Culture and Heritage Studies

Central European University / Invisible University for Ukraine

Spring Term

Elective Course – 4 ECTS credits

** DRAFT**

Zoom link: https://ceu-edu.zoom.us/j/9083100155?pwd=dnQ0MTUrRThVNkwvNjBWay8wNDRxdz09

Course Description:
The course focuses on culture and cultural heritage; narratives; power: who decides what heritage is.

Learning Outcomes:
The program offers an intensive learning experience, placing questions relevant for Ukrainian students into a transnational comparative perspective. It aims at familiarizing the students with various cutting-edge interpretative paradigms and methodological traditions. The program is not meant to replace or duplicate the existing online education in Ukrainian universities, but to support them and provide help for filling the lacunae that temporarily emerged due to the Russian military invasion. At the end of this course, students will have expanded their knowledge on key issues of culture and cultural heritage in a European and global transnational perspective and explored the applicability of these for the Ukrainian context. The course also develops the participants’ critical thinking and skills in academic discussion in English.

Learning activities and teaching methods:
Each session will consist of approximately 60 minutes of presentation by an invited tutor. It will be followed by 40 minutes open discussions or tasks in breakout rooms. During the course,
participants will work individually and in groups, building on their individual experience and learning, and share their progress and findings with other groups and members of faculty.

The students will be asked to provide a brief written answer to three questions posed by the course instructor (we recommended around 150 words per answer) and upload it to the forum under the relevant session. Their answer will be discussed during the follow-up seminar. The answers consider meaningful if they raise new insights, move the discussion forward, and offer relevant examples. The instructors hosting seminars will use the answers when preparing the session. We ask the participants to upload their answers a day before the relevant seminar.

Assessment:

This course is taken for a pass/fail grade. Passing the course means that the students have participated in the classes actively. For those students whose conditions make it impossible to listen to the classes synchronically, an asynchronic mode will be made available, with the lectures uploaded and questions they are asked to answer on the basis of watching/listening to the lecture.

Participation:

Please, try to attend as many classes and seminars as possible: by skipping a class, you deprive the other students to learn from you. Class participants are expected to contribute actively in class discussions, building off on the comments from classmates and the class instructor to work towards understanding problems. A contribution is considered meaningful if a student added something new by sharing knowledge, asked a critical question, explained a tricky detail, raised a new possibility, synthesized from examples, or summarized arguments.

Module 1: Heritage

Class 1 (April 26 at 5 PM CET): Heritage as a resource for the future

Dora Merai (CEU)

Cultural assets we inherited from the past should be preserved and passed on to the future generations - this is how professionals in these fields generally define their tasks. At the same time, they increasingly acknowledge that in many cases this is not feasible: we cannot preserve everything we inherited, partly because it is simply too much, and partly due to the ever changing social and natural environment and the related challenges, such as climate change, migration, and war damage. Consequently, cultural heritage is often associated with loss. But is it true that our generation unavoidably deprives the future from a part of their valuable heritage? Or can these processes of selection and loss be the source of something good; can the concept of cultural heritage help to work towards a better future?

Seminar work:

Heritage in Ukraine is getting destroyed now due to the Russian military aggression. The seminar discussion will discuss the reader and the class presentation in this context and invite the participants to answer these questions: If you could go back in time to the period before this war, and make a decision on what to pass on to the generations in the distant future, what would you choose? What would you choose right now? Based on what values? What would be your main message by this choice? How distant is the future you would think about? What would be the best way to send this message to the future?

❓ Questions about the reader:

1. Why do the authors consider heritage management a futuristic activity, and how do people in the sector generally relate to the future in their opinion?
2. Why do the authors think that this general approach to the future is problematic?
3. What is their suggestion, what should be done by professionals to deal with this problem?

