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UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE

DILEF
DIPARTIMENTO
DI LETTERE
E FILOSOFIA

SUMMER SCHOOL (SEPT 4-8 2023, UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE)

ACROSS NATURE AND CULTURE: THE CITY OF FLORENCE AS A CASE STUDY FOR NATURAL-CULTURAL CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION ISSUES

In times of rising urbanization and biodiversity erosion, the future of *natural heritage* is expected to increasingly depend on the ability of people to maintain a connection to nature within urban contexts. A city park or a municipal garden is often the *only* form of nature that people in cities can experience directly. Furthermore, cities – paradigmatically, European cities - also raise issues of *historic-artistic heritage* conservation: in urban contexts, green areas frequently coexist side by side with examples of tangible and intangible cultural heritage (buildings, monuments; traditions, oral history). What are the main challenges posed by the necessary integration of natural heritage issues, on the one hand, and cultural heritage issues, on the other hand, in the context of today's Anthropocene cities? What is the role played by the arts, aesthetics, and the natural sciences in these challenges?

The Environmental Humanities, as an interdisciplinary field of research and teaching which underlines the centrality of the humanities to understand today's environmental emergencies, provides the most effective approach to bio-cultural conservation in urban contexts.

To discuss these issues, an **International rotating field study Summer School**, funded by EUniWell, will be hosted in Florence (Italy), **4-8.09.2023**.

ACROSS NATURE AND CULTURE

This summer school is a part of the EUniWell project *Across Nature and Culture: the city of Florence as a case study for natural-cultural conservation and preservation issues*. Four of the [EUniWell](#)

universities are participating in the project: University of Cologne, University of Florence, Nantes University, and Linnaeus University.

ABOUT YOUR ACCOMMODATION

Teaching staff:

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Students (only for students from Nantes, Cologne, Vaxjo-Linnaeus):

Hotel Careggi

Via Taddeo Alderotti, 43 - 50139 FIRENZE

Tel: +39 3356113179

Main location of the summer school:

University of Florence, Department of Philosophy and Literature (DILEF), via della Pergola 60, 50121 Florence, "Sala Orbatello"

In case you need to contact us during before, during or after the summer school, please email, text or phone:

Mariagrazia Portera (academic inquiries; primary contact person):

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Camilla Righini (administration)

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PROGRAMME:

• Monday, Sept 4

14.00 – 15.30:

DILEF, University of Florence, via della Pergola, 60, 50122 Firenze, Sala “Orbatello”

Welcome coffee; introduction to the Summer school, run-through of the week’s programme and introduction to the assignments (Mariagrazia Portera, DILEF, University of Florence); “speed dating workshop”, forming groups;

15.30 – 17.30

Walking tour through the city center of Florence and visit to the to the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (“Laboratorio di restauro”, guided tour by Dr. Alessandro Sidoti, BNCF); <https://www.bncf.firenze.sbn.it>

17.30 – 19.00

DILEF, University of Florence, via della Pergola, 60, 50122 Firenze, Sala “Orbatello”

Coffee & tea; Group Work

• Tuesday, Sept 5

9.00–12.00

DILEF, University of Florence, via della Pergola, 60, 50122 Firenze, Sala “Orbatello”

Teaching module: *The city in the Anthropocene: natural-cultural conservation issues from the perspective of the Environmental Humanities*

Teaching staff: Mariagrazia Portera (DILEF, University of Florence); Natalie Dederichs (Cologne), Karine Durin (Nantes); Agnès Blandeu (Nantes)

Description: The first part of this teaching module (by Mariagrazia Portera) will introduce students to the notions of “cultural conservation” and “natural conservation” and to possible strategies of interconnection and integration of different conservation issues against the background of the Anthropocene city. What does it mean, in the midst of the global ecological crisis, to conserve nature and culture (both tangible and intangible culture) in the urban context? Why should we conserve, to what purpose and for whom? What is the role of aesthetics and the arts in conservation practices? What is the role of the human body and aesthetic performance in the conservation, enaction and transmission of intangible cultural heritage? Mariagrazia’s main assumption is that, along with looking for effective solutions, we should also give us the time to “stay with the trouble” (Donna Haraway), in the attempt to understand profoundly the conflicting issues of the Anthropocene and the multiplicity of human and non-human actors at stake. In the second part of the module (by Natalie Dederichs), students will be presented with the key concepts and methods of the Environmental Humanities (EH). Using the example of ecocriticism as a subdiscipline of

