

## **ANTH 2730/UGED 2668 Preserving Cultural Heritage (2025-26)**

Instructor: Dr. Sharon Wong Wai-yee

Office: NAH411, Humanities Bldg, New Asia College.

Phone: 3943 7670 (office) Email: [sharonwyy@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:sharonwyy@cuhk.edu.hk)

Tutor: Shu Zien

Email: [TsringSHU@link.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:TsringSHU@link.cuhk.edu.hk)

Lecture: Monday 10:30am-12:15pm T.C. Cheng Bldg 114

Tutorial: Monday 12:30-1:15pm T.C. Cheng Bldg 114

### Course Outline

Shall we preserve the old things, and why? What is “cultural heritage”? Using examples in different parts of the world, this course aims to give students a concise and critical understanding on heritage conservation from an anthropological perspective. The course will introduce basic concepts and cultural contexts of the occurrence and development of cultural heritage conservation in the world, and discuss important issues in this field, including the economic, social and political meanings of heritage in contemporary societies, the impetus of preserving heritage, climate change impact on heritage, the use of heritage as a social and political implement by the state, scholars, and different communities for their own interests. The course will also discuss problems and challenges in this area.

No prior knowledge on heritage preservation is required for this course.

### Major contents of this course

Why are human beings interested in their past? Is heritage “invented”?

The origin and development of heritage conservation will be explored and discussed.

Debates on heritage preservation and management:

1. Who needs cultural heritage? Is heritage conservation a social elite business?
2. Who owns the cultural heritage, and who has the right to decide what should be preserved, and how to preserve it?
3. International principles and local cultures, globalization and localization: the preservation of cultural heritage in different political, economic and social contexts/countries—should there be “universal principles and philosophy” for heritage conservation? Is there a so-called “best practice”? Who has the right to decide what is “the best practice”?
4. How climate change relates to cultural heritage?
5. The use and abuse of cultural heritage. Issues about documentary heritage, the dynamics between tangible, intangible and digital heritage.
6. The future of human beings’ past: can heritage be preserved at all? The relationship between heritage, society and individuals

### Learning outcomes

After taking this course, students are expected to:

1. Understand the basic concepts, principles and approaches of managing cultural heritage.
2. Learn to appreciate cultural heritage created by human beings, and to respect different cultures.

3. Understand the economic, social and political issues of heritage preservation and management in contemporary societies.
4. Use inter-disciplinary approaches and critical thinking in discussing heritage issues.

#### Learning activities

2-hour lectures and 1-hour tutorial per week for one semester, site visit and field trip in Hong Kong.

#### Course assessment:

1. Participation and discussion in the tutorials (20%)
2. Mid-term report (30%)

Student should submit no more than 3 pages individual report on a study of selected cultural heritage site (Due date: 13<sup>th</sup> March, Friday, 5pm)

3. Final paper (50%)

Student will be required to write not more than 2500 words individual paper on a study of selected topic(s) from lecture(s) (Due date: 24<sup>th</sup> April, Friday, 5pm)

Grade descriptors are as follows for the assessment of this course:

Grade Overall course

- A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A- Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- B Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
- C Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes
- F Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

#### Medium of instruction

Cantonese

#### Use of AI Tools by Students in Learning Activities and Assessments

Approach 1 – Prohibit all use of AI tools

Students are not allowed to use any AI tools in any kind of learning activity or assessment that will be counted towards students' final grade of the course, or used for evaluating students' attainment of the desired learning outcomes. Students are expected to produce their own work independently without any collaboration or use of AI tools.

#### Submissions & academic honesty

As required by the university, from Sept. 2008, students must submit a soft copy of their computer-generated text assignments to VeriGuide at a specified URL. The system will issue a receipt containing a declaration of honesty statement. Students should sign the receipt, print a hard copy of their assignment, and submit the hard copy and the receipt to

teachers for grading. The university says that assignments without the receipt will NOT be graded.

Please check the website "Honesty in Academic Work" at:

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> for more information on plagiarism and on how to submit papers through VeriGuide

Essential readings:

UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

ICOMOS The Venice Charter and the Archaeological Heritage Charter  
<http://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts>

Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001256/125637e.pdf>

Smith, L. 2006. *Uses of Heritage*. New York and London: Routledge.

Smith, L. 2021. *Emotional Heritage: Visitor Engagement at Museums and Heritage Sites*. London and New York: Routledge.

Lecture topics:

Week 1 (5<sup>th</sup> Jan.)

Introduction, what is cultural heritage? Is it inherited or invented? Heritage preservation vision and strategies

Required Readings:

Smith, L. 2006. *Uses of Heritage*. London and New York: Routledge. Chapter 1.

Smith, L. 2021. *Emotional Heritage: Visitor Engagement at Museums and Heritage Sites*. London and New York: Routledge. Chapter 1.

UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

Week 2 (12<sup>th</sup> Jan.)

Contents, application and problems of international principles and conventions on heritage preservation

Required Readings:

Australia ICOMOS. 2013 The Burra Charter. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance

<http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>

The Venice Charter [http://www.icomos.org/charters/venice\\_e.pdf](http://www.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf)

The Archaeological Heritage Charter

[http://www.icomos.org/charters/arch\\_e.pdf](http://www.icomos.org/charters/arch_e.pdf)

Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001256/125637e.pdf>

Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000179529/PDF/179529eng.pdf.multi>

Week 3 (19<sup>th</sup> Jan.)

