

Background

Venice has developed over the centuries into one of the most remarkable cultural patrimonies in the world due to a series of unique historical geographical, social and political circumstances. The historic city of Venice, together with its lagoon, has been inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987 as an extraordinary architectural masterpiece.

The big flood of 1966, which put in evidence the dramatic conservation problems of Venice's historic and artistic heritage, gave rise to a significant international campaign launched by UNESCO collecting and channeling contributions of many private organizations to restore and preserve the buildings of Venice and its art treasures in close collaboration with the local authorities. Over the past 40 years many research and conservation projects have been set up in Venice, functioning as a pilot laboratory for conservation practice, scientific research, experimentation and evaluation of stone conservation treatments.

Program objectives and content

The course aims at providing participants with an understanding of the Built Heritage of Venice, its historical development, construction techniques and building materials and at gaining insight in the related conservation problems. It is conceived as a logical progression, starting with an introduction to Venice and its unique location in a lagoon environment and offering a historical overview of its growth and architectural development. The program subsequently deals with the specific characteristics of Venetian architecture and its great variety of stone materials and finally focuses on decay mechanisms and conservation treatments performed since 1966.

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Course requirements and grading

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all course activities and to be flexible for possible required changes - especially related to site visits - in the scheduled program. Students should complete all assigned readings before the related class meetings so as to engage with the topic.

Grading will include active class participation (20%) as well as two paper assignments, each consisting of a written and documented research paper, to be completed at mid-term (40%) and at end-term (40%). Detailed information will be given during the course. It is important that students bring their camera for documentation.

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Please make sure to wear comfortable walking shoes for site visits!

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WEEK 1

Wednesday June 11

Introduction to Conservation

- Venice Restored, UNESCO, 1978, pp. 7-9 and 29-41.

- UNESCO for Venice. International Campaign for the Safeguarding of Venice (1966-1992). Review of Results,

UNESCO, n.d., pp. 3-9.

- Bernard M. Feilden, The Principles of Conservation, in Conservation of Historic Stone Buildings and Monuments, Washington D.C., 1982, pp. 22-30.

Friday June 13

Venetian Perspectives: Historical Development of Venice and its Architecture

(with Guest Speaker Paola Modesti, Architectural Historian, Università degli Studi di Trieste)

NB: There are no scholarly articles encompassing the wide, introductory context of this session but the following article touch meaningful points:

- Paul Hills, Living on a Lagoon in Venetian Colour, New Haven and London 1999, p. 1-21.

- Deborah Howard, The Architectural History of Venice, London 1980, Chapter III The Mediaeval City. Building Materials and Techniques, pp. 55-60.

- Judith and Walter MUNK, Venice Hologram, in Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 116: 5, 1972, pp. 415-422. (gives a general overview but requires some updating)

WEEK 2

Wednesday June 18

Visit to the CNR-ISMAR Institute (National Research Council - Institute of Marine Science, Arsenale) at 14.00 (Bacini boat stop)

Venice and its Lagoon Environment, Acqua Alta and Related Problems

(with Guest Speaker Georg Umgieser, Oceanographer, CNR-ISMAR)

- Augusto Ghetti and Michael Batisse, the Overall Protection of Venice and its Lagoon in Nature and Resources, 19: 4, 1982, pp. 7-19.

- Flooding and Environmental Challenges for Venice and its Lagoon: State of Knowledge (Proceedings of the International Meeting held at Cambridge UK, September 2003), Cambridge, 2005, selections.

- The Arsenal, in Venice. Humanity's Heritage, Vol. I, ed. ICOMOS-UNESCO, 1993, pp. 104-115.

Friday June 20

Characteristics of Venetian Construction Techniques

(with Guest Speaker Edoardo Danzi, Architect, Consultant Lecturer Università IUAV di Venezia)

- Mario Piana, Lagoon Building and Safeguarding Problems, from: Venice and its Lagoons. World Heritage, a dialogue between cultures: which future? n.d., 5 p.

- Edoardo Danzi, Mario Piana, The Catalogue of the External Plasters in Venetian Building, in Scientific Research and Safeguarding of Venice. CORILA Research Program 2001 Results, Venezia 2002, pp. 87-95.

- Mario Piana, Marmorino Plasters in Venice between the XVI and XVII Centuries, in Scientific Research and Safeguarding of Venice 2005. CORILA Research Program 2004-2005, IV, Venezia, 2006, pp. 71-90.

Visit to the San Sebastiano church and the ongoing Save Venice conservation project.

- August Gentili, Michele di Monte, Veronese in the Church of San Sebastiano, Venezia, ed. Marsilio, 2005, pp. 5-6.

- Veronese. The Stories of Esther Revealed, ed. G. Manieri Elia, Venice 2011, selected articles.

- The Church of San Sebastiano, in Venice Restored 1966-1986, Milano, 1986, p. 108.

