

ARKE02, From Ancient Sites to Virtual Worlds: An Introduction to Digital Heritage, 3 credits

*From Ancient Sites to Virtual Worlds: An Introduction to Digital Heritage, 3
högskolepoäng*
First Cycle / Grundnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Pro Dean of First and Second Cycle Studies at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2026-06-01 (U 2026/270). The syllabus comes into effect 2026-06-01 and is valid from the spring semester 2027.

General information

The course is offered as a free-standing course.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of study *Specialisation*

- G1N, First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the student should

Knowledge and understanding

- be able to provide a general overview of how digital technologies—such as 3D visualization, geodatabases, web-based platforms, and AI-based methods—are used in research and practice in the field of cultural heritage, specifically material culture and spatial data, for example regarding landscapes,
- be able to explain, at a basic level, how technological development, critical perspectives, and methodological innovation are reshaping how cultural heritage is created, interpreted, and communicated

Competence and skills

- be able to discuss, both orally and in writing, how digital cultural heritage can be linked to and integrated into other fields of knowledge and sectors of society (such as urban planning, digital humanities, museology, cultural policy, or applications in virtual worlds and environments),
- be able to broadly identify and analyze how these approaches shape society's understanding, participation, and decision-making processes regarding cultural heritage,
- be able to reflect on how digital tools and methods influence professional and academic work in cultural heritage-related contexts (such as urban planning, digital humanities, museology, or cultural and social policy)

Judgement and approach

- be able to identify various theoretical, ethical, and methodological perspectives related to digital representations of material culture within cultural heritage,
- be able to assess, at a basic level, the societal implications of methods used in digital cultural heritage.

Course content

This course is an introduction to the field of digital cultural heritage. It provides insight into this dynamic and rapidly changing field of research and application, with an emphasis on how digital technology, methods, and critical perspectives are transforming the way cultural heritage is understood, produced, communicated, and experienced, particularly through digital representations of material culture and spatial data (such as 3D models, virtual environments, and their connections to virtual worlds, the gaming industry, and other advanced computer systems).

The course does not focus on a single technical method or tool. Instead, it offers a broad overview of key approaches and methods in digital cultural heritage and examines how these influence various aspects of society. Special attention is given to the interplay between theory and practice.

Topics covered in the course include:

- theoretical foundations of digital cultural heritage,
- critical perspectives on technology and its role in shaping knowledge production (e.g., bias in AI-based analyses, issues of authority on digital platforms),
- methods for digital documentation, visualization, and dissemination (e.g., 3D recording and modeling, GIS-based analysis, web-based and immersive visualization of cultural heritage environments),
- ethical considerations, including issues of inclusion, representation, sustainability, and data management (e.g., ownership of digital data, access and reuse, long-term preservation),
- the societal impact of digital cultural heritage within cultural, educational, and institutional contexts,
- new technological approaches and their implications for the interpretation of and engagement with cultural heritage.

Throughout the course, digital cultural heritage is situated in relation to other fields of knowledge, demonstrating how cultural heritage perspectives contribute to interdisciplinary collaboration and broader societal development.

Course design

The course consists of lectures and seminars.

The lectures introduce key concepts, theories, and methods in the field of digital cultural heritage. The seminars provide opportunities for discussion, critical reflection, and the development of analytical skills in relation to the course literature and case studies. Active participation is expected.

Assessment

The course is assessed through a written take-home exam and participation in a mandatory seminar.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass

Entry requirements

General requirements

Further information

- The course is offered by the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at Lund University.
- For further information, please refer to the current registration and information materials.