Proposed Distance Learning Course; UMASS Center for Heritage and Society

Safeguarding intangible heritage

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Course aims and description
This course aims to equip participants with an understanding and a working appreciation of both theoretical and operational approaches to intangible cultural heritage. It also aims to equip participants with the necessary skills to empower communities and to engage them in the safeguarding of their own heritage. All through this course, the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (henceforth the ICH Convention) will serve as a reference point. This course targets heritage professionals, community leaders, non-profit organization staff members, and civil servants as well as higher education students from the social sciences/humanities (anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, public policy ...).

Numerous are the professionals skilled at preserving the tangible heritage and versed in its comprehensive literature. However, professionals able to safeguard the living heritage made, inter alia, of practices, representations, performing art forms or cosmologies are lacking. Hence the importance of this course where students will develop an understanding of the role of intangible heritage in cultural identity; the convergences and differences between tangible and intangible heritage; the national and international mechanisms for the implementation of the ICH Convention; the diverse ways in which communities can be involved and empowered in the process of intangible heritage safeguarding or the manifold ways of safeguarding intangible heritage, including those mechanisms provided by the ICH Convention.

Student Learning Objectives and pedagogy
By the end of this intensive three-week course, participants should be able to:

- Demonstrate critical understanding of intangible heritage, its specificities but also its points of convergence with tangible heritage
- Demonstrate mastery of the main theoretical concepts and key issues related to intangible heritage
- Devise and implement practical strategies to ensure that communities are fully engaged and empowered in the safeguarding of their intangible heritage
- Devise community-based safeguarding plans according to the specificities of the elements under consideration
- Adapt safeguarding plans to the requirements of nomination dossiers to the Urgent Safeguarding List, the Representative List or proposals for the Register of Good Practices as defined in the ICH Convention
This course uses a number of pedagogical tools. They include lectures by the instructor and discussions to expose students to as wide a range of opinions and experiences as possible. The required readings, selected carefully for their quality and relevance, should help participants to get a critical understanding of the key issues related to the issues on intangible heritage under consideration. Through exercises, participants will be able to analyze critically locally-relevant strategies for community engagement and empowerment as well as for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, analyses of the gaps in these engagements and safeguarding measures and solutions for their improvements.

**Required Texts/Readings**
To be shared online

**Course Requirements**
Attend lectures posted; participate in chat room and Q&A; complete in timely manner the reading of required texts; complete exercises on time for discussion, send completed questionnaires on time...

**Lesson Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>The 2003 Intangible Heritage Convention: definitions, national obligations and mechanisms for international cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Q and A and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Community engagement and empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Exercise and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Safeguarding intangible heritage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>SWOT analyses of existing safeguarding plans and discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>