HERITAGE

THE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Executive Leadership Development in Heritage Management Workshops

Engaging Communities in Cultural Heritage

International Summer School

Paros, Greece

(in person and online)

15 June - 6 July 2025

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15 - 22 June • ONLINE

23 June - 6 July • IN-PERSON

Course Directors & Instructors

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HERITΛGE Director

Community engagement gradually becomes a mainstay in the public programs of heritage institutions worldwide. A variety of methods and good practices have been developed to successfully engage the bewildering variety of communities and publics that such institutions address. Still, the uncritical application of "toolkits" for effective engagement is perhaps not the ethically appropriate way to incorporate cultural differences in the field. In this hybrid (physical/online) program, we aim to develop a different approach to community engagement, that is based on social and artistic research with community-led initiatives. Research-led practice can lead to exhibition design and collaborative actions that are better suited to the cultural and social particularities of each milieu and each specific group or community and its relation to others. This course draws from our long experience with community engagement through heritage and will discuss several examples from our own and other work.

In this hybrid program we collaborate with a citizen's initiative, the Paros Festival, from the Greek island of Paros. This is an art and heritage festival organized from below, with a remarkable volunteer base and significant impact on the town community, and with the local oral history initiative Ai Mnimai (the memories). Both initiatives will help discuss the ways in which research can lead to collective modes of knowledge creation and the preservation of local heritage.

During the course, participants will familiarize themselves with the context of community engagement through heritage, will discuss methodologies based on ethnography and oral history, will engage in practical exercises, and will be called to produce multimedia content based on interviews conducted with the guidance of the instructors.

This immersive two-week summer school program was designed to combine theoretical learning with practical application.

Online Component:

Participants will engage in daily online lectures that provide a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical foundations of community engagement. These sessions are complemented by carefully selected readings and assignments to deepen their insights and analytical skills.

On-Site Fieldwork:

Building on the online foundation, the on-site field component emphasizes the practical application of theory. Through hands-on ethnographic research and dynamic field exercises, participants will apply various ethnographic techniques such as direct and participant observation, interviews, focus groups in real-world scenarios.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

Online Participation

- demonstrate an understanding of the principles of community engagement, collaborative research and heritage values
- conduct research in a dynamic mode, tailored to community needs and community engagement initiatives
- demonstrate skills in applied ethnography, doing long-distance oral history interviews and digitally documenting personal narratives and material objects
- practice the curation of multimedia content and create narratives for online exhibitions
- ponder on the possibilities of cultural heritage becoming part of festival activities and temporary exhibitions
- get introduced to interpretation skills for heritage managers
- learn about the potentials and pitfals of festival organization around heritage
- learn and discuss the issues involved with community tourism
- ponder on the uses of art and artistic research in the preservation, highlighting and interpretation of heritage, and its role in engaging communities

On-site Participation

- understand the complexities of local communities in heritage based on the concrete example of the local place they work in, compare and contrast it with examples from the team's own experiences
- engage in collaborative research in teams, meaning the planning, execution, evaluation and further planning of ethnographic and desk research in a real setting. Manage the dynamic of the team as well as the capacities of people involved. Locate, approach and interview interlocutors, understand their background and study them in context
- conduct ethnographic observation in person and in teams, discuss the results and be able to interpret them in context

- create an interview guide for at least one interlocutor, conduct the interview in person, critically interpret and evaluate the outcome
- understand the fundamental technical aspects of recording, storing, archiving and evaluating interviews
- investigate critically and understand in situ the different heritage initiatives of the place the summer school happens in, and be able to understand their prospects and limitations in the Greek context of heritage management - compare with different contexts and settings
- learn how to develop their own community engagement projects based on the particular characteristics of their locale and their own communities. Understand why community projects do not "travel" very well
- interpret the information gained through research and devise strategies to share it with the public
- participate in the making of a podcast based on the research done during the summer school
- devise ways to present research to the public, and do so in a final presentation of work in situ