Recommended reading:


Audiovisual material: “Walk’n’Talk with Cornelius Holtorf - a science talk about heritage futures and nuclear waste” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXMGqeymJlk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXMGqeymJlk)

Class 2 (May 3 at 5 PM CET) Heritage and Power. The Power of Heritage

👩‍💻 Diána Vonnák (University of St.Andrews)

Who decides what a community considers valuable from the past? Who has the power to influence such choices? How do universalist, cosmopolitan understandings of heritage coexist with national and local approaches, and what does this mean when it comes to institutions that shape the fate of heritage sites?

Since the 1970s, a global infrastructure has emerged for the preservation, recognition and maintenance of cultural heritage. UNESCO World Heritage Site status has become a much-desired designation that can translate to increased visibility, economic potential and prestige. Nation-states are at the core of the UNESCO nomination process, and lower-tier protection is usually organised by state bodies as well.
Critical heritage studies is an approach that focuses on the social and political power struggles that arise around cultural heritage. In this session we look at examples of how 'heritigisation' can lead to gentrification and how communities can be pushed out from participating in the future of their heritage, on ways national heritage regimes can push asides minority heritage sites or uncomfortable heritage, and on examples when the heritage designation comes into conflict with usage practices. We talk about the role of elites, institutions, communities, about expertise, resistance and counter-narratives.

Seminar work:

🤔 Questions to discuss:

1. What is heritage if not a thing? What do we mean by heritage as a process?
2. What is the role of the nation state in heritage management? How can local, national and universalist understandings of heritage come into conflict?
3. How does UNESCO World Heritage designation change a site? What are the gains? What are the challenges?
4. Can you think of contexts in Ukraine where local people who use a heritage site could be in conflict with the national authorities or local institutions? What is the role of expertise in heritage conflicts?

📚 Readings:


Extra resources:

If you are new to heritage studies: Harrison, Rodney. (2010) "What is heritage." Understanding the politics of heritage

Ugo Guarnacci, Tokie Brown, Ro’otsitsina (Tsitsina) Xavante: Heritage of the Marginalised (video debate) https://www.ourworldheritage.org/nha_s18/

Lynn Meskell: UNESCO World Heritage: A New Global Order of Things (video lecture): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8b6T_r80KK0&t=90s

Class 3 (May 10 at 5 PM CET) Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict: Protection, New Challenges & Ways Forward

👩‍🏫 Kateryna Busol (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies)

Attacks against cultural heritage and iconoclastic destruction of cultural property have been known to humankind for centuries. Considerable attempts to limit the encroachment on heritage through the laws and customs of warfare internationally were taken in the XIX and XX centuries. However, a question remains as to how adequate such protection is in light of the new encroachments on cultural property and identity, including through gradual cultural erasure. The class will explore the new challenges to cultural heritage posed by the Taliban and ISIS and arising out of Russia’s
aggression against Ukraine. The discussion will focus on the need for the more holistic perception of heritage and the role of the civil society in catalyzing it.

Readings:


Questions:

1. What new types of violations against cultural heritage do you see in armed conflict nowadays?
2. What motives do you see behind such violations?
3. How do different - legal, policy, educational - measures in peacetime impact the protection of cultural heritage in war? What peacetime measures are needed for the more effective protection?
4. How should gradual cultural erasure be addressed?
5. What should be the roles of the state and civil society in safeguarding cultural heritage today?

Module 2: Memory

Class 4 (May 11 at 5 PM CET) Contested histories in public space

Daniel Walkowitz (New York University)

This session will explore the effects of major upheavals—wars, decolonization, and other social and economic changes—on the ways in which public histories are presented around the world. Issues related to public memory here cut across political, cultural, and geographic divisions. At the same time, by revealing recurring themes and concerns, they show how basic issues of history and memory transcend specific sites and moments in time. Today we will discuss contests over public memory following two major political transformations: the wave of liberation from colonial rule in much of Africa, Asia, and Central and South America during the second half of the twentieth century and then focus on the reorganization of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet bloc beginning in the late 1980s. As we shall see, silences and absences are as telling as museums and memorials. In addition, memorialization is conveyed not only in marble and stone but also through cityscapes and performances such as popular songs and parades. However, given the present crisis, special attention (hopefully with some excerpts from my 1990 documentary *Perestroika from Below*) will be paid to memory work (and forgetting) in Ukraine both as seen among Donetsk miners and steelworkers in 1989, in the [re]making of the Ukrainian state after 1989, and in the present moment.

