

2026 - 2027

Course Offerings



Cultural Geography (GEO)
Wageningen University & Research



Table of Contents

<u>Education @ GEO</u>	<u>P. 3</u>
<u>Period 1</u>	<u>P. 4 - 6</u>
<u>Period 2</u>	<u>P. 6 & 7</u>
<u>Period 3</u>	<u>P. 8</u>
<u>Period 4</u>	<u>P. 9</u>
<u>Period 5</u>	<u>P. 10 & 11</u>
<u>Period 6</u>	<u>P. 12</u>
<u>PhD Courses</u>	<u>P. 13</u>
<u>Online Courses</u>	<u>P. 14</u>



Education @ GEO

The Cultural Geography Group (GEO) offers courses for WUR students, graduates, post-graduates and professionals who have an interest in exploring and finding solutions for the ecological and social challenges facing all life on Earth.

The Cultural Geography Group has a community of approximately 20 PhD candidates from all parts of the world, operating actively and mutually inspiring. We offer dedicated supervision and support for a variety of topics, theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, related to research agendas of staff members.

Please note: Course titles, course information and coordinators listed in this brochure are subject to change. Please consult the WUR Study Handbook for the latest information.

Education & PhD Coordinators



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Period 1

Concepts & Approaches: Knowledge, Power, and Positionality in Social Research (GEO30306)

6 ECTS | Period 1 Morning | Coordinator: Meghann Ormond

How do different worldviews shape the way we understand tourism and ourselves? In this course, you will learn to understand and apply five major social science approaches that inform research across many fields, including tourism: positivism, interpretivism, Marxian political economy, transnational feminism, and poststructuralism. Each approach offers different assumptions about what counts as knowledge, how it is produced, and the role of the researcher in that process. You will analyse academic texts, social issues, and your own experiences using these approaches as lenses, while also reflecting on your own positionality — your values, biases, and background — and how these influence the kinds of questions you ask and the knowledge you seek to create. Each week, you will individually and collectively investigate an academic journal article through the lenses of the approaches we learn in the course. In the first of your two final assignments, you will co-design a public exhibition piece that helps others grasp the core ideas of one of the approaches using a visual, auditory, or performative format. In the second, you will choose your own case topic—such as a tourism-related issue, social trend, or policy debate—and analyse it using multiple approaches. With a mix of conceptual grounding, practical exercises, and space for personal reflection, this course will strengthen your ability to think across disciplines and develop your own voice as a scholar and citizen.

Geopolitics of Climate Changes for Frontline Communities (GEO39806)

6 ECTS | Period 1 Afternoon | Coordinator: Jennifer Veilleux

This course is about climate change, geopolitics, and the frontline communities located at the intersections. We will explore together, over the 8 weeks, why this matters and what can be done about it. You will be taught by scholars working at relevant intersections of felt experience, corporate interests, feminism and critical social science, more-than-human perspectives, historic path dependencies, grassroots movements, energy policy, and environmental sciences. Together, we will explore elements of belonging and embodying relationships between humans and the planet. We will engage with transformative learning techniques such as gaming and role play, seminar discussions and mind mapping, and group and individual work that culminate in a final presentation about your assigned frontline community. We center frontline communities throughout the course to better understand how resistance at grassroots and in other unexpected places offers novel, and often decolonial, ways forward in everyday practices. We also consider the geopolitics of the food, energy, and water nexus interdependencies; how industry and policies may work to promote or obscure through climate obstruction acts the structural just, equitable, and sustainable changes required for people and communities; and finally what we, as individuals, can do in the face of historic injustices right in our own communities. We hope you will join us to explore learning together in and out of the classroom, with and from your peers, through multi-media sources of information to accommodate different learning modalities, toward employing creative forms of synthesis in better understanding the climate crisis and opportunities to join countless others already building climate responsible futures.

Period 1 (cont.)

