

MINOR ARTS AND HERITAGE 2026-2027

For registration please fill out the separate Minor Registration Form

Period		Title	Code	ECTS	Assessment
Period 1: 31-08-2026 / 23-10-2026	Course	Arts and Culture: Policy and Politics	ACU3005	12	grade
Period 2: 26-10-2026 / 18-12-2026	Course	Museum Meanings	ACU3004	12	grade
Period 3: 04-01-2027 / 29-01-2027	Course	Wicked problems: current issues in Policy, Art and Law *	ACU3910	6	grade

** Registration for this course is only allowed together with registration for modules ACU3005 in period 1 and ACU3004 in period 2*

Period 1: Arts and Culture: Policy and Politics

What is art? What makes good art? Who decides what is good art? Is taste in art strictly subjective? Why and how should the government support or not support art and culture: which art, whose culture? How about cultural participation? Is art for the elite or for everyone? What are values of art and culture? Can art be used as an instrument, for instance to enhance social inclusion? What are possible economic benefits for governments of supporting arts and culture?

These are some of the questions tackled in this introductory course in Cultural Politics, that is the public policy field covering the arts and heritage. Highly distinctive is the mix between need-to-know cultural theory, such as Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory on taste or Richard Florida's theory of the creative city, and practice-based encounters with professionals from the cultural sector during workshop-like lectures and fieldtrips. The course includes both in-class and in-situ tutorials, and together with a team of fellow students you will work on a practice-based research project.

Course objectives

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of basic theories and concepts in cultural politics;
- apply these theories and concepts to practical cases from the cultural sector;
- write an academic paper in which you critically reflect on these theories and concepts and their application in professional cultural practice;
- work together in a team on a practice-based research project.

Period 2: Museum Meanings

This course focuses on the history and future of the museum and its changing role in society. During this course, you will study the developments that have taken place in the museum world over the last decades through literature study, by conducting small case studies, visiting (virtual) museums, talking to people working in the museum field, group presentations, discussions and debates. The course will address several of the many challenges that museums are currently facing, such as an increase of restitution demands, the urge to decolonise, severe cutbacks in financial support, spiraling energy costs, audience demands, globalisation, and digitalisation. How does the museum deal with these challenges?

Is there a role for museums, for instance, in building awareness about the current climate crisis, and which actions are museums taking to decrease their own ecological footprint? Is the end of the museum as we know it near, or will it be able to adjust itself to the demands of the 21st century? What is the future of museums?

The tutorial sessions, lectures, and museum visits give you the opportunity to participate actively in the present debates about the role of museums in society. The course draws on theoretical perspectives from museum studies, anthropology, cultural studies, (art) history, media studies, and material culture studies. The setup of the course will systematically help you to prepare an exhibition review as well as your final position paper in which you reflect on one of the themes addressed in the course.

Course objectives

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the historical development and organisation of museums;
- recognise the debates related to issues of audience participation, diversity, social responsibility, decolonisation, and repatriation of museum objects;
- evaluate a museum exhibition;
- engage critically, in written and verbal form, with current issues in the philosophy of museums, museum missions, and the future of museums.

Period 3: Wicked problems: current issues in Policy, Art and Law

Registration for this course is only allowed together with registration for modules ACU3005 in period 1 and ACU3004 in period 2

Cultural institutions today are at the heart of social, political, ethical and legal issues. How to deal with objects that were taken from communities or individual owners under circumstances that we currently find unacceptable? This question includes objects from former colonies, dependencies and territories under foreign occupation. When and to whom should objects be returned that came from former colonies and territories under foreign occupation (post-colonial challenges)? What to do with museum objects that have been taken from their owners in suspect or even unacceptable circumstances (looting by the Soviets and Nazis)? What to do with human remains (including objects made from human remains) that have entered museum collections? What is reparation, restitution and repatriation, and whose responsibility is it to implement it? How to respond to the call for cultural institutions to take a leading role in social justice matters? What is the role of ICOM in this case, and what is the role of governments in the case of government controlled museums?

This course focuses on three core wicked problems in the policy, art and law field. We question exhibitions in situations of coloniality, provenance research and restitution. These topics will be explored in relation to a particular case study. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach and builds on perspectives coming from academic fields such as (art) history, sociology, pedagogy, philosophy, law and critical museology as well as professional practices such as conservation, curatorship, policy, and education.

Course objectives

At the end of the course you will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced knowledge of and insight into important issues in the fields of policy, politics of arts and heritage, museum studies, cultural education or curatorship related to the themes of the course;
- Identify relevant stakeholders, actors and factors in diverse practices related to arts and heritage research;

- Apply the knowledge gained on a practical case study.