



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Netherlands Program, Summer 2027

ART 491: Topics: Curatorial Strategies, The Netherlands

Instructor: Prof. Becky Alley

Email: becky.alley@uky.edu

Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: The Netherlands will serve as our classroom as we investigate how museums, galleries, public art, architecture, neighborhoods, and everyday places communicate culture and meaning. Through museum and gallery visits, walking excursions, Place-as-Text explorations, discussions, readings, and reflective assignments, students will develop the skills to closely observe and critically interpret the spaces they encounter. Along the way, we will examine the creative decisions made by curators, designers, architects, artists, and other cultural practitioners, considering how choices about selection, placement, interpretation, and context shape visitors' experiences and influence meaning. By asking not only *what* a place or exhibition communicates, but also *how* it was constructed—and how different creative decisions might have produced different experiences—students will develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between creative practice, interpretation, and public engagement. Throughout the course, students will also engage in the creative process of curating, considering how works of art enter into dialogue with particular sites and audiences and how thoughtful curatorial choices can transform the experience and meaning of both art and place.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Develop a deeper understanding of how museums, galleries, public art, architecture, and everyday places shape the ways art is experienced and interpreted.
- Strengthen their ability to closely observe, analyze, and critically engage with cultural spaces using Place-as-Text methodologies.
- Examine how curatorial, artistic, architectural, and interpretive decisions influence meaning and visitor experience.
- Explore the creative process of curating by considering how works of art can enter into dialogue with particular sites, histories, and audiences.
- Connect firsthand experiences in the Netherlands with broader ideas about place, context, exhibition design, and public engagement.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze museums, exhibitions, public art, and other cultural sites through written, visual, and oral responses.
- Apply observational research and contextual investigation to interpret the relationship between art, place, and audience.
- Evaluate how curatorial choices—including selection, placement, interpretation, and exhibition design—shape visitor experience and meaning.
- Produce writing appropriate to the field of curatorial practice, including exhibition proposals, interpretive texts, and critical reflection.

- Develop and present an original curatorial proposal that thoughtfully situates works of art within a specific site, supporting creative decisions with research, visual analysis, and an understanding of audience and context.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course: Through readings, discussions, museum and gallery visits, public art encounters, and Place-as-Text excursions, this course explores the relationships among art, place, and interpretation. Students will investigate how architecture, exhibition design, public space, and cultural context shape the ways artworks are experienced and understood. We will examine the creative and curatorial decisions that influence visitor experience, considering how choices about selection, placement, interpretation, and audience engagement shape meaning. Throughout the course, students will move between critical analysis and creative practice, developing the skills to thoughtfully interpret and imagine exhibitions and other site-responsive cultural experiences.

Major topics include:

- Place, context, and the interpretation of art
- Curatorial practice and exhibition development
- Museum and gallery studies
- Place-as-Text methodologies and close observation
- Public art, monuments, and memorials
- Exhibition design and visitor experience
- Architecture and the built environment
- Curatorial writing and exhibition proposals
- Art, site, and audience engagement

5. Required Readings and Materials: Students should bring a **laptop** capable of word processing and connecting to Wi-Fi, as it will be used for writing assignments, research, and the development of their final curatorial proposal. Internet access will be available throughout the program.

Required readings will be provided electronically as PDF documents through the course learning management system. Readings will include essays and excerpts related to museums and galleries, curatorial practice, Place-as-Text methodologies, public art, architecture, and the interpretation of place. Additional site-specific materials may be assigned throughout the program to complement museum visits, walking excursions, and class discussions.

Students should also bring a **notebook or sketchbook** for recording observations, sketches, and field notes, along with a **smartphone or digital camera** for documenting exhibitions, public art, architecture, and other sites visited throughout the program. Students will use written notes, sketches, and photographs as forms of visual research and documentation to support class discussions, written assignments, and the development of their final curatorial proposal. Because much of the course takes place outside the classroom, active participation, close observation, and thoughtful documentation of experiences are essential components of the course.

6. Graded Assignments:

Students will actively engage with museums, galleries, public art, architecture, and the built environment through discussions, readings, Place-as-Text excursions, written reflections, and

visual documentation. Throughout the program, students will develop a series of observational and analytical assignments that build toward a final site-specific curatorial proposal and presentation.

Assignment	Percentage
Reading Responses (3)	15%
Site Studies / Place Profiles (4)	20%
Participation, Engagement, and Field Activities	20%
Exhibition Analysis + Presentation	20%
Final Curatorial Proposal + Visual Presentation	25%

Letter grades will be given in this class and will be assigned using the standard grading scale: 100-90%=A Represents an exceptionally high achievement as a result of aptitude, effort and intellectual initiative. Work created well exceeded all of the requirements for the project/course. 89-80%=B Represents a high achievement as a result of ability and effort. Work created met all requirements for the project and exceeded some of them. 79-70%=C Represents average achievement. Work met all requirements for the project/course. 69-60%=D Represents the minimum passing grade. Work met some requirements for the project/course and failed to meet some. 59% and below=E Represents unsatisfactory performance and indicates failure in project/course. Work did not significantly meet requirements for the project/course.

This course will be graded on the above criteria, without regard to other scales (i.e., plus-and-minus) which may apply at your college or university. Note KUIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.

7. Generative AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can “hallucinate” (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:

- **Brainstorming:** You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- **Citation Assistance:** AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- **Grammar and Style Checking:** AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- **Concept Understanding:** Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.

- Research Assistance: AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:

- Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- Data Manipulation: Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- Misrepresentation of Skills: Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Confidentiality Breach: Using AI tools that might violate KIIS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

Metacognitive Reflection. In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

"I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]."

9. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

10. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability

accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

11. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.