Human Geography: Theory and Practice (GEO20406)

6 ECTS | Period 1 Afternoon | Coordinators: Karolina Doughty & Maria de Wit

How do human experiences, identities, and behaviours shape — and get shaped by — the places we live in? In this course, you'll explore key human geography perspectives on the relationships between people and their environments, from wilderness and therapeutic landscapes to cities and everyday infrastructures. Guided by a team of lecturers with diverse perspectives, you will dive into topics like place-making, spatial design, and human–environment relationships through interactive lectures, lively discussions, and hands-on fieldwork. To bring theory to life, you will research a site of your choice, presenting your findings in a short video. Moreover, a field trip to a circular prison offers a look at social impacts of space. Along the way, you will sharpen your critical thinking, academic writing, and research skills. There are 2 lectures and one tutorial per week over 6 weeks. Course activities include lectures, tutorials, a group project, a fieldtrip, and an in-class essay and exam. This course builds your analytical and collaborative skills, and offers a solid foundation in human–environment relations — ideal if you're interested in exploring environmental issues, nature conservation, or spatial planning from a social perspective.

Qualitative Research Methods (GEO24806)

6 ECTS | Period 1-2 Whole Day (in Breda) | Coordinator: Cheryl van Adrichem

This course provides an advanced introduction to the theory and practice of qualitative research methods, specifically qualitative data analysis. The course provides students with advanced knowledge and skills to carry out qualitative data analysis of different variety of data (e.g., text, photos, videos) collected from different settings using varied tools. This course is designed to give students experience in designing qualitative research projects, analysing qualitative data, and to give them a conceptual understanding of the reasons for using qualitative analytic approaches, the limits of the techniques they will be using, and the opportunities and challenges unique to advanced qualitative social research methods. It is assumed that students have had prior exposure through an introduction course on qualitative research methods (MAT-15806 Fundamentals of Research Design (RM1)) in which they have learned the process of data collection through interviews, focus groups, participant observation, compiling policy documents, images, videos, and other qualitative materials. This course therefore builds on these by introducing advanced methods and focusing on the practical aspects of qualitative data analysis which covers what to do with the data once you have started collecting it and how to report findings.

Responsibilities for Equality and Sustainability (GEO25806)

6 ECTS | Period 1 Morning | Coordinator: Chizu Sato

In this course, we examine social and ethical dilemmas surrounding responsibility using frameworks developed for the study of gender and diversity to advance a more sustainable world. We have chosen cases that are made more complicated by both uncertainty (e.g. when the same dilemma can be seen through different lenses) and history (e.g. when structural inequalities, like sexism, matter). The course creates a space where students from diverse backgrounds become comfortable sharing their understandings of their own position, the practices they find normal and the responsibilities they feel. Students learn the background of and practice skills that are relevant to responsibility, such as how to reflect on practice using different lenses, how to select inquiry methods that fit who you are and what you are trying to study, how responsibly and respectfully to debate, and what an ethics of care means in practice. Because this course is about our own responsibilities, it uses learning activities that are experiential: students learn about responsibility from their own experience and from their own position. These learning methods, informed by the role of transformative learning in supporting boundary crossing, constructively link the concepts and skills taught to students' everyday lives.

Period 1 (cont.) & 2

Statistics for Tourism, Society and Environment (GEO12801)

1 ECTS | Period 1 Afternoon | Coordinator: Maarten Jacobs

The course introduces students to the use of statistics for research on tourism, society and environment. Basic statistical concepts needed to use statistics will be explained. The course addresses how to select appropriate statistical tests and enables students to use statistical software.

Tourism: Principles & Practice (GEO11806)

6 ECTS | Period 1-2 Whole Day (in Breda) | Coordinator: Antonia Purrmann

Why does tourism matter — and what are its impacts on people, places, and the planet? This course gives you a solid introduction to tourism as a system: how it operates, who's involved, and what its effects are. You will dive into tourism's many interrelated components to understand the complex relationships and impacts of tourism. Ultimately, you will gain a critical and systems-based perspective on one of the world's largest industries.

To translate principles into practice, you will in small research teams explore the current tourism development locally in a real-life case study. Through this research project, you will build key academic skills, namely presenting scientific projects and collaborating in diverse teams.

- > Format & Commitment: Weekly lectures and tutorials on Mondays, plus three one-day excursions on Wednesdays
- > Student freedom: Choose your own research question to analyse the case study
- > Skills & Relevance: Build a foundational understanding of tourism systems; apply critical thinking to real-world tourism issues; build research and communication skills in a diverse team; build a foundation for later courses in the BSc Tourism programme.

No prior tourism knowledge needed — just bring your curiosity and your experience as a traveller or observer of tourism.