Reading:

**Video:** [Perestroika from Below / Перебудова знизу - YouTube](#)

**Questions to discuss:**

1. How is memory marked in public spaces?
2. Who are stakeholders in memorialization?
3. How does the different cultural, social, and political power of stakeholders shape the framing of the past?
4. How had the past been remembered and contested in the Donbas over time? What accounts for the change and differences?
5. How should uncomfortable memories be treated in the future?
6. Can a history of the past insulated from political currents be memorialized?

**Additional Resources:**

*Mystic Chords of Memory*, M. Kammen (Vintage, 1993), especially ch 1, “The Problem of Tradition and Myth in a Democratic Culture” (pages 17-39)


**Class 5 (May 17 at 5 PM CET) Politics of memory: counter-memory as a source for social transformation**

Maria Mayofis and Ilya Kukulin (Independent researchers)

In his essay of 1971 “Nietzsche, genealogy, history,” Michel Foucault proposed (basing on Friedrich Nietzsche’s essay “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life”) a new term – counter-memory. Foucault coined this term for specific forms of historical representations – grotesque, full of emotions, subversing common knowledge of traditions and historical continuity. In today’s studies, counter-memory is usually understood as a set of forms of “alternative remembrance” that subvert official, state-sponsored vision of history from a viewpoint of private people or of (previously or currently) suppressed social or cultural groups – cultural, religious, or sexual minorities. These concepts, Foucault’s and contemporary, do not contradict to each other: one can recall a recent “dark comedy” by Armando Ianucci “The Death of Stalin” (2017) that obviously combines ideas of counter-memory as it is presented in Foucault’s essay (grotesque and satiric vision of history) and as it is discussed in today’s studies (depiction of history as it would be seen from a viewpoint of victims). Today, counter-memory can be regarded as an important tool to convey to general audience private stories and private assessments of historical events. These “particular voices” are important forms of cultural heritage that make “alive” such traditional forms of heritage as buildings, libraries, and museum collections. We plan to discuss a notion of counter-memory and its applicability to today’s cultural situation.

**Reading:**


Seminar work:

1. What are the main social and cultural institutions where work of counter-memory can be found?
2. What types of cultural heritage can be discerned, acknowledged, and understood with the help of counter-memory?
3. What could be the major social and political effects of counter-memory in today’s societies?

Recommended additional reading:


Class 6 (May 18 at 5 PM CET) Memory, forgetting, nostalgia

[Diana Vonnak (University of St. Andrews) and Dora Merai (CEU)]

Memory is crucial when defining identities of individuals and communities: humans have the ability to reflect on what they remember, thus, to remember who they are, and social memory is a crucial tie that connects groups of people through time. However, both individual and collective memories are selective – forgetting is an essential counterpart of remembering. Besides creating “space” for new information, forgetting also has a defensive, therapeutic, and even constructive function, and it can even be a temporary phenomenon to achieve these goals. The session will introduce students to the basic theories of memory and forgetting, and focus on a specific type of memory: nostalgia. Nostalgic attitude is often criticized for being sentimental and past-oriented instead of focusing on the present and future and finding values there. However, recent analyses of field observations in various social and cultural contexts have put nostalgia in a different perspective: it is not always uncritical towards the past but can also evoke reflection and there is a critical potential: to ask why the past is better in our memories and what this tells about the present. The class will address how forgetting and nostalgia might be useful concepts in addressing various aspects of the Ukrainian reality and foster a critical attitude toward the past and present.

Reading:

**Recommended reading:**


Magdalena Novoa. (2021) "Gendered nostalgia: grassroots heritage tourism and (de)industrialization in Lota, Chile." Journal of Heritage Tourism


**Module 3: Canon building**

**Class 7 (May 24 at 5 PM CET). Canon Formations in Art History**

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The canon is a system of reference in art history in a certain cultural context. Although the idea still exists that the canon is absolute, timeless, static and all-encompassing, it is constantly challenged by “outsiders” in order to expand, to revise or to change it. The constructed nature of the canon is concealed, the hierarchy of power in the field of art is hidden. Power struggles are inherent to canon formation. The genealogy, historicity of the canon, as well as the process of its formation and competing canons will be explored.

