



ONLINE CASE-STUDY BASED TEACHING IN CULTURAL HERITAGE STUDIES

OSUN Connected Learning Contest Winner

Dóra Mérai and Volodymyr Kulikov

Central European University

Course: Adaptive Heritage Reuse—Policy and Practice

The course “Adaptive Heritage Reuse: Policy and Practice” was taught in the winter term of the 2019/20 academic year. It took place on the Vienna campus of CEU. It was a mandatory course for the second-year group enrolled in the Management and Policy Stream of the MA program, and was elective for the first-year students. Ten students enrolled in the class (9 for a grade, 1 audit). We had seven in-class sessions, three sessions with site visits (adaptive heritage reuse cases), and the last three sessions had to be moved online, one of which was supposed to be a site visit.

At the beginning of the class, we communicated to the students why their active participation is crucial and what we mean by “meaningful contribution” to a discussion. As explained in the syllabus, “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.” We kept this principle also in the online part of the course and developed the method accordingly.

Adaptive Heritage Reuse: Policy and Practice

Buildings get used and re-used over time – this is a natural process, and usually, this comes together with various levels of physical alteration. Traditionally this belonged to the sphere

of interest of architecture, but recently the issue has been moved to the focus of various disciplines such as heritage studies, urban planning, and sociology since the process equally concerns the built structure and humans as well as their communities. Moreover, many policymakers started to look at heritage reuse as a source of social empowerment and economic revitalization. The reuse of buildings brings many challenges: what is the acceptable level of change? What kind of new functions are suitable for historical buildings? How to find a balance between the principles of heritage preservation and the needs of the community? Who should be involved in the decision-making process? How to create the financial basis of such projects? How to ensure the sustainability of historical buildings by giving them new functions?

The course aims to examine the concept and practice of adaptive heritage reuse in various social, political, economic, and cultural environments, its benefits, and challenges. How does adaptive re-use contribute to the conservation of tangible and intangible heritage? How does it benefit the community? What aspects of the legal context are relevant for the stakeholders in these projects? What kind of policies are supportive, and which are discouraging adaptive heritage reuse? How does the concept of participatory governance benefit heritage? What is the role of adaptive reuse in urban and spatial planning? How can such projects be sustainable in terms of financing and the environment? The course participants discuss these questions and problems through cases selected from various geographical, political, and social contexts.

For more details about the course see:

<https://courses.ceu.edu/courses/2019-2020/adaptive-heritage-reuse-policy-and-practice>

Practical and pedagogical value

One of the most challenging tasks of online teaching is to keep the students engaged. Offering thought-provoking readings and intriguing questions is a good way to keep the student's attention. However, students are even more enthusiastic when the discussion is built around their own ideas. Therefore, we ask students to submit their answers before the class and then build the conversation on THEIR comments. Having these materials in advance, the moderator can see which are the patterns in the answers, which are the most thought-provoking, challenging, or contradictory opinions. When moderating the online conversation, she/he can address specific students on different views asking them to explain their position for the group. In addition to these planned elements, there is a place for an open discussion as well. The Zoom chat box is an excellent tool for this: in addition to viva voce comments and questions, students can use that one too. This makes it easier for the moderator to see whom to call to present their comments and questions. Interestingly, having a script as a backbone for the discussion based on the answers prepared in advance makes the online session more inclusive, since the opinion of each student appears.

1) The course is built on the principle of teaching with cases. It relies mostly on the cases developed in our [Horizon2020 project](#) "OpenHeritage". Participation in a large international research project enables us to bring the most cutting-edge concepts and approaches to the classroom through case studies. The off-line version of the course was based on in-class discussions building on the analysis of readings, and site visits. When moving the course entirely online, we combined synchronous elements with asynchronous work in processing the case studies. Students submitted their answers for the preparation questions before each session based on a short film and paper presenting and analyzing the respective case studies. Following this, the synchronous online session moderated by the course instructors was based on discussion points identified by assessing the students' answers. This method allowed each student to individually address the issues raised in the questions. Then, the reflections and ideas of each student appeared during the synchronous session, which is otherwise a challenge in a relatively large group. Each session resulted in a set of conclusions concerning various aspects of the case study.

