

European Cultures and Identities

SYLLABUS 2026

*summer*school
UTRECHT



Universiteit Utrecht

Materials

Reader, provided by the Utrecht Summer School

Period

6 July – 17 July 2026

Credits

4.0 ECTS + Certificate of Attendance

Faculty

Course Coordinator and Lecturer

[Dr. Julie Deschepper](#)

Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University

Email: j.c.deschepper@uu.nl

Teaching Assistant

Liza Mironova, BA

Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University

Email: e.mironova1@students.uu.nl

Coordinator Summer School

[Dr. Carlotta Capurro](#)

Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University

Email: c.capurro@uu.nl

Guest lecturers

[Dr. Rachel Gillett](#), Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University

[Gabriëlle Negrón](#), MA, Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University

Utrecht Summer School

<http://www.utrechtsummerschool.nl>

summerschool@uu.nl / +31 (0)30 253 44 00

Location

Check the programme carefully.

All information will be confirmed via email the day before.

Check location here:

Academiegebouw: [Kanunnikenzaal](#) + [Sterrecamer](#)

[Janskerkhof 2-3](#) (JK 2-3)

[Kromme Nieuwegracht 80](#) (KNG80)

Contents

Course description and format	4
Learning objectives	5
Assessment forms	5
List of reading	6
Planning overview	6
Academic programme	8
Assessments, attendance and grading	16
Online education	17
Statement on use of generative AI	18
Instructions assignment	19

Course description and format

Welcome to the Utrecht Summer School and welcome to European Cultures & Identities!

This course **aims** to introduce you to Europe. This is a continent with many different countries that all maintain their own political systems, cultural traditions, and national identities. At the same time, since the second half of the twentieth century, most of the European countries have been engaged in a joint project aimed at economic and political integration. **We will explore how this mix of particularism and unity has developed historically, and how it is challenged today.**

Lecturers from Utrecht University will introduce various **topics, key conceptual frameworks, and case studies** in different educational formats: **lectures, seminars, and excursions.**

The course is divided into three general themes:

- 1) Europe: Ideas, Imaginations and Representations**
- 2) Constructing Europe: Nationalism, Colonialism, and Imperialism**
- 3) Uses of the Past: Heritage and Memories of and in Europe(s)**

The summer course has an **interactive and intensive character**. Active participation is expected from all students. During the seminars, students are encouraged to engage in discussions, ask questions, and collaborate in group work. During lectures, students are expected to attend attentively and take notes. During excursions, students are encouraged to connect the topics of the course with the locations we will visit.

Thorough individual preparation through the assigned readings and the timely completion of assignments are essential for successfully passing the course.

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives of the course are:

1. To obtain a grounding in European Cultures and Identities on a conceptual level, and to think critically about these topics.
2. To learn to apply conceptual knowledge about European Cultures and Identities to understand cultural expressions and learn to think about the creation of cultures and identities on a deeper level.
3. To learn to apply this knowledge to case studies by practising with writing assignments and oral presentations.

Assessment forms

The course will conclude with three assessments, covering all the lectures, seminars, museum visits, and reading materials:

1. Critical Journal (Individual grade, 50%)

By the end of the summer school, you will hand in a journal consisting of a critical and personal reflection on the key ideas discussed during the lectures and seminars, including the readings and museum visits.

Deadline: Thursday 16 July, 16:00.

See precise instructions hereafter.

2. Group presentation (Group grade, 50%)

You will prepare a group presentation about one core theme of the summer school. The presentation consists of an oral group presentation and an accompanying explanatory document.

The presentation focuses on one core theme of the course and is based on a case study (artwork, exhibition, event, music, organisation, institution, etc.). You will be asked to relate your case study to the lectures, seminars, excursions, and reading materials, and you will be challenged to formulate your own argument accordingly

Presentation day: Thursday 16 July, in person.

See precise instructions hereafter.