**Reading**


**Seminar:**

Questions to discuss

- Who are the agents of constructing the canon?
Who is included and who is excluded? What are the criteria and how are the criteria defined?

What is the geopolitical structure of the canon and what are its consequences?

What is to be done concerning the canon in Eastern and Central Europe?

**Recommended Readings**


**Class 8 (May 31 at 5 PM CET). Staging Art Historical Continuities Worldwide**

Instructors: Polina Baitsym (CEU) and Lizaveta German (independent researcher)

National art-historical narratives cherish continuities, drawn by curators and art historians between contemporary culture and the “great masters of the past.” For instance, in the Soviet Union in the 1950-80s, socialist realism was associated with the Renaissance, and art experts claimed Soviet artists as successors of Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and Titian. This session aims to introduce a critical perspective on continuities in art history and equip students with the basics of the transnational analytic approach to undermine and revise established canons. The second part of the session will illuminate how biennales and international exhibitions endure as crucial sites of knowledge production where states strive to mediate the display of national cultural belonging.

**Reading:**


**Seminar**

**Questions:**

1. Why art historians and curators do pursue the creation of continuities in arts? Who are the other actors in these matters, and what are their motivations?
2. How are these ideas distributed and perceived?
3. Why the international displays of these continuities are essential?

**Class 9 (Jun 7 at 5 PM CET). Cultural heritage canons**

![icon](person.png) **József Laszlovszky (CEU)**

Heritage is controversial. What is heritage? Who owns heritage? Who creates heritage? Why to protect or preserve heritage? These are the key issues for any ideas concerning cultural heritage, ever since the term has been coined, created and used in international discourses. And of course, heritage is also about canon or canons. It is a kind of common understanding that heritage can be treated in a hierarchical system. This would mean local, regional, national and world heritage. However, who has the right to create the canon (or the „official” lists) of heritage? Is this the government of a country in the case of national heritage? Is it UNESCO in the case of World Heritage? If so, what is „outstanding universal value”, which is the main concept behind the World Heritage list? The discussion of these points are also connected to the issues of other canons, created by academic fields (art history, archaeology, literary studies, etc.), since the controversies faced by these fields should also influence the debates on canons in the sphere of heritage studies. Another important aspect of these discussions will be the critical approach in the field of heritage studies: these theoretical issues will also be confronted with the daily practices of creating canons or lists.

📚 **Mandatory reading:**


**Optional further readings:**


[Gábor Sonkoly – Tanja Vahtikari: Innovation in Cultural Heritage Research. For an integrated European research policy](#)

**Module 4: Art, Media, and Archives**

**Class 10 (Jun 14 at 5 PM CET). Testimonial value of archival footage and entangled historical narratives in contemporary documentary cinema**

![icon](person.png) **Oksana Sarkisova (CEU)**
This class focuses on the role of visual imagery in construction and circulation of historical narratives. It explores medium-specificity and social context of image production, exhibition, and circulation and reflects on the social and historical conditioning of seeing. The topics include the notion of objectivity, the problem of interpretation, the appropriation and redefinition of visual imagery in different historical narratives.

Viewing:

![One Day in People's Poland / Jeden dzień w PRL (dir Maciej Drygas, Poland, 2005)](image)

September 27, 1962 was an ordinary day in the Polish People's Republic. We would know very little about what exactly happened in the lives of the country's 30 million inhabitants on that day, were it not for the meticulous reports produced by police officers, security officials and their informants. Every incident that suggested the slightest hint of resistance was investigated, and thick dossiers were compiled on the lives of many ordinary people who were suspected of being dissidents. With dates and times accurately recorded, the details of their lives were stored in the Polish archives.