The main principle of the model is that the case studies are presented for and analyzed by the students before the session, and the synchronous online session is dedicated exclusively to discussion points identified by assessing the group members' reflections.

2) The second element of the course adapted for online teaching was the final assignment. The cases brought by the students had an imperative role: each participant chose an example (generally from their own region) to analyze and present during the course based on the theoretical approaches covered during the sessions. They offered a brief oral presentation accompanied by slides during the last two sessions. Incorporating the feedback received from the peers and the course instructors, they prepared a final presentation of the case. When moving the course online, we chose a new, online form of final assignment: students presented the analysis of their own case studies in the form of an online story, using the Microsoft Sway application. This form allowed them to combine text, images, audio materials, videos, and made creating and watching the stories more enjoyable. Another advantage is that online stories work well when viewed on different devices, which is crucial, considering that many students use their smartphones to read/watch learning materials.

The assignment

Adaptive Heritage Reuse: Policy and Practice

Instructors: Dóra Mérai and Volodymyr Kulikov

Part 1

Online case-study based teaching

Instructions posted on the Moodle page: Under every session you find an abstract, one or two readings, a brief video introduction, and some questions for the preparation. Please read the abstract, watch the video, and read the readers. Then provide a brief answer for the questions in writing (we expect around 150 words per answer), and upload it to the Forum under the relevant session.

The course instructor hosting the live session will use your answers when preparing the session. The sessions will be discussions of the readings, the questions, and your answers, so your prepared and active presence is very much needed.

Topic 1 # Adaptive reuse to promote social values: The Case of Sargfabrik, Vienna

Abstract: The adaptive reuse of the architectural remains of the former coffin factory (Sargfabrik) embracing of its past (even if only partially) and as a result combining the idea of a home with that of the activities surrounding death is a surprisingly avantgarde project. The housing concept was put forward by the Association for Integrative Living (Verein für Integrative Lebensgestaltung) - formed as a bottom up initiative - and it was based on collective living arrangement, a very much talked about/often supported housing form today, but less so in the 1980s, when the story of the Sargfabrik began. The reuse of the Sargfabrik is an illustrative example of how bottom up initiatives can successfully navigate in the bureaucratic field to reach their goals, and how uncomfortable heritage can be reinterpreted, how strategic forgetting can be employed and how an aptly employed new narrative can influence the wider environment, contributing to its profound transformation on a neighbourhood level.

Reader: [The Case of Sargfabrik, Vienna](#). Research deliverable, OpenHeritage project

Video: <https://openheritage.eu/2018/11/22/sargfabrik/>

Preparation questions:

1. What are the heritage values attributed to the site? How does the community preserve these?
2. Imagine that you are interviewing a potential tenant of Sargfabrik. What would be your top three questions to her or him?
3. Would it be possible to emulate the Sargfabrik model in your city?

Part 2

Final Assignment – Sway Stories

Instructions posted on the Moodle page:

Present your case in the form of a Sway Story, on the example of this one:

[Alba Iulia Citadel Story](#)

- The maximum number of topics (headings) should be 6-7. You can use those in the Alba Iulia Story or you can create different ones. Focus on the aspects which are the most interesting in your case study.
- The maximum length of a paragraph under a heading should be 100-150 words.
- The last section should be references, no more than 6.
- Do not forget to add the photo credits.
- You can use any features in Sway: images, videos, sounds. (In the Alba Iulia example none of these was used, images are only used as background). You can keep simple but you can also go creative.

Examples of assignment done by the students:

1. Bálna Budapest by Bori Mohácsi <https://sway.office.com/atmOWoBvILLDyc3Tc>
2. Coal Drops Yard London by Catinca Mănăilă
<https://sway.office.com/KUow6PrlCoYbGEVK?ref=Link>