List of Readings

Mandatory

1. Abt, Jeffrey. 2006. "The Origins of the Public Museum." Sharon Macdonald (ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies*. MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pp. 115–134. [Utrecht University Library](#)
2. Buettner, Elizabeth. 2022. "Europe and Its Entangled Colonial Pasts: Europeanizing the 'Imperial Turn'." *Decolonizing Colonial Heritage: New Agendas, Actors and Practices in and beyond Europe*, edited by Britta Schilling and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa. Routledge, pp. 25–43. [Utrecht University Library](#)
3. Deschepper, Julie. 2026. "Striking Similarities! Public Statues, Human Bodies, and the Power of Monuments." *Contested Histories. Global Perspectives on the Past, Present and Future of Public Monuments*, edited by Tomás Irish, Simon John and Hannah Lyons. Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 17–40. PDF will be sent.
4. Hicks, Dan. 2020. *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*. Pluto Press, Chapter 18 and Afterwords, pp. 230–242. [Utrecht University Library](#)
5. Nielsen, Vibe. 2024. "Diversifying Public Commemorations in Cape Town and Copenhagen." *De-Commemoration: Removing Statues and Renaming Places*, edited by Sarah Gensburger and Jenny Wüstenberg. Berghahn Books, pp. 114–123. [Utrecht University Library](#).
6. Pagden, Anthony. 2013. "Europe: Conceptualising a Continent." *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, edited by Anthony Pagden. Cambridge University Press, pp. 33–54. [Utrecht University Library](#)
7. Weller, Shane. 2021. "Introduction". In: *The Idea of Europe: A Critical History*. Cambridge University Press:1-15. [Utrecht University Library](#)
8. Zhurzhenko, Tatiana. 2022. "War and Memory in the Post-Soviet Space: Arming without Borders?", [online](#).

All readings will be available to all students. See the explanatory document at the end of the syllabus on how to read an academic text.

Planning overview

WEEK 1

Monday 6 July – Introduction. Seminar 1. Lecture 1.

Tuesday 7 July – Seminar 2. Lecture 2.

Wednesday 8 July – Lecture 3. Seminar 3.

Thursday 9 July – Excursion 1.

Friday 10 July – Lecture 4. Seminar 4.

WEEK 2

Monday 13 July – Lecture 5. Excursion 2.

Tuesday 14 July – Excursion 3.

Wednesday 15 July – Lecture 6. Seminar 5.

Thursday 16 July – Deadline Assignment 1 & Assignment 2.

Friday 17 July – Closing Remarks, Graduation, Drinks.

Academic Programme

6 July – 17 July 2026

Week 1

Monday 6 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:15-12:00 Academiegebouw: Kanunnikenzaal	<i>Opening remarks</i> Julie Deschepper & Liza Mironova	Welcome and general introduction to the course!
13:00-14:45 Group 1 Kanunnikenzaal Group 2 Sterrecamer	SEMINAR 1 Julie Deschepper & Liza Mironova	Getting to know each other. Methodology check: how to read an academic text. Assessment explanation: what is expected of you and when. ⇒ Group formation for assignment 2.
15:15-17:00 JK 2-3 0.13	LECTURE 1 Julie Deschepper	<i>The Idea of Europe: Past, Present and Future</i> Readings: Weller, Shane. 2021. "Introduction". In: <i>The Idea of Europe: A Critical History</i> . Cambridge University Press:1-15.

