Online Public Engagement for Cultural Heritage Organizations

Cultural Heritage Studies Program, Central European University
MA Course – 2 Credits

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor: Volodymyr Kulikov (kulikovv@ceu.edu)

Format: Blended synchronous and asynchronous, **fully ONLINE** via Microsoft Teams

Virtual Office Hours: Monday 3:15 PM or by appointment

The course offers an introduction into the use of crowdsourcing and social media when implementing cultural heritage projects, with a special focus on engaging the public in the design, conduct, and dissemination of research.

Crowdsourcing – also known as citizen science – is becoming more and more common in the humanities and heritage domain as a tool for processing vast amounts of data. Members of the broader public have been involved into the collection, digitization, transcription, and description of heritage within crowdsourcing projects run by various cultural heritage organizations – galleries, libraries, archives, and museums. However, it is more than just a framework for generating content. It is a powerful tool for creating a community of interested individuals who are ready to work towards a specific shared goal.

Across industries, including the fields related to cultural heritage, social media is turning from a "nice to have" to a significant component of business strategy. Cultural heritage organizations increasingly recognize the power of social media in reaching and broadening their audience. Engaging the public with the help of these tools benefits both the audience and the organizations. The audience has easy access to the collections and knowledge, and they can learn through direct engagement with the help of interactive, collaborative digital tools. For cultural organizations, social media is an efficient way to present their work and exhibits and to involve the audience into the formation and curation of the collections.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students completing this course will:

- understand the concept of participatory heritage and advantages of community engagement in heritage-related projects
- learn the basics of what efficient crowdsourcing and social media are and how they can be used in the fields of cultural heritage studies, humanities, and social sciences;
- learn how to formulate the idea of a crowdsourcing project, how to identify micro-tasks for the crowd, how to define clear and convincing aim and tasks of the project;
- gain hands-on experience with digital tools and techniques used by scholars in the field of humanities and social sciences such as Zooniverse and Omeka;
- learn how to apply social media for public engagement;
- learn to create an effective online public engagement strategy for a heritage-related project.

PREREQUISITES

The course is designed for students specializing in cultural heritage studies, public policy, and the humanities in general. Familiarity with the basics of social media is expected, but this course assumes no special IT knowledge.

ASSESSMENT

Each class will include a discussion and analysis of cases. Students will reflect on the case and present their own projects. Students may be asked to work in small groups and to report on the results of small-group discussions. Students are encouraged to participate actively in all synchronous and asynchronous discussions since 60 percent of a student's grade are based on the quality of class participation. There will be a few compulsory readings and some practical assignments after the classes every day. Students are advised to check the home tasks and plan them in advance.

Tasks	Due	Max points
Class participation (answering questions, preparing presentations or case studies)	See Appendix 1	60
Creating a crowdsourcing project	21-Dec	20
Paper on the digital engagement strategy of a selected cultural heritage institution	30-Dec	20

Grading system

Grade	Name	Points	Credit
A	Outstanding	95	Yes
A-	Excellent	90	Yes
B+	Very Good	83	yes
B	Good	75	yes
B-	Satisfactory	66	yes
C+	Minimum Pass	50	yes
F	Fail	0	no

Students are welcome to submit the modified project documentation and the final paper after the instructor's revision before the due date. Late work is eligible for 70% of the original points.

Attendance and participation. Class attendance is imperative: 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.

Crowdsourcing project. Students are required to upload the link to their project on the eLearning site. The project can be built on Omeka, Zooniverse, or another appropriate (considering the project's aim) platform.

On the Zooniverse platform, besides the workflows and subject, fill in the *About* section, including the *Research, Results*, and *FAQ* pages (totally at least 1,000 words and five images). You may include further information such as strapline, "call to action," plans how to utilize the project. Create a field guide or(and) the project tutorial with clear instructions written in plain language (see Design principles for crowdsourcing cultural heritage and Best Practices for Engagement & Success).

On the Omeka Contribution plugin, besides *Contribute an Item*, create and fill in the pages *About* and *Guidelines* (feel free to create any other pages). The text (at least 1,000 words totally) should be written in a plain language targeting the broad audience.

You may wish to look at these examples: 1) http://menus.nypl.org/about
2) http://buildinginspector.nypl.org/about 3) http://crowdsourcingheritage.net/about
4) https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/catincamanaila/eyesores-of-bucharest

Paper on the digital engagement strategy of a selected cultural heritage institution of ca. 1,500 words should include the following elements: digital engagement aims and their correspondence to the mission and vision of the organization; SWOT analysis; suggested actions considering available resources, increasing online reach and deepening engagement, enabling audience participation, cultivating a community of practice. The paper should demonstrate the student's acquaintance with relevant secondary literature.

Examples: The National Archives Social Media Strategy. 2017–2020; The National Archives Digital Strategy. 2017–2019

READINGS

Online Public Engagement for Cultural Heritage Organizations: An Introductory Reader – 2020.
Optional: Simon, N. (2010). *The Participatory Museum. Museum 2.0.* URL: participatorymuseum.org
Optional: Ridge, M. (2014). *Crowdsourcing Our Cultural Heritage*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing.
See also the blog *Museumnext.*

COURSE STRUCTURE

Topic 1: Introduction.

About the course. Get to know each other. About the assignments.

Topic 2: The concept of participatory cultural heritage

The concept of participatory culture. Participatory heritage organization. The diversity of participation. Principles of participation. Instructional scaffolding. Meeting participants' needs. How does participation work?

Discussing answers on the questions to Nina Simon's book.

