

CRITIQUE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE
Research Seminar

Miklós Vörös

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design
Institute of Theoretical Studies
Spring 2020 — Fridays 10:00–12:50

Course Code: M-SZ-201-ELM-2019202-14 and others

Course Credits: 5

Weekly Hours: 4

Prerequisites: none

Course Requirements: research assignments, presentations, essays

Consultations: office hours on Wednesdays 10:00–11:00, sign up first by email

E-mail: mome.voros@gmail.com, voros@mome.hu

Course Description

Combining theoretical explorations and critical reflections with the development of practical skills of project conceptualization and management, this reading and research seminar broadly examines the emergence of a new conceptual approach in cultural and historical studies in the early 1980s: social constructivism. During the first half of the course students are going to read and discuss key texts published in this genre and then we gradually turn our attention to a specific field of debate: the cultural heritage discourse of the last thirty years. We are going to explore how this discourse has influenced our conceptions about history, culture, and identity and led to the institutional development of heritage tourism in an increasingly globalized cultural landscape.

The main purpose of the course is to familiarize students with the professional and political debates on the social and economic value of cultural heritage sites and folklore traditions. By the end of the course the students should be able to develop their own, autonomous critical analyses of various case studies.

Topics to be covered

- Identity and imagination: culture, tradition, heritage – and authenticity
- The invention of culture: freezing the cultural flow
- Presentism and nostalgia: the imaginary past in the present
- The invention of tradition: discussion of a concept
- The uses of tradition: local knowledge and performance
- The uses of folklore and intangible heritage
- Transnational heritage discourse: policies and practices
- Manufacturing, promoting and consuming cultural heritage
- World cultural heritage: management in practice
- European cultural capitals: branding culture and heritage

Requirements for Completing the Course

The format of the course is a combination of brief lectures, controlled discussions of various assigned readings (including book chapters, journal articles, as well as policy documents), and analyses of case studies, some of them developed during the course itself. The students should be prepared to give concise presentations on the readings during the class meetings and carry out brief research tasks between them.

Calculating the Course Grade

It is required to participate in all class meetings. Failing to attend more than two classes will automatically result in the non-completion of the course.

Components:

• Course attendance	10 %	86–100 %:	A
• Presentations of readings	15 %	71–85 %:	B
• Completion of research assignments	25 %	61–70 %:	C
• Presentation of individual case study	25 %	51–60 %:	D
• Final essay	25 %	0–50 %:	F

Grading:

Preliminary Course Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topics and Assignments</i>
Feb. 7	Introduction and Course Outline
Feb. 14	<i>Identity and Imagination</i> – Culture, tradition, heritage, and authenticity
Feb. 21	<i>Culture</i> – The invention of culture: Freezing the cultural flow (discussion)
Feb. 28	<i>Nostalgia</i> – Presentism: The imaginary past in the present
March	Selection of Case Studies
March 6	<i>Tradition</i> – The Invention of Tradition: Discussion of a Concept (presentations)
March 13	<i>Folklore</i> – The Uses of Tradition: Local Knowledge and Performance
March 27	<i>Intangible Heritage</i> – Transnational Heritage Discourse: Policies and Practices
April 3	<i>Museum Collections</i> – Historical Genealogies of Consuming Cultural Heritage
April 17	<i>Built Heritage</i> – Protection and Promotion of Cultural Heritage Sites
April 24	<i>Branding Heritage</i> – Cultural Heritage in the Global Tourism Industry
May	Presentations of Case Studies (date to be announced)
June	Grading

Course Readings

1. Key texts in social constructivism: Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 1975, 1981); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1983, 1991); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983, 1992).
2. The main source of case studies, for reference: Nezar AlSayyad (ed.), *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage* (Routledge, 2001); Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (University of California Press, 1998); Yorke Rowan and Uzi Baram (eds.), *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past* (Routledge, 1996).