Tuesday 7 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00 Group 1 KNG80 006 Group 2 KNG80 017	SEMINAR 2 Julie Deschepper & Liza Mironova	<i>Representing Europe</i> Readings: Anthony Pagden, 2013. "Europe. Conceptualizing a Continent", <i>The Idea of Europe</i> , chapter 1, pp. 33-54.
14:00-15:30 KNG80 006	LECTURE 2 Gabriëlle Negrón	<i>Inherited Formats, Radical Futures: Feminist Art Histories and the Deconstruction of Patriarchal Narratives in Dutch Museums</i>

Wednesday 8 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00 To be confirmed.	LECTURE 3 Julie Deschepper	<i>Critical History of European Museums</i> Readings: Jeffrey Abt. 2006. "The Origins of the Public Museum," in Sharon Macdonald (ed.). <i>A Companion to Museum Studies</i> . MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pp. 115–134.
14:00-16:00 Group 1 Group 2 To be confirmed.	SEMINAR 3 Julie Deschepper & Liza Mironova	<i>Questioning the Decolonization of European Museums</i> Readings: Dan Hicks. 2020. <i>The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution</i> . Pluto Press, chapter 18 and Afterwords – p.230-242. ⇒ Start brainstorming about assignment 2.
17:00-18:00	Grand Opening Utrecht University Summer School	Festive opening of the UU Summer School Period for lecturers and students Centraal Museum (optional)

Thursday 9 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
9:00-17:00 09:00: Gather at Janskerkhof square for Bus 17:00: Gather at the same bus station (Prinsessegracht) for bus return	EXCURSION 1 THE HAGUE	PROGRAMME 9:00: Bus Departure from Utrecht 11:45-13:00: Critical visit to the Mauritshuis 13:00-14:00: Free lunch time 14:00-16:00: Visit of the Europa Experience (European House) 17:00 return to Utrecht by bus

Friday 10 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00 KNG80 006	LECTURE 4 Julie Deschepper	<i>A Transcultural History of Contested Monuments in Europe</i> Readings: Deschepper, Julie 2026. "Striking Similarities! Public Statues, Human Bodies, and the Power of Monuments".
14:00-16:00 Group 1 KNG80 006 Group 2 KNG80 017	SEMINAR 4 Julie Deschepper & Liza Mironova	<i>The Future of Monuments in Europe</i> Readings: Vibe Nielsen, "Diversifying Public Commemorations in Cape Town and Copenhagen," in <i>De-Commemoration: Removing Statues and Renaming Places</i> , edited by Sarah Gensburger and Jenny Wüstenberg, Berghahn Books, 2024, 114-123. ⇒ Validation of your chosen topic / case study for assignment 2.

Weekend (11-12 July)
Free time and self-study

Week 2

Monday 13 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00 JK 2-3 021	LECTURE 5 Rachel Gillett	<i>A European History of Colonialism</i> Readings: Buettner, Elizabeth. 2022. "Europe and Its Entangled Colonial Pasts: Europeanizing the 'Imperial Turn'." In Decolonizing Colonial Heritage: New Agendas, Actors and Practices in and beyond Europe, edited by Britta Schilling and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, 25–43. London: Routledge.
14:00-16:00 Meeting point: in front of Janskerkhof 30	EXCURSION 2 UTRECHT	City Walk in Utrecht Traces of Slavery Utrecht

Tuesday 14 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
9:00-17:00 09:00: Bus Janskerkhof square 17:00: Bus Station for return to be confirmed the day itself	EXCURSION 3 AMSTERDAM	Programme: 9:00 Bus from Utrecht 10:45. Critical Visit of the Wereldmuseum 14:15 Canal Tour (Stadhouderskade 550 tgenover de Heineken Experience) + free time! 17:00: Return to Utrecht

Wednesday 15 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00 JK 2-3 021	LECTURE 6 Julie Deschepper	<i>Contested Heritage and Difficult Memories in Central and Eastern Europe</i> Readings: Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "War and Memory in the Post-Soviet Space: Arming without Borders?", online.
14:00-16:00 Group 1 JK 2-3 021 Group 2 JK 2-3 111	SEMINAR 5 Julie Deschepper & Liza Mironova	<i>Difficult Memories in Central and Eastern Europe</i>

Thursday 16 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description
10:00-13:00 JK 2-3 021	ASSESSMENT 2 + Deadline assessment 1	Group oral presentations (60%)

