our background can shine while wearing multiple hats.



Full name: Simon Warnich

Job title: Director, Digital Communication & Development

Currently work for: BDO

Degree: MA Cognitive Semiotic

Bachelor course: Comparative Literature at Aarhus University

Year of graduation: 2013

What was the journey to your current position?

Uni --> Intern at an Ad agency --> Marketing Consultant at Jyllands-Posten (newspaper)
--> BDO (a former boss asked me to join him, and I accepted)

What does your daily work life entail?

I run a team of four people responsible for all digital platforms facing our clients and potential clients (client portals, apps, websites, social media, SEM, marketing automation etc.). This involves everything from development to day-to-day tasks.

What topic or skills have you acquired during your studies that are most relevant to your current work?

Other than a general understanding of how humans think, I would say: being able to work in a structured manner and the ability to acquire knowledge and connecting dots in complex structures.

What advice would you give to current students?

Get an internship. I can draw a direct line from my internship to my current job. Pursue the things you're interested in, and find out what you want to do, but do not expect to get there right away. Also, rethink as you go along. Things change, and so do you.

Would you like to add any more details?

I've added a master's degree in Digital Innovation, so Cognitive Semiotics is no longer my only background

Would you be interested in being contacted by current students via LinkedIn?

www.linkedin.com/in/simon-warnich

Full name: Bridgette Day Tuckfield

Job title: Copywriter

Currently work for: Charles Schwab and Co., Inc. It's a Fortune 500 brokerage firm.

Degree: MA Cognitive Semiotic

Bachelor course: Linguistics with a minor in editing from Brigham Young University (BYU)

Year of graduation: 2017

What was the journey to your current position?

I worked after my bachelor's at Accenture in San Francisco, where I did management consulting for a number of different firms and industries. That was ultimately unsatisfying, so I sought out my master's in cognitive semiotics. During my master's degree, I realized that while researching how we process meaning in language and art was fascinating, I would rather create it than study what others were doing. That said, the program directly contributed to my ability to do that. After I graduated, I sought work as a writer.

What does your daily work life entail?

I'm a copywriter--I design content strategy, and then write the content. Any given day, I have a number of projects in progress. This might include anything from writing an ad, to concepting for a video, to designing a website.

What topic or skills have you acquired during your studies that are most relevant to your current work?

Parsing and analysis of meaning; resonance in communication. I believe the most relevant classes were Text Processing and Cognitive Aesthetics (I work directly with artists). I also have written a number of blog posts for the company relating to how brains process meaning.

What advice would you give to current students?

Be creative when you look for jobs outside academia. When I interviewed, I leaned on the fact that my master's taught me how to parse meaning, so I could better strategically create it.

Would you like to add any more details?

The MA in Cognitive Semiotics was incredible; I loved it. It directly contributed to me being able to do what I love as a job today.

Would you be interested in being contacted by current students via LinkedIn?

Please do! <https://www.linkedin.com/in/bridgettedaytuckfield/>



Full name: Juan Olvido Perea García

Currently work for: National University of Singapore

Degree: MA Cognitive Semiotic

Bachelor course: English Philology from Universidad de Málaga

Year of graduation: 2015

What was the journey to your current position?

The MA I'm Cognitive Semiotics gave me the space and resources to expand my interests from cognitive linguistics to experimental semiotics. It also shifted my focus to comparative psychology and the study of communication. I focused on human adaptations that facilitated referential communication, and ended up studying the way in which our eyes convey information to others.

What does your daily work life entail?

Tutoring or preparing materials for students, coming up with ideas for research and carrying them out. It involves a lot of learning because I come from a different background (now doing ge-nomics).

What topic or skills have you acquired during your studies that are most relevant to your current work?

A holistic understanding of communication and a deep understanding of comparative psychology. Also the feeling that a good idea will be picked up.

What advice would you give to current students?

Be cheeky! There are few places that will be as supportive as Aarhus University. Money is a con-straint but today we can tackle many questions without financial resources thanks to new technologies.



Full name: Amalie Guldbæk Staggeimeier

Job title: Study Coordinator

Currently work for: Aarhus University Study Administration

Degree: MA Cognitive Semiotic

Bachelor course: BA in Linguistics from Aarhus University

Year of graduation: 2018

What was the journey to your current position?

I have worked in the university administration during my studies, but in another department than where I am now employed. After having graduated, I narrowed my job search down to administrative/coordinative positions in the educational sector, and that led me to apply for and get my current job. Also, it was not only my former paid job that qualified me for the job, but also volunteer work at the university in different respects.

What does your daily work life entail?

My job title is Study Coordinator. I am responsible for planning, coordination and administering teaching and exams at the Department of Arts. Furthermore, I was also hired to be a part of different development projects, so my job involves both day-to-day maintenance and routine tasks as well as project development.

What topic or skills have you acquired during your studies that are most relevant to your current work?

Data management, which is a big part of almost all tasks I have. An understanding of communication at the level of single word and phrase semantics - choosing the right terms when communicating with students and naming new forms, procedures etc. is important in my organization.

What advice would you give to current students?

If you have freedom in your schedule for it, see if you can find one or more student position, paid as well as unpaid. There are a lot of positions available, for example at the university, both those that are relevant to your academic field and those that give you competencies which are more generally applicable afterwards. You should not feel rushed to do this from the beginning of your Bachelor's degree - but at the Master's where you often have less teaching, you should definitely consider it!