EH-research, we will discuss the potential of an interdisciplinary approach to literary analysis to explore and comment on natural-cultural entanglements in Anthropocenic cityscapes. In this context, we will also investigate how the affective and aesthetic affordances of literature contribute to climate change communication in a time of ecological crisis. In the third part of the module (by Agnès Blandeu and Karine Durin), the treatment of nature in a late 14th-century Middle English romance, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and the archaeology of the nature-culture dichotomy in modern European literature will be discussed. Agnès Blandeu will examine the metaphoric role attributed to nature (and its link with pagan sorcery) in the romance, with some parallels and differences with David Lowery's film, *The Green Knight*, while Karine Durin will introduce the students to some literary examples of the long-term idea of the conflict between natural heritage and cultural heritage. In particular, she will question how a certain approach to aesthetics has contributed to historically rooting representations of the incompatibility between urban and natural environments, which have reached their extreme point in the Romantic period. How can we transcend these dichotomies that still pervade the field of literary representation? What is the state of this antagonism today? How does culture deal with it today?

Readings:

(I part; Mariagrazia Portera):

Ferretti, Valentina & Comino, Elena. (2015). *An integrated framework to assess complex cultural and natural heritage systems with Multi-Attribute Value Theory*. "Journal of Cultural Heritage". 16. 10.1016/j.culher.2015.01.007

Ruggles, D. Fairchild, Silverman, Helaine (ed. By), *Intangible Heritage Embodied*, Springer 2009.

Ingold, T. (2001). *From the transmission of representations to the education of attention*. In H. Whitehouse (Ed.), *The Debated Mind: Evolutionary psychology versus ethnography* (pp. 113-153).

(II part; Natalie Dederichs):

Glotfelty, Cheryll. 1996. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis". In Cheryll Glotfelty & Harold Fromm (eds.). *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, pp. xv-xxxvii.

Hubbell, J. Andrew & John C. Ryan. 2021. "Introduction to the Environmental Humanities: History and Theory". In J. Andrew Hubbell & John C. Ryan (eds.). *Introduction to the Environmental Humanities*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-18.

(III part; Agnès Blandeu, Karine Durin):

George, Michael. (2010). *Gawain's Struggle with Ecology: Attitudes toward the Natural World in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. "Journal of Ecocriticism" 2(2) July, pp. 30-44.

Horace, Second Epode, Elizabeth Jones (trans.), *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics, Fall, 2005, Third Series*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Fall, 2005), pp. 117-120;

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/29737264>

Fray Luis de León, Marion E. Beall, «The Quiet Life: (La Vida Retirada)», *Hispania*, vol. 7, n°4 (oct. 1924), pp. 266-268 (Jstor- english translation)

Selected Poems of Luis de Góngora. A Bilingual Edition, John Dent-Young (ed., trans.), Chicago & London, The University of Chicago Press, 2007, p. 12-14.

Wiener, Martin, J., *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980*, Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 41-52.

12.00 – 13.30

Lunch, Sant'Apollonia

14.00 – 17.00

Bus to Fiesole & **Field experience in Fiesole** – “Monitoring pollinators in the urban context”; Staff: Leonardo Dapporto (BIO, University of Florence), Claudia Bruschini (BIO, University of Florence), Alessandro Cini (University of Pisa), Federico Cappa (BIO, University of Florence)

17.00 – 19.00

Teaching module: *Biodiversity in the city. How to monitor, measure and improve the richness in biodiversity within the urban context in the Anthropocene*

Teaching staff: Leonardo Dapporto (BIO, University of Florence), Claudia Bruschini (BIO, University of Florence), Alessandro Cini (University of Pisa)

Description: In recent years, there has been growing evidence about the decline of terrestrial insects across the world. Insects are a crucial component of global biodiversity and play a vital role in ecosystem services, for example making pollination possible or as food for other animals. In the Anthropocene, the risk is real that we witness an Insect-geddon, the final extinction of most insect species across the planet. But what is the role of cities in this decline of insects? Has the rising urbanization in the Anthropocene increased the speed rate of insect extinction? In this teaching module, which includes a practical part (field monitoring experience) and a theoretical part (workshop), we focus on a particular insect group, i.e. butterflies (Lepidoptera). Butterflies are, on the one hand, among the most well-studied insect groups, due to their beauty, their symbolic-cultural value, and the fact that they are relatively easy to identify; on the other hand, butterflies are particularly sensitive to environmental change and degradation (habitat loss, climate change, pollution). Students will be introduced to standard methods to monitor insect biodiversity in urban areas, to the main studies discussing the issue of insect decline at the global level, and to some example of possible conservation solutions.