Friday 17 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:30 UU Summer School Office Janskerkhof 30	Handing in accommodation keys to Julie Deschepper	Students that made use of the Utrecht Summer School accommodation option hand in their keys to the course coordinator. The course coordinator will hand in their keys to the USS desk.
15:00-17:00 Café Hofman: Janskerkhof 17A, 3512BM Utrecht	Closing remark + drinks!	Closing and concluding remarks on the summer school, presentation of certificates, and farewell drinks at café Hofman

Assessments, Attendance and Grading

Assessments

There will be two assessments that both test your knowledge and challenge you to formulate your own argument based on the course matter:

1. **Critical journaling 50%**
2. **Group presentation: 50%**

See schedule and guidelines in the syllabus. You need an average grade of at least 5,5 to pass the course and earn credits. Please note there is no possibility for resits or repair assignments

Attendance (PASS/FAIL)

Attendance is mandatory. Active participation and involvement of all students are the core features of this course. Attending all meetings and preparing well are essential to completing this course successfully. You are responsible for your own learning process and for that of the entire group. Everyone is expected to participate **actively, respectfully, and constructively** in the discussions and activities. Only in this way can we learn together and from each other.

The classroom is a safe environment, and participation respects all students' specific needs and learning styles. Therefore, participation is based on the quality rather than the quantity of your contribution. A good contribution might be an insightful question or an observation relating to that week's conversation or to something covered earlier. It can also be a thoughtful analysis of what you have read. Good comments build on class discussion, evidencing that you have been listening to your classmates. Participation can also be a demonstration that you are listening carefully to the discussion and engaging with it, while not necessarily speaking or raising your hand.

More than one unexcused absence will result in failing the module. In case of illness or an unavoidable absence, please contact Julie Deschepper via email as soon as possible. If you are ill, please stay at home to prevent spreading infection.

Grading

Your grades will be numerical grades according to the Dutch grading system. Dutch grades range from 0 (very bad) to 10 (excellent). At Utrecht University, a 5,5 is the lowest passing grade, though note that this might be different at other (Dutch) institutions. The Utrecht University student registration system (Osiris) that will produce your transcript will round off all grades to whole numerals for 5 and lower, and half numbers for 5.5 and higher. On coursework and examinations, however, it is customary to receive a grade that has not been rounded off. Plusses and minuses are sometimes used, and count for one-fourth of a point, for instance: 8- = 7,75.

Meaning of numerical grades:

9.00-10.00	Excellent
8.00-8.99	Very good
7.50-7.99	Good
7.00-7.49	Very satisfactory
6.50-6.99	Satisfactory
6.00-6.49	Sufficient
5.50-5.99	Acceptable; minimum pass
5.00-5.49	Insufficient; fail
4.00-4.99	Unsatisfactory
3.00-3.99	Very unsatisfactory
2.00-2.99	Bad
0.00-1.99	Very bad

Note that conversion of grades that you have received in the Netherlands to grades at your home institution is the responsibility of your home institution, not Utrecht University. This chart should be used as an indication; no rights can be drawn from it.

Online Education

You have received your Utrecht University login code (SOLIS-ID) from the Summer School administration. If this is not the case, send them an e-mail at summerschool@uu.nl or contact them by phone: +31 (0)302534400. You can use this login code to gain access to the digital teaching environment on Microsoft Teams and to the digital environment of the university library.

Statement on use of Generative AI

- The use of GenAI tools such as ChatGPT affects the achievement of the learning objectives you work on during the course: critical and independent thinking, ability to organise ideas, understand and summarize key concepts and ideas, and demonstrate self-reflection.
- Moreover, the data centers powering generative AI require [enormous amounts of energy](#) and [drain water](#) from areas already facing draught. The [environmental costs](#) are huge in times of a worsening climate crisis.
- Most GenAI models are [trained with copyrighted material](#) that has often been obtained illegally. This means that private companies such as OpenAI and Meta are using other people's work to create a product they sell for a profit. This threatens the livelihood of authors and other creative professionals.