Gender and Diversity in Transnational Worlds (GEO39306)

6 ECTS | Period 2 Afternoon | Coordinator: Chizu Sato

Media powerfully shapes how our students view themselves, how they treat others and objects, like natural lifeworlds, how they are viewed and treated by others, and their choices, for example, in consumption and travel. This course enables students to better understand the relationships between culture, identity, consumption, mobility, and their natural lifeworlds across national borders. It uses a gender and diversity perspective that draws insights from transnational critical gender studies. The comparative approach it follows examines how differences between men and women are relationally constructed in interaction with the marketing of products, ideals, and ideas in both historical and contemporary contexts and then it highlights their effects on (in)equality (gender, class, race, sexuality, and nation) and (un)sustainability. Students collaboratively study forms of resistance to and alternative forms of consumer culture and enhance their gender and diversity sensitive media literacy skills by applying the insights they learned to a concrete case in their everyday life individually and in a small group.

Period 2

Global Landscapes and Place-Making (GEO37306)

6 ECTS | Period 2 Afternoon | Coordinator: Ana Aceska

How do global forces shape places and landscapes? This course analyses the politics, identities, and power dynamics behind the planning and design of landscapes around the world. You'll investigate real-world case studies—from tourist destination development to urban neighbourhoods and transboundary watersheds—through the lenses of cultural geography, sociology, and political ecology. You will engage with interactive lectures, fieldwork, debates, film analysis, and your own research interests. Over six weeks, with 2–3 classes per week, you'll develop your own place-based research project, choosing a case and theme that matters to you related to identity, tourism, heritage, water, or beyond. Expect to gain critical insight into how place-making is never neutral, and how globalisation reshapes even the most mundane local environments. You will sharpen your analytical and design skills and come away with a self-directed research report, presented, and a final exam that connects theory with the landscapes that surround us.

Human Geography (GEO10306)

6 ECTS | Period 2 Afternoon | Coordinator: Alexandra Rijke

The course provides an overview of the reciprocal relationships between people and the environment, places and spaces. Both the ways in which people have an impact on the environment and the ways in which people are affected by the environment will be scrutinized. The course will be addressing subjects such as the multiple meanings of space and place, designing on a human scale, human/animal relationships, contested landscapes, and so on. On the fore are the different conceptual perspectives adopted by geographical theory. In the lectures we will focus on models that enable us to understand the relations between people and the environment.

Philosophy of Science & Ethics in Tourism (GEO23806)

6 ECTS | Period 2-3 Whole Day (in Breda) | Coordinator: Chih-Chen Trista Lin

Why do we study tourism the way we do? This course goes beyond the “how” of research to explore the why—unpacking the ethical and philosophical foundations that guide tourism research and practice. You'll critically engage with big questions shaping scientific studies of tourism today, like: What role does personal experience play in understanding tourism? Can we separate facts from values when studying tourism? Do structural factors shape individual tourism choices, and if so, how? How do we address power imbalances in tourism research? And importantly, you will gain a nuanced perspective on how tourism should be studied and practiced by learning from ethical theories and by considering this question: What role do the rights and perspectives of vulnerable social groups play in tourism development?

This course takes you on a journey through important philosophical and ethical approaches behind tourism research and practice, while applying these ideas to real-world tourism and mobility issues. Expect a mix of engaging lectures, group activities, and real-world case studies. One highlight: a field trip in Utrecht, where you'll apply your knowledge to a tourism organization. Over the weeks of the course, you'll develop your own critical perspective on a pressing tourism issue, propose a research idea based on the approaches you learned, take part in peer feedback sessions and receive instructor's feedback to help sharpen your idea.

In this course, students work on a set of academic skills which are not assessed, yet contribute to:

- > Philosophy of science skills
- > Ethics skills

The course equips students with the knowledge and skill needed for ethical reflection at the learning outcome attainment level 3, and with the knowledge and skill needed for philosophy of science at the learning outcome attainment level 2. As part of the philosophy of science learning activities of this course, students will reflect back on their National Field Project.