Readings:

M.S. Warren, D. Maes, C.A.M van Swaay, P. Goffart, H.Van Dyck, N.A.D. Bourn, I. Wynhoff, D. Hoare, S. Ellis, *The decline of butterflies in Europe: problems, significance, and possible solution*, “PNAS”, 2021, 18, 2.

S. Fattorini, *Insect extinction by urbanization: A long term study in Rome*, “*Biological Conservation*”, 144, Issue 1, 2011, pp. 370-375.

Fattorini, S., Mantoni, C., Dapporto, L., Davini, G., Di Biase, L. *Using Botanical Gardens as Butterfly Gardens: Insights from a Pilot Project in the Gran Sasso and Monti Della Laga National Park (Italy)*. *Conservation* 2023, 3, 109-126.

• Wednesday, Sept 6

09.00 – 10.30

DILEF, University of Florence, via della Pergola, 60, 50122 Firenze, Sala “Orbatello”

Teaching module: *Literary maps in the Anthropocene City: Florence on the surface and underground*

Teaching staff: Nicola Turi (FORLILPSI, University of Florence), Diego Salvadori (FORLILPSI, University of Florence)

Description: Focusing on the texts of two Florentine authors who have portrayed their city, this section aims to reflect on Florence's literary representation from a dual perspective: the spaces on the surface and those underground. The first part will examine, from a geo-critical perspective, Vasco Pratolini's works (*Il quartiere, Le ragazze di San Frediano, Cronache di poveri amanti...*), especially considering the transformations of urban space (and his perception: see the concept of 'geographical border') during the first half of the twentieth century. The second one, following the Material Ecocriticism theoretical framework, will focus then on Florence's sewers narrations, investigating the 'networked city' as contamination site and organism at the same time: sewers are the 'bowels' of Florence - a hidden but undoubtedly vital body - and we'll try to read them in some literary works (i.e. "Sussi e Biribissi", by Carlo Lorenzini, 1902). For the afternoon's city tour, we'll follow these literary maps over the streets of Florence.

Readings:

Prieto, E. (2016). *Geocriticism Meets Ecocriticism: Bertrand Westphal and Environmental Thinking*. In: Tally, R.T., Battista, C.M. (eds) *Ecocriticism and Geocriticism. Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Phillips, Dana. 2014. "Excremental Ecocriticism and the Global Sanitation Crisis". In: Serenella Iovino, Serpil Oppermann (eds.). *Material Ecocriticism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 172–185

10.30-12.30

Group Work

12.30 – 13.30

Lunch, Sant'Apollonia

14.00 – 15.30

DILEF, University of Florence, via della Pergola, 60, 50122 Firenze, Sala "Orbatello"

Teaching module: *Literature, Environment and the City: Enacting Intangible Cultural Heritage Through Performances in Urban Spaces*

Teaching staff: Luca Degl'Innocenti (DILEF, University of Florence)

Description: This teaching module explores a key example of intangible cultural heritage deeply embedded in the urban fabric as well as in the history of the city of Florence: the oral poetry performed since the Middle Ages by singers of tales and improvisers in Piazza San Martino and other crucial spaces of the town centre (to be explored in the afternoon walking tour). This tradition spans from Medieval and Renaissance narrative poems called *cantari* (which allowed also for moral, political, scientific, and love topics) to duels in rhyme – known as *contrastisti* – improvised in front of the passers-by up to the 1960s (and beyond), and continues today in updated forms that will be discovered in our evening performance. The central part of the module focuses on the case-study of Cristoforo l'Altissimo, a famous singer of tales of Renaissance Florence. His entertaining and educating *cantari* (midway between action movies and documentaries) were transcribed by the audience during his performances and therefore allow us to investigate how such cultural objects were created and communicated (and, in sum, did truly exist) only while enacted in front of an audience in a specific environment, by interacting with the beliefs, curiosities, interests, tastes, cultural

and social stances of the former and with the materials, shapes, functions, sounds, smells, time, weather, and natural components of the latter.