In view of the learning objectives of this course, the use of GenAI as a tool is permitted, but not necessarily recommended in the following way:

- Spell checking of self-written texts
- Help with translating certain words or phrases (not entire self-written texts)
- Format your bibliography

Note that for all other applications, the use of GenAI is NOT allowed. If in doubt, consult with your teacher. **Always be transparent about your use of GenAI, e.g. in declaring how you used it in your assessment.**

Fraud and Plagiarism

It is not allowed to fully generate material with GenAI and to present it as your own work. This could include generating full sentences/code, paragraphs, texts or figures. This is fraud. If your lecturer notes that you have used generative AI, other than for purposes permitted above, they may invite you to explain your work, and its genesis, orally. The staff then will evaluate further participation in the course.

Instructions Assignment

Assignment 2. Critical Journaling

Critical journaling is a self-reflection on what you have learned during the summer school. It is personal and has an open format. It is not a description, but an opportunity for you to demonstrate that you have understood the key concepts and ideas, and that you have learned new skills. Do not hesitate to be creative both in the content and form!

Cover page with

- An image of your choice (and a caption)
- Name
- Email
- Native language(s)
- Name of the course
- Name of instructor

Format:

- You can choose to organize your reflection day by day, by key themes, or by highlights.
- Include pictures! Also the ones you took during our excursions!
- You can include footnotes with references to the readings (no style requirement, just be coherent)
- Approx. 2500 words.
- For online format: **submission via email to Julie in PDF!**
- If you would prefer to create a material journal including collages, hand-written texts, or if you have other ideas: I am very open to it – just check in with me.

Guiding questions:

- What are your main takeaways from the classes?
- What are your reflections on the course's contents?
- What challenged your existing knowledge?
- What surprised you?
- Which theme would you like to explore more in the future?

This is a personal assessment based on your own experience. Therefore, the answers and reflections should come from you, and only you. Any form of plagiarism will be sanctioned. And I invite you **not to** use any form of GenAI. Please note that I do not grade your language expression, but your critical reflection, engagement and creativity.

Deadline: 16th June, 16:00

Assignment 3. Final oral presentations

Group of 3-4 students.

We will form groups in week 1. Presentations will be in week 2.

Goal

The presentation consists of an oral group presentation and an accompanying explanatory document including:

The presentation focuses on one core theme of the course and is based on a case study (artwork, exhibition, event, music, organisation, institution, etc.). You will be asked to relate your case study to the lectures, seminars, excursions, and reading materials, and you will be challenged to formulate your own argument accordingly

Topics can be (but are not limited to):

1. Visual or material representations of Europe
2. Past and present of European colonialism and imperialism
3. Past and present of European nationalism
4. Contested heritage in / of Europe
5. Contested memories in / of Europe
6. Evolving European identities
7. European art
8. European museum
9. Europe and the world
10. The future of Europe

Format

10-minute presentation with a support (PowerPoint, poster, collage, audioguide, etc.) followed by 5 minutes of discussion.

The presentation should include:

- Relevant context (what where when why)
- One core question
- Analysis of the case study
- Use / citation of at least one reading/author

Grading criteria:

- Quality of presentation (clarity, time management, sensitivity to your audience)
- Relevance and connection to the course
- Demonstration of collaborative work
- Use of relevant concepts, ideas, keywords and literature

How to read an academic text?

Before each lecture or seminar, please identify the:

- **Author(s): who is writing?**
 - o Check their biography (nationality, position, age, disciplines)
 - o When was it published?
- **What is the topic?**
 - o What is the title?
 - o What are the key ideas (summarize them in one sentence)
- **Who is the audience?**
 - o Where was the text published?
 - o What is the style?
 - o What is the intended effect (contribution to knowledge, student textbook, manifesto, etc.)
- **Content:**
 - o Check all references, names, or dates that you do not understand / know yet (there is never shame in not knowing something!)
 - o Prepare questions!