WEEK 3

Wednesday June 25

Local Stone Building Materials and Use of Imported Stones & Marbles in Venice

(with Guest Speaker Lorenzo Lazzarini, Petrographer, Università IUAV di Venezia)

- J. Delgado Rodrigues, Petrography, in Actes du Congrès International sur la conservation de la pierre et autres matériaux, Paris, 1993, pp. 35-36.

- L. Lazzarini, The Marbles of the Palace, in I Marmi del Doge. Design e ospitalità, Consorzio Marmisti Chiampo, 2009, pp. 29-55 (including catalogue of stones and marbles)

Friday June 27

Overview of Stone Deterioration Processes

- G. Torraca, Porous Building Materials. Materials Science for Architectural Conservation, Rome 1982, Chapters II-III-IV, pp. 19-49.
- Air Pollution and Conservation. Safeguarding our Architectural Heritage. Introductory information on an Interdisciplinary Symposium held in Rome October 1986, Gothenburg, 1986, p. 14-16.
- Vasco Fassina, Monica Favaro and Andrea Naccari, Principal Decay Patterns on Venetian Monuments, in Geological Society London Special Publications, 2002, 205, pp. 381-391.

Visit to St. Mark's Square and Basilica

Use of stone materials and decorative marbles and their decay, Area Marciana

(with Guest Speaker Lorenzo Lazzarini, Petrographer, Università IUAV di Venezia)

- selections from Venice Restored 1966-1986, Milano, 1986, pp. 166, 168 and 170-171.
- Deborah Howard, the Architectural History of Venice, London, 1980, pp. 27-35 and 79-85.

WEEK 4

Wednesday July 2

Visit to the LAMA Laboratory for the Analysis of Ancient Materials, Università di IUAV di Venezia

(with Guest Speaker Lorenzo Lazzarini, Petrographer, Università di IUAV di Venezia)

- G. Torraca, The Application of Science and Technology to Conservation Practice in Science, Technology and European Cultural Heritage, Proceedings of the European Symposium, Bologna 1989, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1991, pp. 221-232.

Friday July 4

The Diagnostic Process and Morphology of Stone Decay

- M. Laurenzi Tabasso, Stone Conservation in the Last Few Decades: conceptual and technical developments, in Interdisciplinary Workshop The Building Stone in Monuments, Athens, 2001, pp. 309-317,
- Normal Recommendation 20/85, Conservation of Stone Material: project development, execution and preliminary evaluation, Rome 1987, pp. 1-6.

Field Work at the San Sebastiano Church

- UNI-Beni Culturali 11182/2006, Cultural Heritage. Natural and Artificial Stone. Description of the Alteration - Terminology and Description, Italian Glossary - English translation provided
- Chiesa di S. Sebastiano, in Venti Anni di restauro a Venezia (ed. Soprintendenza ai Beni Ambientali e Architettonici di Venezia, 1987, p. 172 (for those students reading Italian).

WEEK 5

Wednesday July 9

Overview of Stone Conservation Practice / Materials and Methods

- M. Laurenzi Tabasso, Materials for Stone Conservation in Actes du Congrès International sur la conservation de la pierre et autres matériaux, Paris, 1993, pp. 54-58.
- G. Torraca, Porous Building Materials. Materials Science for Architectural Conservation, Rome 1982, Chapter III, Conservation of Stone, pp. 82-94.
- Normal Recommendation 20/85, Conservation of Stone Material: project development, execution and preliminary evaluation, Rome 1987, pp. 6-16

Friday July 11

Field trip to the island of the Lazzaretto Nuovo; recovery and revival of a historical site.

For many years abandoned, the island is now fully recovered and has developed into a centre for didactic, scientific and archaeological research.

- English brochure on the Lazzaretto Nuovo island
- Venezia. Isola del Lazzaretto Nuovo, ed. G. Fazzini, Venezia, 2004, selected articles (for those students reading Italian)

Visit to the ongoing Save Venice conservation works of the mosaic pavement at the Basilica of SS. Maria e Donato on the island of Murano

- The Church of Santi Maria e Donato, in Venice Restored 1966-1986, Milano, 1986, pp. 226-230.
- Marilyn Perry, The Basilica of SS. Maria e Donato on Murano, Venezia, 1987, pp. 25-32 and 48-56.

WEEK 6

Wednesday July 19

Field Work at the San Sebastiano Church

Friday July 18

Evaluation of former stone conservation treatments in Venice (1970s)

- J. M. Teutonico et al., Group Report: How can we ensure the responsible and effective use of treatments (cleaning, consolidation, protection)?, in Saving our Architectural Heritage. The Conservation of Historic Stone Structures. Report of the Dahlem Workshop Berlin 1996 (ed. N.S. Baer and R. Snethlage), Chichester, 1997, pp-293-297 and 304-310.
- L. Lazzarini, Treatment Cards of Venetian Monuments and Sculptures, in Third International Congress on the Deterioration and Preservation of Stones, Venice, 1979.