What is a MOOC?

A massive open online course (MOOC) is an online course aimed at large-scale interactive participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as videos, readings, and problem sets, MOOCs provide interactive user forums that help build a community for the students, professors, and teaching assistants (TAs). MOOCs are a recent development in distance education. The Heritage under Threat MOOC is hosted on the Coursera platform.

For whom?

This course does not require prior knowledge. It is aimed at both practitioners in the field and people who are concerned about situations of failed governance or neglect in regards to heritage. This course is free, and will remain free for participants. You can, however, purchase a certificate if you want.

Find the Heritage under Threat MOOC on https://www.coursera.org/learn/heritage-protection

What our students say

"One of the finest courses dealing with heritage and its conservation"
– Anonymous

"This course has taught me a lot and offered amazing insightful views about heritage worldwide. It broadened my previous (limited) knowledge about cultural and archaeological heritage. I would highly recommend this course to those interested in the topics of heritage!"
– Anonymous

"Nice course with good information!"
– Anonymous

Centre for Global Heritage and Development

Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

TUDelft
Delft University of Technology

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Partners

This course is sponsored by the LDE Centre for Global Heritage and Development and the Honours Academy of Leiden University, and the Netherlands Commission for UNESCO which gave its support to one of the sections of the MOOC.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Heritage under Threat

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Heritage under threat

Heritage under Threat is a Massive Open Online Course in which you will learn to articulate your own concepts about (threatened) heritage, as well as gaining perspective on other outlooks on heritage. What is your heritage? Who defines heritage? Why is heritage under threat? How can we protect it? Politics and contemporary conflicts, as well as continuing political and socio-economic inequalities and colonial pasts all play a role in global heritage discussions, valorisation, and protection of heritage. Hence, the destruction of and threats to heritage are related to complex issues, often connected to multifaceted landscapes of wars, the war-on-terror, fundamentalism, migration, global warming, financial crises, inequality and diverse interests of local communities.

We wish to engage global communities and widen the perspective on Heritage under Threat. For this, we need your help. Join our Heritage under Threat community and learn more on the topic, while sharing your insights and opinions with others. Together, we can create a better understanding of the various threats to heritage and how to counter them.

The course consists of six modules, each covering certain aspects of heritage under threat, and each consisting of several lecture videos, as well as video interviews with a variety of heritage experts (such as maritime heritage experts, anthropologists, and law experts) and interesting case studies to illustrate the discussed theory.

Course modules

What is your heritage?

The first module tackles cultural heritage from a personal point of view. This is important because, as you will learn later, combining our personal views leads to inclusive heritage, which is crucial in the battle against the various threats to heritage. We would like you to introduce yourself to your fellow students in this week as well, before we dive into the content in the following weeks.

Heritage and inequality

This module will ignite a discussion on how heritage is defined, both within the field of (archaeological) heritage management, and in local communities. We will also discuss various forms of inequality, which unfortunately come with defining and framing heritage.

Heritage, communities and ownership

The third module covers the role of communities and the impact of heritage ownership. We have also prepared a very interesting case study on contested heritage for you about the Benin heritage collection.

Heritage threats

The various threats to heritage, both anthropogenic and natural, are covered in the fourth module of this MOOC. We will talk about heritage in conflict situations and the role of cultural heritage in conflicts about human rights, with a case study on the destruction of cultural heritage in Timbuktu, Mali (internationally also known as the 'Al Mahdi' case).

Heritage protection

In this module, we will discuss how we can protect cultural heritage and which measures we have at our disposal to do so. Much of these are based on international laws, treaties, and agreements. We will explain to you what these are and how they (inter) connect with concepts such as human rights and international law.

Inclusive heritage

Lastly, we will discuss how heritage can be utilised to create an inclusive, sensitive, and thoughtful society. We will also discuss some of the innovations in the world of video games and virtual reality, which offer new tools to help create an open and inclusive heritage discourse.

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