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Call for applications
Venice Summer School in Digital and Public Humanities   VeSSDPH 2026
6 - 10 July 2026, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Purpose of the School
The Venice Summer School in Digital and Public Humanities provides advanced and in-depth training in theories, technologies and methods applied to historical monuments, artefacts and texts. Focussing on cultural, archaeological, historical, literary, and artistic materials from Venetian sites and cultural heritage institutions, participants will engage in debates about digital cultural heritage and public humanities while enhancing their competences and skills in digitising materials and sources and in modelling, analysing and visualising multimedia humanities data.

Contents and schedule
The Summer School takes place at historical sites and cultural venues across the city of Venice and its surroundings. Each day is dedicated to a specific academic field: archaeology, history, art history and textual scholarship. Teaching formats include lectures, hands-on workshops, guided tours and experimental performances. Units are planned and delivered by local experts and invited specialists. All classes will be taught in English. The programme includes "Meet the Expert" sessions for discussing the participants' individual research projects with domain experts.

DAY ONE - *Absence, Mediation, and (Re-) Construction of Cultural Heritage*
This one-day strand explores how cultural heritage is constructed through absence, narrative, and selective visibility, and how meaning changes when objects, figures, and places are displaced, digitally mediated, or destroyed. The workshop foregrounds the experiential and perceptual dimensions of digitally mediated heritage, asking not how digital tools can replace what has been lost, but what kind of experience emerges in the absence of physical presence, and how meaning is negotiated through interfaces, narratives, and attention. The programme combines short theoretical inputs with a guided experimental session involving 3D models, eye-tracking, and participatory practices, positioning participants as a small observational cohort.

DAY TWO - *Texts in Motion: Digital and Public Approaches to Venetian Textual Heritage*
This strand introduces participants to theories and practices of Digital Textual Scholarship exploring Venetian literary traditions and archival records related to Marco Polo (1254-1324), Veronica Franco (1546-1591), and Giacomo Casanova (1725-1798). Activities will combine close reading with practical work on primary sources such as manuscripts, archival documents, and early printed books that will be analysed and made accessible through digital methods. Participants will experiment with standards and tools for text encoding (TEI/XML), image annotation (IIIF) and automated text recognition (HTR) using Transkribus and eScriptorium, and explore basic approaches to data modelling and linked open data (LOD) for textual and documentary sources. A visit to the State Archives of Venice will highlight the material foundations of digital textual scholarship.

DAY THREE - *"Pimp my project" sessions and Visit of La Biennale di Venezia's 61st International Art Exhibition, In Minor Keys*
In the morning participants will discuss their individual research and projects with expert teachers from various domains. A visit to La Biennale di Venezia's International Art Exhibition, "In Minor Keys" in the afternoon will include a lecture on Artificial Intelligence and serve as a "photo sampling" opportunity for Day FIVE..

DAY FOUR - *Digital and Public History: Venetian History, Urban Spaces and New Technologies*
The history day focuses on the history of Venice and its urban space, viewed from a Digital and Public Humanities perspective. How can we use the new technologies to better understand Venetian past? How can we use a public history approach to engage the public in historical research and narrative? Venice's urban spaces, where time seems to have stood still, represent a perfect field of inquiry for understanding the relationship between history and places. GIS and mapping technologies further help connect present-day locations and past life. The day will feature a combination of outdoor and indoor activities, and there will also be time to apply generative AI and virtual exhibitions to the history of Venice.

DAY FIVE - *Digital and Public Art History: Describing Art with AI: Bias and New Narratives*
This workshop examines a new form of ekphrasis emerging from AI latent spaces, focusing on how user-driven descriptions of artworks can reveal biases embedded in AI training datasets. By juxtaposing human perception with AI-generated interpretations, the programme shows how individual viewing experiences can bring to light misconceptions, omissions, and underrepresented narratives within art exhibitions. Drawing on selected works from La Biennale di Venezia's ongoing International Art Exhibition, the workshop explores how minor or situated datasets can disrupt dominant institutional frameworks. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of cultural context and market-oriented strategies in shaping AI outputs, raising critical questions about the extent to which curatorial, economic, or promotional priorities influence the narratives produced by algorithmic systems.

Eligibility and admission criteria
The Summer School warmly welcomes PhD students, postdocs and practitioners from the private, public, and non-governmental sectors. Applicants must hold at least a Master's degree or equivalent at the time of application. Precedence will be given to those candidates whose cover letter will show that their research projects or profession will benefit from the Digital and Public Humanities methods that they will learn during the summer school. A fair balance among genders and among disciplinary backgrounds will be preserved.

Availability of positions
The School will host max. 25 participants.
Up to five positions are reserved for applicants from the EUTOPIA DigIn Connected Community, and one position for an applicant from the Scuola di Archivistica, Paleografia e Diplomatica of the Venetian State Archives.

Participation Costs
- NO fees
- Biennale entry ticket: €20 (includes three non-consecutive days for both Giardini and Arsenale)
- Optional booking of a single room (99 EUR per night) or double room (121 EUR per night) at Camplus University Residences (up to 6 nights)

How to apply
Your application must contain
- a **curriculum vitae** (max. 2 pages);
- a **cover letter** (max. 2 pages) stating your motivations for joining the School and your expectations about it.

Your CV and cover letter should be sent in pdf via the following online form:
https://forms.gle/rH9tZnkbq4aUWqLt5

Important dates
Deadline for applications: 13 April 2026 (11:59 p.m. CEST)
Notification of acceptance: 29 April 2026
Summer School: 6-10 July 2026

Full programme and further information: https://www.unive.it/pag/39288/
Contact: vedph@unive.it

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