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Read: Simon, Nina. (2010). *The Participatory Museum*. Chapter 1: Principles of Participation. 24 pp.

Answer the questions posted on the eLearning site.

Topic 3: Crowdsourcing in cultural heritage

The concept of crowdsourcing. What is and what is not crowdsourcing? Types of crowdsourcing initiatives by cultural heritage institutions.

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Read: Terras, Melissa. "Crowdsourcing in the Digital Humanities." A New Companion to Digital Humanities (2016): 420–439.

Answer the questions posted on the eLearning site.

Topic 4: Crowdsourcing case studies

Surfing the crowdsourcing projects in the cultural studies domain. Students present the analysis of cases (ca. 5 mins).

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Select a pair of crowdsourcing projects from the list (see the eLearning site). Analyze the cases and prepare a presentation of up to seven minutes.

Topic 5: Crowdsourcing platforms to collect materials

Hands-on: browsing project built on the Omeka Contribution plugin. Building an own project.

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Read: Bernstein, Shelley. "Crowdsourcing in Brooklyn." In *Crowdsourcing our Cultural Heritage*, pp. 39–65. Routledge, 2016.

Answer the questions posted on the eLearning site.

Topic 6: Crowdsourcing platforms to process materials
Hands-on: browsing Zooniverse projects. Building an own project: definition of the project, building workflow, uploading media. Do's and don'ts of a good tutorial. Case study analysis: browsing tutorials of the selected crowdsourcing projects.

Topic 7: Volunteers and the community

Volunteers and the stages of participation. Their motives. Reward. Quality control for crowdsourcing projects. Organizing online communities.

Case study analysis: methods of engaging volunteers and quality control of the outcome; managing online communities.

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Read: Owens, Trevor. "Digital Cultural Heritage and the Crowd." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 56, no. 1 (2013): 121–130.

Answer the questions posted on the eLearning site.

Topic 8: Presenting student's projects

Students present in ca. 5 minutes the idea and the working version of their crowdsourcing project.

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Prepare a 5-mins presentation explaining the idea of your future crowdsourcing project. Tell the audience about the aim and the expected outcome of the project. Data and sources. Software solution(s)*. The consequence of the microtasks (show it!). Targeted audience. Challenges and limitations. Relevance to your research project. I strongly recommend drafting the project on the crowdsourcing platform so that you can see possibilities and constraints in advance.

Topic 9: Engaging the Public through Social Media: Best Practices

How do cultural heritage institutions use social media? Engaging the public through social media and websites. Case study analysis.

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Read: Chen, Jenn (2018). The Ultimate Social Media for Museums Guide. 12 pp.

Answer the questions posted on the eLearning site.

Topic 10: Strategies to engage the public via Social Media

Social media Do's Don'ts's, and How-To's. What, When, and How to Post on Facebook. 1-7-30-4-2-1 model of publishing content.

Case study analysis: analysis of the social media strategy of a selected cultural heritage institution.

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Work in groups. The task is to analyze the best practices of social media usage by GLAM and to suggest ten pieces of advice (supported by the examples) for advanced users.

Group #1 – Presenting the organization.
Group #2 – Communicating with customers.
Group #3 – Planning a social media campaign.

Group #4 – Building bridges with peer organizations.

Topic 11: Heritage organizations during the COVID-19 crisis: from onsite closure to online openness

Discussing Deborah Agostino's et al. paper.

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Read: Agostino, Deborah, Michela Arnaboldi, and Antonio Lampis. "Italian state museums during the COVID-19 crisis: from onsite closure to online openness." *Museum Management and Curatorship* (2020): 1-11.

Answer the questions posted on the eLearning site.

Topic 12: Digital engagement strategy for a selected cultural heritage institution

Students present in ca. 5 minutes the digital engagement strategy for a chosen cultural heritage institution.

🔔 **Pre-class assignment**

Prepare a 5-mins presentation explaining the idea of your future paper.

ASSIGNMENT TABLE

Pre-class assignment	Due to	Points	Classwork	Date
Assignments related to our classes				
			About the course	28-Sep
Answer to the questions related to Nina Simon's chapter	4-Oct	5	The concept of participatory heritage	5-Oct
Answer to the questions related to Melissa Terras' paper	11-Oct	5	Crowdsourcing in cultural heritage	12-Oct
Preparing case studies presentation	19-Oct	10	Crowdsourcing case studies	19-Oct
			Crowdsourcing platforms to collect materials	26-Oct
Answer to the questions related to Shelley Bernstein's chapter	1-Nov	5	Crowdsourcing platforms to process materials	2-Nov
Answer to the questions related to Trevor Owens' paper	8-Nov	5	Volunteers and the community	9-Nov
Prepare a 5-mins presentation about your future crowdsourcing project	15-Nov	5	Presenting student's projects	16-Nov
Answer to the questions related to Jenn Chen's paper	22-Nov	5	Engaging the Public through Social Media: Best Practices	23-Nov
Hands-on: Social Media for a Cultural Heritage Institution Guide	30-Nov	10	Strategies to engage the public via Social Media	30-Nov
Answer to the questions related to Deborah Agostino's paper	6-Dec	5	Heritage organizations during the COVID-19 crisis: from onsite closure to online openness	7-Dec
Prepare a 5-mins presentation about your future digital strategy paper	14-Dec	5	Digital engagement strategy for a selected cultural heritage institution	14-Dec
Total		60		
Final assignments				
Crowdsourcing project	21-Dec	20		
Paper on digital strategy	30-Dec	20		
Total		40		