Readings:

Luca Degl'Innocenti; Massimo Rospocher (2019), *Urban voices: The hybrid figure of the street singer in Renaissance Italy*. "Renaissance Studies", vol. 33, pp. 17-41.

15.30 –17.00

Walking tour through the city center of Florence (visit to urban sites relevant for tangible/intangible cultural heritage conservation)

17.00-19.00

Group Work

19.30

Performance: *Embodying immaterial cultures: from the ottava rima to contemporary freestyle*; freestyle rap contest with young rappers and performers from the city of Florence, with the participation of Gianni Ciolli (ottava rima improviser); introduction by Luca Degl'Innocenti; Piazza S. Martino (via del Canto alla Quarconia), Firenze.

● Thursday, Sept 7

09.00 – 10.30

DILEF, University of Florence, via della Pergola, 60, 50122 Firenze, Sala "Orbatello"

Teaching module: *Meditations of the climate and ecological emergency*

Teaching staff: Ola Ståhl (Linnaeus), Jørgen Bruhn (Linnaeus)

Description: In this session, we will explore the relationships between the complexities of the climate and ecological emergency, different forms of mediation, and the agencies they open up to. Beginning with extracts from the *Critical Zones* exhibition curated by Latour and Weibel, and moving through works by Lisa Autogena/Joshua Portway and Olafur Eliasson, we will end up discussing the more activist approaches advocated in *Dokumenta 17* (Kassel, 2022) as articulated by curator Charles Esche.

Readings and materials:

Olafur Eliasson Studio, *Ice Watch*, <https://olafureliasson.net/artwork/ice-watch-2014/>

Charles Esche's speech from *dokumenta 17, 2022* (50 minutes, hear the whole presentation or parts of it, from ca 1.47-2.35), accessible here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjGxqUwOk0U>

Lisa Autogena, *Kvanefjeld*, <https://www.autogena.org/work/kuannersuit-kvanefjeld>

10.30-12.00

Group Work

12.00 – 13.30

Lunch, Sant'Apollonia

14.00 –16.30

DILEF, University of Florence, via della Pergola, 60, 50122 Firenze, Sala “Orbatello”

Teaching module: *Multispecies Design in the urban context: between heritage and nature conservation*

Teaching staff: Irene Fiesoli, Giuseppe Lotti, Francesco Cantini, Eleonora D’Ascenzi, Manfredi Sottani (DIDA, University of Florence); in cooperation with Luca Erbaggio.

Description: The training module addresses the topic of Design for Sustainability with a specific focus on Inter-species Design. The unit deals with the main case studies — from macro (ecosystem - territory), to meso (organism - city), and micro (micro-organisms - materials) scales — that attempt to tackle the main topic issues with innovative solutions. These examples are classified through the main following categories: bio-design, biomimicry, bio-receptive design, inter-species design and generative design.

To conclude, students are actively involved in a collective and conceptual work aimed at representing their vision of the analyzed issue, by connecting and questioning with the tangible and intangible heritage of the city of Florence.

Readings:

- compulsory:

Roudavski, S. (2021). Interspecies Design. *Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Anthropocene*, 147-162. (please contact us in case you can’t find the pdf)

Pallasmaa, J. (2021). *L’architettura degli animali: Animal Architecture* (p. 218). Firenze University Press.

- recommended:

Oxman, N. (2016). Age of entanglement. *Journal of Design and Science*.

Haraway, D., Endy, D., & Lejeune, L. (2019). Tools for multispecies futures. *J Des Sci*, 1, 1-22. (please contact us in case you can’t find the pdf)

Cruz, M., & Beckett, R. (2016). Bioreceptive design: A novel approach to biodigital materiality. *Arq: Architectural Research Quarterly*, 20(1), 51-64. (pdf da poter inviare)

Sarkis, H. (2021). How will we live together?. *Statement. 17^a Biennale Architettura*. (please contact us in case you can’t find the pdf)

16.30 – 19.00

Group Work

20.30

Dinner together (teachers + students), Cafaggi Restaurant, via Guelfa 35, Firenze, <https://www.ristorantecafaggi.com>.