Course Outline

Theme 1: Introduction to heritage management and community engagement

(by Aris Anagnostopoulos, Lena Stefanou, Evangelos Kyriakidis)

What is community engagement? How is it different from outreach or public education programs? What is a community and how do we set up collaborative programs of research and presentation? What is the decolonizing potential of community engagement programs? In this summer school, we give an introduction to heritage management and the fact that we are managing values when we manage heritage, rather than just fabric. This comes to explain the primacy of the local communities as important stakeholders for the management of heritage. We further discuss the developments in community engagement within archaeology and heritage in the last few decades. We look at criticisms, dilemmas and put emphasis on examples of good practice. The instructors present their own work, in comparison with other examples from the world over, and lay out their method of incorporating research and public actions into a complete plan for working with communities.

Theme 2: Ethnographic methods and collaborative research

(by Aris Anagnostopoulos, Lena Stefanou)

What is ethnographic research? Why is it necessary for heritage practitioners? How can we use it to solve issues with heritage spaces? Why is it a strong engagement tool? How do we define our audiences and publics? How does audience segmentation help us through this process to expand our potential to offer tailored projects for the needs of different communities and to produce audience-centred and people-centred approaches and results? Ethnographic research is an indispensable aspect of designing and implementing a community engagement project. It is essential in establishing relations with the communities involved and understanding their values, culture and issues, as well as the differentials in power and access.

Theme 3: Oral history

(by Lena Stefanou)

In this theme we will explore the relationship between oral history and heritage. The collection of oral testimonies regarding heritage sites and cultural practices, as well as their incorporation in museum exhibitions and heritage projects has acquired a great importance over the last decade. During the summer school we will have ample time to explore how we set up or support projects that focus on collecting personal and communal narratives, and on publicly displaying community memory. Some of the themes to be explored are the main principles of conducting an interview, the structure of an interview guide, the technical parameters we need to be aware of for conducting successful oral history interviews, as well as the consent forms and the General Data Protection Regulations.

Theme 4: Going digital: producing and displaying local cultural heritage and history

(by Aris Anagnostopoulos, Lena Stefanou)

How can cultural heritage and local history be transformed into multimedia content? What are the specificities of curatorial work and research on the web? In what different ways do communities of users participate in online collections and what role do social media play in creating and sustaining communities? We look into the making of web-based platforms, such as the "Postman's Road" in Sfakia, Crete, the "Archives and Collections of Paros" online repository, and the digital initiative "The Museum inside Me". Based on the experience of working both online and offline for creating digital content, we will discuss modes of knowledge production and practices of engaging with communities based on online content.

Theme 5: FESTIVALS National / State-Regional / Private-Local / Community: mission, objectives, characteristics, challenges

Each festival organization is an entity in itself: its mission, objectives, stakeholders, format, and outcome define the core of its identity. And these may differ from National/State to Regional/Private, to Local/Community. By understanding the specific characteristics of each such event, and the parameters that influence its very essence at all stages (initiating - designing - planning – executing – evaluating), one can put into perspective the role of community in different types of festivals. And as festivals around

the world become a prevailing element of cultural activity, the key request for community engagement is not always a fact by default. Different festivals entail different challenges in terms of community involvement, different tools to address them, diverse outcomes to expect in different levels of ownership, and participatory approaches. But there is always a way to engage the community, as long as it is set as a primary aspect of any festival!

Bibliography

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To apply for this workshop please:

1. Fill in and submit the Executive Leadership Program in Heritage Management Application Form. Please complete the application process by submitting your CV, a personal statement (describing your current project that will benefit from this training) and a reference letter (which may come in separately by your referee at their earliest convenience).

2. A reasonable proficiency in spoken and written English is required to attend the course.

3. Applicants will be asked to participate in a personal (oral) interview.

After approval of their application file, participants will receive an official letter outlining in detail the conditions of participation.

Places for this workshop are limited, so please apply early.

The application deadline is 30 April 2025.

For questions regarding the application process and the administrative aspects of the course, contact us at info@heritagemanagement.org.