INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSERVATION OF VENICE’S BUILT HERITAGE
(Materials & techniques, decay and conservation)
Columbia Venice Summer Program 2018

INSTRUCTOR
Mieke Van Molle

COURSE SCHEDULE
Wednesdays 9:00-11:00 & Fridays 9:00-15:30 (break included)

lecture hours may slightly vary related to site visits

Save Venice component: individual work assignment relating to Save Venice’s conservation projects, schedule TBA according to individual course schedules

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, was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987 as an extraordinary architectural masterpiece, comprising diverse architectural styles and historical stratifications but preserving a coherent unit.
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 50 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.
The state of conservation of the historic city and its Lagoon, closely followed by the UNESCO World Heritage Center, is now also threatened by tourism pressure, large scale infrastructure projects and intense water traffic, whereby the site risks to be inscribed on the list of the World Heritage in Danger.

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. Students are first introduced to the particular conservation problems of the city of Venice and its Lagoon environment. The course then addresses the historical growth and architectural development of Venice, its specific construction techniques and its great variety of stone materials, originating from all over the Mediterranean. It subsequently focuses on the multidisciplinary conservation process, including the diagnostic survey, the different decay mechanisms and finally offering an overview of the conservation treatment.
The course includes a series of guided walking tours and diversified site visits which will illustrate and complement class lectures. In addition, participants will conduct a diagnostic group research on a historical building in Venice consisting in a condition survey of the monument where they will be requested to observe, discuss, describe and document the different constituent materials, their various forms of decay along with the related distribution pattern, integrated with a historical study of the monument.

**Course requirements and grading**

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all course activities. They should complete all assigned readings before the related class meeting so as to engage with the topic and are expected to draw also on these source materials for their research papers. Students should be flexible for possible required changes, especially related to site visits, in the scheduled program.

Grading will include active class participation (25%), a written and documented research paper to be completed at mid-term (25%), as well as a documented end-term research (written paper 25% and oral presentation 25%). Detailed information will be given during the course. It is important that students bring their camera for documentation as well as closed comfortable shoes with rubber soles (e.g. sneakers) for visits to ongoing conservation projects.

**Academic Honesty**

Please read and carefully review Columbia’s University’s Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity at [www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity](http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity). Academic integrity is expected of all students and plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Offenses will result in a failing grade and will be referred to the Dean’s Office.

**TENTATIVE CURRICULUM AND READINGS**

**Useful reference material:**

- Overview of architectural history and styles with proper terminology:

- Glossary of architectural terms and Venetian words:

- Biographical notes on the architects of Venice:

- Short bibliography on Venetian architecture, outdoor sculpture and restorations
WEEK 1
Wednesday, June 13

Introduction to Conservation in Venice
Teaching method: PPT presentation
Readings:

Friday, June 15

Venetian Perspectives: Historical Development of Venice and its Architecture
Guest lecturer: Paola Modesti, Architectural Historian, Università degli Studi di Trieste
Teaching method: PPT presentation + walking tour
Readings:

WEEK 2
Wednesday, June 20

Visit to Save Venice and the Rosand Library & Study Center
Readings:

Friday, June 22

Characteristics of Venetian Construction Techniques
Guest lecturer: Edoardo Danzi, Architect, Consultant Lecturer, Università IUAV di Venezia
Teaching method: PPT presentation
Readings:

Visit to a conservation project/worksite - depending on availability and authorization
Related readings to be defined
WEEK 3
Wednesday, June 27

Overview of Stone Deterioration Processes
Teaching method: PPT presentation

Readings:

Friday, June 29
The Stones of Venice and their Decay
Visit to the LAMA Laboratory for the Analysis of Ancient Materials, Università IUAV di Venezia
Visit to St. Mark’s Square and Basilica

Guest lecturer: Lorenzo Lazzarini, Petrographer, Università IUAV di Venezia

Teaching method: Lecture & visits

Readings:

WEEK 4
Wednesday, July 4
Visit to a conservation project/worksite - depending on availability and authorization

Related readings to be defined

Friday, July 6
The Diagnostic Process and Morphology of Stone Decay

Teaching method: PPT presentation

Readings:
**Diagnostic Group Research on a historical building**

Readings & documentation will be distributed during the course

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**WEEK 5**

**Wednesday, July 11**

**Diagnostic Group Research on a historical building**

Readings & documentation will be distributed during the course

**Friday, July 13**

**Overview of Stone Conservation Practice / Materials & Methods**

Teaching method: PPT presentation

Readings:

**Diagnostic Group Research on a historical building**

Readings & documentation will be distributed during the course

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**WEEK 6**

**Wednesday, July 18**

**Mortar mixing demonstration**

Reading:

**Friday, July 20**

**Participants’ Presentations on the findings of their Diagnostic Group Research**

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MvM, January 2018