• Friday, Sept 8

Pop-up Academy – "The (dis?)Connectedness of natures and cultures", organized in cooperation with Linnaeus University, Vaxjo, Sweden

Botanical Garden, University of Florence, via Pier Antonio Micheli 3, 50121 Firenze

9.00.-9.30

Introduction to the Pop-Up Academy and the EUniWell project; Ola Ståhl (Linnaeus), Jørgen Bruhn (Linnaeus)

9.30-10.30

Guided tour through the Botanical Garden "The intersection of natures and cultures within the city", "Giardino dei Semplici", via Pier Antonio Micheli 3, 50121 Firenze

10.30-11.45

Students' presentations and feedback

11.45-12.00

Break

12.00-13.00

Guest speaker: Marianne Krogh (University of Aarhus, Denmark)

Webs of Life

13.00-14.00

Guest speaker: Adam Dickinson (Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada)

Metabolism and Poetry: Writing in the Anthropocene

14.00-15.00

Buffet lunch, "Gran Caffè San Marco", Piazza di San Marco, 11/R, 50121 Firenze FI;
<https://www.grancaffesanmarco.it>

15.00-16.00

Panel discussion with Marianne Krogh and Adam Dickinson

DILEF, Department of Literature and Philosophy, via della Pergola 60, 50121 Firenze, Sala
"Orbatello".

MEMBERS OF THE TEACHING STAFF:

Mariagrazia Portera (DILEF, University of Florence; coordinator and scientific supervisor)
Luca Degl'Innocenti (DILEF, University of Florence)
Nicola Turi (FORLILPSI, University of Florence)
Diego Salvadori (FORLILPSI, University of Florence)
Leonardo Dapporto (BIO, University of Florence)
Claudia Bruschini (BIO, University of Florence)
Federico Cappa (BIO, University of Florence)
Alessandro Cini (University of Pisa)
Irene Fiesoli (DIDA, University of Florence)
Giuseppe Lotti (DIDA, University of Florence)
Francesco Cantini (DIDA, University of Florence)
Eleonora D'Ascenzi (DIDA, University of Florence)
Manfredi Sottani (DIDA, University of Florence).
Natalie Dederichs (University of Cologne)
Karine Durin (University of Nantes)
Agnès Blandeu (University of Nantes)
Ola Stahl (Linnaeus University)
Jorgen Bruhn (Linnaeus University)

LIST OF STUDENTS:

Saskia Maassen (Cologne)
Katrin Klandt (Cologne)
Tanya Gautam (Cologne)
Mars Edwenson Briones (Cologne)
Jody Kelly White (Linnaeus)
Enes Musa (Linnaeus)
Natalie Jirmann (Linnaeus)
Tristan Rayon (Nantes)
Emma Verron (Nantes)
Elsa Tabart (Nantes)
Solène Boulenger (Nantes)
Bianca Chiti (Florence)
Edoardo Brunelli (Florence)
Tommaso Celli (Florence)
Berto Hari (Florence)
Carlotta La Penna (Florence)
Ginevra Giannelli (Florence)
Andrea Mori (Florence)
Camilla Biagioni (Florence)
Elisa Serafini (Florence)
Cosimo Coruzzo (Florence)

GUEST SPEAKERS, POP-UP ACADEMY:

Marianne Krogh is an art historian from the University of Aarhus in Denmark and she holds a PhD from the Copenhagen School of Architecture. She has worked as a curator, critic, editor, researcher and teacher for two decades, in Denmark and abroad. In 2003-2004 she taught at the University of Venice, and she spent a decade in Berlin working at the Studio Olafur Eliasson. She is based in Copenhagen and currently directs the project 'agenda: EARTH', a three-year initiative with the aim of leading the architecture industry onto a more sustainable path. The initiative is supported by The Dreyer Foundation.



Adam Dickinson is a writer and professor of English and Creative Writing at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. His poetic practice integrates expanded modes of writing with laboratory-based scientific experiments to investigate the complicated interplay between bodies and environments. He is the author of four books of poetry, including *Anatomic* (Coach House Books), a finalist for the Raymond Souster Award and winner of the Alanna Bondar Memorial Book Prize from the Association for Literature, Environment, and Culture in Canada. *Anatomic* incorporates and responds to the results of chemical and microbial testing on his body. His work has been nominated for major Canadian literary prizes, including the Governor General's Award for Poetry, and twice for the Trillium Book Award for Poetry. He was also a finalist for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Poetry Prize and the K.M. Hunter Artist Award in Literature. He is currently an affiliated artist with the University of Copenhagen working at the intersection of metabolism and art.