Heritage management and assessment approaches and practices

Required Readings:

Smith, L., 2004. *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage*. Routledge, London. Chapter 1.

Hong Kong Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance:

<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap53>

Week 4 (26<sup>th</sup> Jan.)

Managing and interpreting archaeological remains: in situ conservation vs museumification

Required Readings:

Brattli, T. 2009. "Managing the Archaeological World Cultural Heritage: Consensus or Rhetoric?" *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 42(1): 24-39.

Week 5 (2<sup>nd</sup> Feb.)

How to manage archaeological sites as unmovable tangible heritage?

Required Reading:

Lu, Tracey. 2014. "The Management of Archaeological Sites and Monuments in Hong Kong." In Hong Kong Museum of History ed. *Collected Essays of the International Conference on Historical Imprints of Lingnan: Major Archaeological Discoveries of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Museum of History, pp.234-246.

Week 6 (9<sup>th</sup> Feb.)

Climate change and preserving cultural heritage

Required Reading:

Sesana, E, Gagnon, AS, Ciantelli, C, Cassar, JA, Hughes, JJ. 2021. "Climate Change Impacts on Cultural Heritage: A Literature Review." *WIREs Climate Change*. 12: 1-29.

Week 7 (16<sup>th</sup> Feb.) Public Holiday: Lunar New Year. No Class.

Week 8 (23<sup>rd</sup> Feb.)

Architectural monuments and environs—functions, issues and problems in management

Required Readings:

Drury, Paul. 1996. "Conservation Techniques – the Built Environment." In Richard Harrison ed. *Manual of Heritage Management*. Oxford: Butterworth and Heinemann, pp. 196-204.

Pillai, Janet. 2013. *Cultural Mapping: A Guide to Understanding Place, Community and Continuity*. Selangor: Universiti Sains Malaysia, pp.43-91.

Week 9 (2<sup>nd</sup> Mar.) Reading Week. No Class.

Week 10 (9<sup>th</sup> Mar.)

Integrating heritage and environment conservation: the construction of "cultural landscape"

Required Readings:

Taylor, Ken and Lennon, Jane. 2011. "Cultural landscapes: a bridge between culture and nature?" *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 17(6): 537-554.

**\*\*Mid-Term Report: completed reports with Veriguide receipts to be submitted to Blackboard by 5pm Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> Mar.**

Week 11 (16<sup>th</sup> Mar.)

What is intangible heritage and why it should be “preserved”? How to “preserve” it?

Required Readings:

UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention>

Djabarouti, Johnathan. 2021. “Practice barriers towards intangible heritage within the UK built heritage sector.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 27(11): 1101-1116.

Week 12 (23<sup>rd</sup> Mar.)

The dynamics between tangible, intangible and digital heritage

Required Readings:

Ocón, David .2023. “Low-cost digital tools to preserve cultural heritage ‘blind spots’: the case of Kubor Kassim in Singapore.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 29:9, 961-987.

Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000179529/PDF/179529eng.pdf.multi>

Week 13 (30<sup>th</sup> Mar.)

Issues about documentary heritage

Required Readings:

Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001256/125637e.pdf>

Laia, Colomer. 2017. “Heritage on the Move. Cross-cultural Heritage as a Response to Globalisation, Mobilities and Multiple Migrations.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23(10): 913-927.

Week 14 (6<sup>th</sup> April.) Public holiday – The day following Ching Ming Festival. No Class.

Week 15 (13<sup>th</sup> April.)

Who needs cultural heritage? Heritage, society and individuals

Required Reading:

Smith, L. 2021. “Heritage and the Politic of Recognition.” In *Emotional Heritage: Visitor Engagement at Museums and Heritage Sites*. London and New York: Routledge, Chap 12.

**\*\*Final paper: completed papers with Veriguide receipts to be submitted to Blackboard by 5pm Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> April.**

Tutorial topics

Week 1

No tutorials. Students to prepare and read readings.

Week 2

Discussion: what is cultural heritage and what is meant by preserving it.

Week 3

Discussion: major contents, strengths and weakness of international principles.

Week 4

Discussion: Managing and interpreting archaeological remains: in situ conservation vs Museumification

Week 5

No classroom tutorials. No tutorials. Students to prepare and read readings.

Weeks 6

Discussion: Climate change and preserving cultural heritage

Week 7 Public Holiday. No tutorials. Students to prepare and read readings.

Weeks 8

No classroom tutorials. No tutorials. Students to prepare and read readings.

Weeks 9 Reading week. No classroom tutorials.

Week 10

Discussion: Integrating heritage and environment conservation

Week 11

Discussion: Intangible heritage and why it should be “preserved”? How to “preserve” it?

Week 12

Discussion: The dynamics between tangible, intangible and digital heritage

Week 13

Discussion: Issues about documentary heritage

Week 14 Public Holiday. No tutorials. Students to prepare and read readings.

Week 15

Discussion: Heritage, society and individuals