Period 3

Research Methodology for Planning and Design (GEO40306)

6 ECTS | Period 3 Whole Day | Coordinator: Maarten Jacobs

Scientific research methods are key to sound research and should be explicit, transparent, accountable, and adequate. Ultimately, opting for adequate methods serves to make research valid and reliable and thus credible. For conducting scientific research autonomously, a researcher must not only be able to apply given methods, but also evaluate their adequacy, choose amongst and amend existing methods, and critically reflect on their feasibility to address identified research questions. These capacities belong to the realm of research methodology - opting for explicit methodological frameworks and thinking critically about related methods. This includes assessing the consequences of theoretical perspectives for choosing and designing methods (including the implications of the ontological and epistemological assertions inherent within the theoretical perspectives), negotiating the pros and cons of a variety of methods, debating and reflecting on the credibility of research processes and outcomes, and finally reflecting on ethical implications. This course taps into all of these issues. The course reflects methodologies of case studies, correlational and experimental research. The course trains students in qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, as habitually used in observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires.

Society, History & Globalisation (GEO12306)

6 ECTS | Period 3-5 Whole Day (in Breda) | Coordinators: Emmanuel Adu-Ampong & Débora Ribeiro Povoá

Why does tourism evolve the way it does — and what does it reveal about the world we live in?

This course explores the history of tourism as part of broader economic, social, political, and cultural transitions from ancient times to the 21st century. You will discover how tourism reflects major shifts — from agrarian to industrial societies, demographic changes, and more. Each week focuses on a specific historical period to connect the past and current tourism development to broader societal transformations.

- > Format & Commitment: Weekly lectures and tutorials on Thursdays, plus a one-day excursion
- > Student Freedom: Choose a topic for your individual essay connecting tourism to wider historical change as well as current trends
- > Skills & Relevance: Sharpen your critical writing skills; explore ethics and your own societal position as a tourism scholar; learn to manage information effectively

This course shows that tourism has never stood still — and neither has the world around it.

Transformative Encounters: Tourism, Experience, and Social Change (GEO32306)

6 ECTS | Period 3 Whole Day | Coordinator: Karolina Doughty

How can tourism be reimagined as a space for critical reflection, decolonial practice, and social change? This interdisciplinary course explores the dynamics of contemporary tourism through the lens of experience. While the tourism industry often focuses on designing pleasurable, curated encounters, this course takes a more critical and creative approach. We examine how tourist experiences are constructed, consumed, and contested — not only as leisure activities, but as encounters that are deeply embedded in cultural narratives and global power relations. Through the linking of theory with hands-on groupwork, students will investigate whether (nearby) tourist experiences can serve as a tool for social change. A key component of the course involves designing a guided walking tour in collaboration with a societal commissioner. This practical project invites students to apply their learning in real-world contexts, using experience design as a method to engage with place and community in relation to a variety of possible themes.

Period 4

Research Methodologies for Tourism, Society & Environment (GEO40805)

5 ECTS | Period 4 Whole Day | Coordinator: Chih-Chen Trista Lin

Ready to stop just doing methods, start thinking critically about why we research the way we do and tackle the deeper logic of research design? This course challenges you to design research that makes sense—from the big picture to the fine print. You will learn from an array of research projects showcasing the diversity of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and their utility for generating insights on topics in the fields of tourism and mobilities. You'll explore how theory, context, and method shape what we study and how we study it. Whether you're working with interviews, policy documents, surveys, or visual methods, you'll learn to justify your methodological choices and connect theory, context, and analysis in ways that are both logical and creative. You'll craft two mini research proposals in small groups—one qualitative, one quantitative—on topics you choose, gaining the confidence and skills to shape your MSc thesis and future research projects. Through these assignments you will demonstrate your ability to design research critically, coherently, and with curiosity.

Period 5

Cultural and Historical Geography (GEO23306)

6 ECTS | Period 5 Afternoon | Coordinator: Roy van Beek

Which historical and cultural processes have shaped landscapes, and what is their impact on modern society? This course delves into the genealogies of landscapes, drawing from a variety of scientific disciplines, to give you the tools to analyze and understand the significance of landscape history and character in landscape architecture and planning. The six-week course starts with introductions to the analysis of prehistoric, historic and early modern landscape formation processes, and gradually moves modern landscapes. This part of the course introduces a selection of key concepts, methods and tools from cultural geography and addresses processes of identity-formation, memory-construction and social change. Through readings, debates, practical assignments and two excursions, you will engage with the course material in a hands-on and interactive way, developing a deeper understanding of the complexities of landscape history and heritage.

