Venice Summer School in Digital and Public Humanities

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, 6-10 July 2026

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.

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 "Pimp my Project" sessions for discussing the participants' individual research projects with domain experts.

Additional information at the following link: https://www.unive.it/data/33113/2/113737

FULL PROGRAMME

=== DAY ONE ===
Monday, 6 July 2026

Area 1: Digital Archaeology and Public Archaeology
Absence, Mediation, and (Re-) Construction of Cultural Heritage

This one-day strand explores how cultural heritage is shaped through absence, narrative, and selective visibility, and how meaning shifts when objects, figures, and places are displaced, digitally mediated, or destroyed. Using Venice as a point of departure, it opens with Marco Polo—globally recognised, yet absent from the city's monumental landscape. This absence becomes the inquiry: rather than reconstructing Marco Polo, the focus shifts to designing the conditions through which he can be experienced, at the intersection of narrative design and generative AI.

The workshop examines how experience emerges in the absence of physical presence, and how AI reshapes this condition, proposing a shift from representation to experience design and from preservation to the activation of meaning. It combines short theoretical inputs with a guided experimental session involving 3D models, eye-tracking, and participatory practices.

Venue: VeDPH Lab (Palazzo Malcanton Marcorà, 2nd floor)
- 9:30-10:00 Welcome

- 10:00-11:00 Diego Calaon (Ca' Foscari), Elisa Corrò (Ca' Foscari), Grazia Solenne (Ca' Foscari):
  Making Heritage from Absence: Digital Archaeology as a Shared Practice
- 11:00-11:30 Elisa Corrò, Stefano Bergonzini (Museyoum srl):
  From Absence to Experience: Generative AI as a Narrative Device in Cultural Heritage
- 11:45-13:00 Francesca Dolcetti (University of Essex):
  Ethics, Mediation, and Meaning: Participatory Approaches to Digital Heritage

- 14:00-16:30 Francesca Dolcetti, Elisa Corrò, Grazia Solenne:
  Designing Absence: A Values-Led Workshop on Digital Heritage

Venue: Aula Baratto, Ca' Foscari main building (Dorsoduro 3246, 2nd floor)
Opening Keynote within the framework of the DIGITALIA Erasmus+ Project, introduced by Lorenzo Calvelli (Ca' Foscari)
- 17:00-19:00 Francesca Tomasi (University of Bologna):
  What do we mean with scholarly digital culture?

=== DAY TWO ===
Tuesday, 7 July 2026

Area 2: Digital and Public Textual Scholarship
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 research.

Venue: Sala Marino Berengo, Ca' Foscari main building (Dorsoduro 3246, 1st floor)
- 9:30-11:00 Marina Buzzoni (Ca' Foscari), Chiara De Bastiani (Ca' Foscari), Paola Peratello (École nationale des chartes - PSL, Paris):
  Encoding Marco Polo and Visual Manuscript Culture

- 11:30-13:00 Federico Boschetti (CNR-ILC), Agnese Macchiarelli (Bergische Universität Wuppertal/Ca' Foscari):
  Casanova in Context: Digital Approaches to Archival Documents and Early Prints

Venue: Venice State Archives (Campo dei Frari, 3002)
- 14:00-15:30 Tiziana Mancinelli (Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici), Daniele Fusi (Stuttgart University/Ca' Foscari), Paolo Monella (Kore University of Enna):
  Modelling Venetian Renaissance Writing: The Case of Veronica Franco
- 16:00-17:30 **Guided tour of the Venice State Archives**
  incl. documents related to Marco Polo, Veronica Franco and Giacomo Casanova

Venue: tbc
- 18:00-19:00 **Wine reception and "Very Special Sneak Preview"**
  with Peter Robinson (University of Saskatchewan)

=== DAY THREE ===
Wednesday, 8 July 2026

"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..

Venues: VeDPH Lab and other offices (Palazzo Malcanton Marcorà, 2nd floor)
- 9:30-12:00 **Meet the Expert**: Individual consultation meetings

Venue: Biennale Sessions Space (La Biennale di Venezia's International Art Exhibition, Arsenale venue. Sestiere Castello, Campo della Tana 2169/F)
- 13:00-14:30 Carolina Fernàndez-Castrillo (Carlos III University of Madrid):
  Horizons of Artificial Intelligence: Promises, Anxiety, and Planetary Climate
  Discussant: Paolo Berti (Ca' Foscari)
- 14:30-18:30 **Visit to La Biennale di Venezia's 61st International Art Exhibition, "In Minor Keys"**
  incl. "photo sampling" for DAY FIVE

=== DAY FOUR ===
Thursday 9 July, 9:30-18:00

Area 3: 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.

Venue: VeDPH Lab (Palazzo Malcanton Marcorà, 2nd floor) + outdoor activities
- 9:30-11:30 Amanda Madden (George Mason University):
  Mapping Violence in Early Modern Italy
- 11:45-13:00 Stefano Dall'Aglio (Ca' Foscari):
  Murder in Venice. Generative AI and Historical Sources

- 14:00-15:15 Emmanuela Carbé (Ca' Foscari), Mariangela Giglio (University of Bologna):
  From Sources to Exhibitions: Prototyping Public History Projects with Omeka Classic
- 15:30-18:00 Fabrizio Nevola (University of Exeter):
  Urban Space, Geolocated Apps and Digital Public History: a Practical Demonstration of Hidden Venice

=== DAY FIVE ===
Friday, 10 July 2026

Area 4: 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.

Venue: VeDPH Lab (Palazzo Malcanton Marcorà, 2nd floor)
- 9:30-10:00 Irene Russo (ILC-CNR):
  Introduction to generative AI and (co-)creative processes
- 10:00-10:30 Paolo Berti (Ca' Foscari):
  Emergent representations in AI latent spaces: an artistic and historical perspective
- 10:30-12:00 Stefania De Vincentis (Ca' Foscari):
  Perception and biases from La Biennale di Venezia's International Art Exhibition. Reading the artworks working with generative algorithms
- 12:00-13:00 Discussion and round table

Venue: VeDPH Lab (Palazzo Malcanton Marcorà, 2nd floor)
- 14:00-17:30 Vince Dziekan (Monash University), Ross Parry (University of Leicester):
  Awash with images: Collecting institutions in a digital world

Closing keynote
Venue: Aula Morelli (Palazzo Malcanton Marcorà, ground floor)
- 18:00-19:00 Ross Parry (University of Leicester), Vince Dziekan (Monash University)
  Museums and Datafication: Renegotiating museums and their digital interfaces

BIENNALE ARTE 2026
BIENNALE SESSIONS
9.5 — 22.11.26 VENEZIA GIARDINI / ARSENALE