![The Fall of Lenin / Leninopad (dir Svitlana Shymko, Ukraine, 2017)](image)

An ironic documentary film about the farewell to the phantoms of the USSR in Ukraine. The spiritual session with the ghost of Lenin guides us through our past, present and future. The film presents the dawn and the twilight of idols, and the curious afterlife of history's ghosts. It is inspired by laws adopted in 2015 by the parliament of Ukraine which condemn the Soviet totalitarian regime and ban the use of Communist symbols.

GUEST: Svitlana Shymko, filmmaker

Class 11 (Jun 21 at 5 PM CET). Music of the Nation

![Marsha Siefert (CEU) and Ostap Sereda (UKU); possibly Bohdan Shumylovych (UKU)](image)

Music, whether folk song or composed melodies, was an important marker of national identity during the nineteenth-century. This period was also related to the rise of folk-song collecting and choral singing, music clubs and attempts to compose a “national opera.” This session will review the most prominent Ukrainian music personality, Mykola Lysenko, of the 19th century and the form of musical theater as a portrayal of Ukrainian everyday life, as well as its 20th-century manifestations in musical film and television.

Readings:


Questions:

1. How do you imagine the relation between music, nationalism and identity?
2. How do folk songs, national operas and other musical forms contribute to cultural heritage and patriotism?

3. How did 20th century-media enable the transformation and distribution of these national stories?

Audiovisual material:

Zaporizhian Cossacks beyond the Danube (2007)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsVQHBTE66s

Lysenko, Natalka Poltavka

- Mykola’s song sung by Petr Ostapenko  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5llazxMRQ0
- Petro’s song  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mp6hN8mHrCw
- Natalka’s song  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyahNjKhXEl&list=PLvQ3fuGsilcftqaKnNzYMLj1G7p3TKX&index=22

Lysenko, Taras Bulba

- Opening and 1t Kobzar’s song from Lysenko, Taras Bulba (Kyiv State Opera 1972)  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOo7B UdY_o
- Act one, live performance at Kyiv State Opera)  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7SuLWg6bLs
- Ostap’s aria  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvJ9Eu-aSTE (from the filmed version)

Seminar work:

After February 24th, 2022, Lysenko’s Prayer for Ukraine was performed by several groups and the recordings were uploaded. How would you talk about the way in which this 19th century piece was mobilized in the current conflict? Do you think that those hearing it would know about the composer or the piece? Valentin Silvestrov’s Prayer for Ukraine is also being performed and uploaded. How do you relate this contemporary piece by a living composer to its predecessor?

The music conservatory in Kyiv is named after Tchaikovsky, who recommended its founding in the late 19th century. How do we think about music in international culture that is associated with imperial Russia or the Soviet era?

For debate:

https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2022/03/the-cancellation-of-russian-culture

Emily Richmond Pollock and Kira Thurman, 15 April 2022 When Classical Music Was an Alibi - The New York Times
Audiovisual material:

Lysenko, Prayer for Ukraine: performed by Pittsburgh Symphony 4 March 2022
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTHyTwTceE8

Lysenko, modern arrangement; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaOChwNPg5o

Silvestrov, Prayer for Ukraine, performed by Kyiv choir
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuzS_ZS2czY

Further reading:


Schmelz, Peter, 20 March 2022 Ukraine’s Most Famous Living Composer Is Now a Refugee - The New York Times


Class 12 (Jun 28 at 5 PM CET). Curating audio-visual heritage

👩‍🎓 Oksana Sarkisova (CEU)

The session will address the use of audio-visual material in public programs (with a special focus on documentary films and footage), strategies of reaching out to and engaging multiple audiences, reactualizing archival materials in festivals and other cultural events. The discussion will explore the roles and functions of various (actual and potential) stakeholders including cultural programmers and other practitioners, questions of ownership, relationship between archives and festivals, various other forms of institutional cooperation, as well as the possibilities and limitations of curatorship.

GUEST: Yuliia Kovalenko, Docudays UA, programmer, film critic
Organizational help and doctoral mentors:

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