Environmental Psychology (GEO36306)

6 ECTS | Period 5 Afternoon | Coordinator: Maarten Jacobs

Environmental psychology studies the interactions between humans and the environment from a psychological point of view, that is, taking the individual mind as the primary unit of analysis. This course focuses on the reciprocal relationships between humans and those built and natural environments that are most relevant for the environmental sciences: nature, wildlife, landscape and places, and the environment in general. These relationships are rooted in biological as well as cultural and personal mechanisms. The course introduces the history and scope of the field of environmental psychology and describes the advantages and disadvantages of the methods used to derive scientific knowledge of environment and behaviour relationships. The students learn how natural and built environments are perceived and appreciated, how interacting with nature may benefit humans psychologically and physiologically, how people develop a sense of place, how cognitions and emotions towards wildlife are constituted, and how people may built up general images of nature and the environment. The course presents major theories such as, the working of perception and emotion, memory, conscious and unconscious psychological processing, arousal theory, the cognitive hierarchy model, and the psychology of aesthetics. The ultimate aim of environmental psychology is to contribute to creating liveable environments by providing relevant scientific knowledge. The question of how we can use knowledge on human-environment relationships to formulate management strategies, planning strategies, and design principles for urban-rural planning, landscape architecture, and natural resources management will be discussed.

Global Mobilities & Climate Change (GEO31306)

6 ECTS | Period 5 Afternoon | Coordinators: Cheryl van Adrichem & Martijn Duineveld

Are you ready to become a radical changemaker in the world of global mobilities? This course will equip you with the knowledge and skills to reflect on, and learn how to, make a difference. You will critically analyse the relationship between planetary environmental disasters like climate change and their impact on life on Earth, and how global mobility both affects, and is affected by, this. During interactive lectures, tutorials, and a one-day excursion you will delve into various ideas, theories, and approaches to studying global mobilities like tourism and its environmental consequences. You will apply this knowledge gained in an individual paper with a topic of your choice.

In this course you will also learn how to use academic knowledge to drive positive change and contribute to a more just world in and beyond the globalized tourism industry and related industries. Through in-class debates and enacting a court case against a tourism organisation, you will examine dominant ideas related to tourism's sustainability transition like self-regulation, technofixes, and shifting the responsibility to tourists or host communities. Together with your group members, you will collaborate on preparing for, and reflecting on, this court case in a group report.

Period 5 (cont.)

Tourism & Sustainable Development (GEO31806)

6 ECTS | Period 5 Morning | Coordinator: Meghann Ormond

This course is for ambitious students and future change-makers who want to be equipped to lead systemic changes in ongoing societal transitions – particularly in connection to tourism and overall societal sustainability challenges. Amidst ongoing societal (sustainability) challenges, there are ample green shoots of hopeful ways of reimagining transition futures. The course therefore aims to provide students with transdisciplinary research tools and the opportunity to address real-world sustainability challenges through applied learning, field immersion, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Direct engagement with stakeholders from the public, private and research sectors enables students to translate academic insights and transdisciplinary tools into implementation proposals. The course offers students a hopeful approach to driving change and envisioning transition futures.

eXtended Realities and the Future of Communication (GEO38306)

6 ECTS | Period 5 Afternoon | Coordinators: Alexander Klippel & Will Hurst

The course offers an introduction to and discussion of how immersive technologies transform communication and understanding. This course will provide students with the basics of what immersive technologies (XR) are and their history; it will connect XR to recent developments in 3D modeling and environmental sensing as two sides of the same coin. The course will teach content creation and realizing novel and exciting ways to interact with digital content. The course will theoretically address the critical features of XR and introduce students to core concepts such as immersion, presence, and reality-trade-off. Furthermore, the course will provide students with hands-on experiences to create their own XR experiences focusing on entry-level technologies such as 360 cameras, 3D modeling, photogrammetry techniques such as structure from motion mapping, and Unity. Unity is a powerful game engine that allows for creating engaging content for immersive and traditional media.

Period 6

Intersectional Feminist Approaches (GEO38806)

6 ECTS | Period 6 Morning | Coordinator: Chizu Sato

The challenges we face today demand interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. They also demand careful considerations of structural modes of (in)justice. That said, uncovering and making sense of gender, race, wealth, generation, sexuality, effects of colonial practice, and more, is not straightforward. These differences demand a better understanding of the intersecting processes that shape the challenges we study in their specific socio-ecological settings.

