



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

World Heritage and Conflict

Course Code	L_AABAGES207
Credits	6
Period	P5
Course Level	200
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Humanities
Course Coordinator	M.E. Mela
Examiner	M.E. Mela
Teaching Staff	dr. D.G. Hondius, dr. J.O.W. Singerton, M.E. Mela
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Seminar

Course Objective

By the end of the course, we will:

- Acquire knowledge and understanding of the theoretical foundations of heritage studies and discuss the main (inter)national political and public debates surrounding heritage practices.
- Become familiar with the concept of critical heritage and apply it to different analytical approaches.
- Become familiar with different types of conflicts that can emerge in the practice of World Heritage management: conflicts of appropriation, political conflicts, paradoxes in protecting heritage and managing change and development.
- Analyse World Heritage sites, and gain insight into processes of appropriation, canonization, musealization, and possible sources of conflict concerning a World Heritage status.
- Compare and reflect critically upon individual case studies.

Course Content

In this course, students are made familiar with the international political framework that shapes our contemporary interaction with and debates on cultural heritage, with a specific focus on UNESCO World Heritage designations. The meaning of the concept of (World) heritage has radically changed throughout the last decades; whilst initially World Heritage designations were limited to objects and buildings, increasingly sites and (cultural) landscapes are considered as well. There is also increasing attention to immaterial forms of cultural heritage, such as artistic practices, craftsmanship and traditions. Moreover, it is now acknowledged that, whether objects or landscape, tangible or intangible, heritage values are not intrinsic and that especially World Heritage is never undisputed and often gives rise to conflicts; conflicts associated with armed crises, for instance, but also disputes relating to the management of heritage, on sustainability issues or on tourism and economic developments.

In this module, we will specifically focus on the relationship between World Heritage and such conflicts. By discussing critically recent academic, political, and public debates on individual World Heritage sites, students will reflect upon what is called the 'heritage paradox' – the constant tension between the management of future changes and to urge to protect relics of the past. During this course, conflicts will be addressed by discussing case studies by visiting several (World) heritage sites, and by reflecting on the way in which UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world that they consider to be of "outstanding value to humanity".

Additional Information Teaching Methods

Lectures and guest lectures, seminars, excursions.

Method of Assessment

20% Group Assignment

30% Individual Assignments

50% final assignment

Connection between learning objectives and assessment:

Learning objective 1: assignment 1, 2, and 3

Learning objective 2: assignment 1, 2, and 3

Learning objective 3: assignment 1, 2, and 3

Learning objective 4: assignment 1 and 3

Learning objective 5: assignment 1, 2, and 3

Literature

Marie-Theres Albert and Birgitta Ringbeck, 40 Years World Heritage Convention. Popularizing the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage De Gruyter 2015 (DOI (Book): <https://doi-org.vu-nl.idm.oclc.org/10.1515/9783110424409>)
Other course literature to be announced.

Additional Information Target Audience

BA2 students Geschiedenis variant History & Heritage; BA 2 students History and International Studies; BA2 and BA3 MKDA students; International humanities students, level 200-300.

Recommended background knowledge

For international exchange students a basic knowledge of (art) history is required (on level 200-300).