This interactive course exposes students to diverse concepts (e.g., intersectionality, agency, care, decolonisation, performativity, reflexivity) and approaches (e.g., epistemology, history, political ecology, postcapitalism, poststructuralism, posthumanism) that are useful for understanding intersecting processes.

Through participatory sessions and post-session reflections, this course helps students, first, to develop, operationalize and integrate a feminist intersectional framework into their own (thesis) research. The process used for this integration, then, serves as a model for independent integration of other concepts and approaches relevant to students' own interests. Additionally, students are supported to practice skills such as self-reflection, holding brave spaces, perspective-taking, and attitudes that reflect on ethical qualities of respect, reciprocity and responsibility, which improve their ability to engage with (more-than-human) actors from diverse backgrounds.

PhD Courses

Critical Tourism Studies (Summer School)

3 ECTS | Expected June - July 2027 | Coordinator: Edward H. Huijbens

Through the democratization of travel, transport technology developments, ubiquitous internet use and growing global affluence, international tourism is booming despite temporary setbacks. Globetrotting tourists are seen as part of the frictionless flow of capital, information, culture and goods and most places on the planet are meant to be competing in a global marketplace to entice these. As such tourism is generally promoted as a motor for economic growth and regularly cited as the world largest industry, employing one in ten people of the planetary workforce. Under these terms there is a need to tend to the diverse relations through which tourism places and spaces emerge, and thus define tourism development successes from a broader perspective than merely as measurable economic growth.

The course will enable PhD students to unravel the multiple relations surrounding tourism and its development in a range of settings refracted through their own on-going research. The course will equip students with a nuanced appreciation of the socio-material and cultural dimensions of power manifest in tourism destination development, in tandem with an appreciation of the production and mobility aspects of tourism. These will be embedded with an understanding of the forces of structural power that characterize twenty-first century capitalism, empire and globalization.

Transformative and Participatory Qualitative Research Approaches and Methods (TPAR)

4 ECTS | Expected January - February 2027 | Coordinator: Meghann Ormond

How can your research foster inclusion, challenge dominant narratives, and help bring about change? This course offers PhD candidates and early-career scholars a hands-on, critical introduction to transformative, participatory, and action research approaches. These approaches centre engagement with marginalised voices and use creative and arts-based methods—such as storytelling, drawing, collage, and theatre—to co-generate knowledge that matters. You'll explore how power, ethics, and representation shape research processes and outcomes. Through interactive workshops, group activities, and peer feedback, you'll experiment with techniques for participant recruitment, co-analysis, and closing the research loop in respectful and generative ways. You'll also prototype your own set of context-sensitive, ethically grounded research techniques. Expect to reflect deeply on your own positionality and the responsibilities you carry as a researcher aiming for transformation. By the end of this 4-ECTS course, you'll be equipped with the conceptual grounding and practical tools needed to design a methodologically sound, politically aware, and creatively rich research strategy.

Online Courses

Introduction to Tourism and Society (GEO25303)

Did you know that the persisting growth of tourism has effects on the social and natural environment? In this online course, you will use scientific approaches to make sense of tourism phenomena in terms of their relations to space, place and environment. Through knowledge clips and peer discussions, you will discover that tourism is more than just a powerful and positive economic force. Based on weekly reflection exercises, you will have the freedom to choose your own case study and shape your argument based on your interests and/or local context. By the end of the course, you will be able to critically analyse tourism as a global system, understand its societal and ecological consequences, and apply key geographic concepts to assess tourism's sustainable potential.

Offered for 3 ECTS in Period 1 & Period 2. To gain access to the SPOC version, follow the instructions in Brightspace after registration.

Sustainable Tourism: Rethinking the Future (GEO37803)

How can tourism be reimaged to better serve people and the planet? In this online course, you will analyse tourism through social science approaches (psychology, sociology, geography) and engage with tourism development trends such as voluntourism, community-based tourism and overtourism. You will integrate these concepts with an international team into a tourism case study of choice and take part in dynamic discussions to creatively rethink alternative visions for the development of tourism. The hands-on experience with working (online) in an international interdisciplinary team is an essential skill for further courses, internships, and your professional career.

Offered for 3 ECTS in Period 2 & Period 5. To gain access to the SPOC version, follow the instructions in Brightspace after registration.