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Expecting and Facilitating the Unexpected: Culture Lab and the European Capital of Culture

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Abstract
This paper outlines and interrogates the processes informing the design, teaching and learning of Culture Lab, an intensive field class designed to foster experimental learning in anthropology and cultural studies. The course's object of study and site of learning is the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) and its multiple associations – the phenomenon, the city, and the forms of participation, debates, and instances of urban change that occur during a specific iteration. It draws on problem-based and participatory approaches to learning and advocates approaches to teaching cultural anthropology and cultural studies that combine multi-faceted approaches to cultural immersion and discovery, while at the same time acknowledging the individual motivations of learners, by fostering and developing students' interests and curiosity. This paper reports and reflects upon the course in its first two iterations of the course at Amsterdam University College, namely the field trips to Paphos in 2017 and Valletta in 2018.

Keywords: Experiential learning; Immersion; Encounter; Unfamiliarity; Unexpected; Attention; Walking

Introduction

Culture Lab is a laboratory course designed and implemented at Amsterdam University College (AUC) as part of the undergraduate programme in Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS). Conceived as a way of supplementing theory, it aims to extend learning beyond the classroom, with a focus on encountering the unfamiliar and responding to the unexpected as a way of inviting students to experiment with the learning process itself. In this, we draw inspiration from Tim Ingold's observation that to solely focus on pedagogy as 'transmission' is to miss the ways in which education can shape individuals' interactions with each other, themselves and their surroundings when it is thought about as enhanced attention, "a 'leading out', which opens paths of intellectual growth and discovery without pre-determined outcomes or fixed end-points". "It is", Ingold contends, "about attending to things, rather than acquiring the knowledge that absolves us of the need to do so; about exposure rather than immunisation" (Ingold, 2018, p. ix).

While laboratory learning environments embedding experiential learning are well established and practised in the Sciences, with Culture Lab we seek to transpose this approach in ways that respond to challenges posed by the broader field of Social Sciences and the Humanities, in particular Anthropology and Cultural Studies. The notion of the laboratory, then, includes both the examination of acquired knowledge and experimentation with materials and phenomena as a way of acquiring knowledge first hand or through attention. In addition to this pedagogical motivation, the course also seeks to respond to other, more formal challenges arising from the design of experiential learning within the curriculum. These include constraints of time in undergraduate studies (it takes time to do proper anthropological research and see the results, it takes a slow approach to reading and seeing) and complexities of methodological interrelation between theory and observation (questions about whether one should understand theory first in order to apply it to observed phenomena, or could observations create forms of conceptual thinking). In responding to these challenges, taking our cues from methods of observation in field work

in anthropology, and close reading and conceptual analysis in cultural studies, the course is designed to foster learning that propels students to attend to, or *take notice* of their modes of encounter and experience, to form ways of research that combine theory and practice, bringing together study and implementation in creative ways.

In this paper, we outline the course's genesis, its aims and structure, and reflect on its educational and methodological achievements, as well as the problems we encountered. In the following, first we contextualise the course within LAS and AUC's programme and explain where the idea for starting a 'lab' course on 'culture' and focusing on urban elements came from. Laboratory here refers to the format of the course as a place to attend to and experiment with culture, and learn from encountering problems and finding critical solutions to them, but also to our own experimentation (as educators) with new forms and methods of education for students interested in anthropology and cultural studies. This contextualisation will be followed by an overview of the origins of the course, and its development over the past two years in its current four-week structure. Each week of the course follows a particular theme (preparation, exploration, experimentation and dissemination), which we present in this paper under separate headlines. In addition to providing brief overviews of the main themes, activities and assignments for these weeks, in each section we highlight the educational goals we pursue in relation to forms of enquiry, methods of reading and doing fieldwork, and ways of educating, learning and sharing the acquired (and curated) knowledge. To support our arguments, we refer to student activities and projects where applicable and without compromising students' privacy. In conclusion we highlight some of the main challenges we have encountered and things we have learned as educators through our own engagement with the unexpected.

Context

Over the last twenty years, the Dutch approach to liberal arts and science (LAS) undergraduate education has acquired its own characteristics, not least an emphasis on educational innovation that engages students in reflection about their learning, and cultivates a sense of global citizenship through combining the principles of liberal education with relevant theoretical perspectives and contemporary real-world experience. At Amsterdam University College (AUC), our founding mission and location in Amsterdam Science Park position our programme as one that is contemporary and alert to the big questions of our day. It emphasises scientific rigour in the core curriculum, and introduces all our students, whether majoring in sciences, social sciences or humanities, to methods, debates and perspectives that both transcend and contextualise disciplinary learning. The college has also developed a focus on city-based learning as a way of anchoring studies within contexts and communities, and our syllabus is one that builds in contact with our urban, cosmopolitan neighbourhoods in Amsterdam and beyond as an integral component of our extended classroom.

Within these contexts, AUC has begun to pioneer in thinking more explicitly about experiential learning opportunities, including laboratory courses, for all students. For science major students this can already entail traditional classes where students observe, note, deduce and develop hypothesis. In many cases though, the context is already the city: introductions to biology move beyond the academic building to encompass trips to Amsterdam's famous Artis zoo, or conduct experiments in the wildlife reserve across the street with which we work in partnership; big data experimentation is modelled around briefs from multinational companies, start-ups or local community groups; makeshift rocket designs are tested in the open air and air quality measurements taken in different urban landscapes. For students focusing on social sciences or humanities, the city, and particularly the many cultures and societies that constitute it, is already introduced to them *as* their laboratory. All first years register for an immersive and transdisciplinary course about global identities that both awakens their theoretical curiosity and propels them towards encounters with communities where methodologies are brought back to their basic premises: observing, listening, noting, formulating hypotheses and testing these through dialogue, and becoming mindful of the ethical implications of researching within real world contexts.

Building on this foundation, the problem in sustaining such an approach for students with a focus on social sciences and humanities is to make sure that subsequent courses continue to engage with variation, attention and exposure to new circumstances, rather than (solely) taking refuge in tried and tested transmissions of theoretical knowledge. This is already addressed across the curriculum in innovative ways. However, from perspectives such as cultural analysis or anthropology, we are confronted with the additional quandary of designing laboratory learning that both enshrines the scientific rigour of inductive/deductive methods while allowing scope for students to nonetheless encounter and experience the vagaries of human social relations, sparks of creativity, or innovative combinations of theory and practice that characterise researching culture. In part, this is addressed through our decision to target the unfamiliar or unexpected by folding this in to the field of study. The course is designed to make sure students do not limit the bounds of their curiosity to the city walls, or even national boundaries. Just as

tomorrow's big questions and challenges require interdisciplinary thinkers, they are also cross-border, even global, in scale, and the college's international character provides a fertile basis for pioneering in classes that include opportunities for fieldwork in other countries, be this our broader European home or further afield. What is important here though is that the approach to learning is scaffolded in ways that continue to engage students actively in the methodological and theoretical choices we make together, precisely as we encounter the unexpected, in other words to attend to learning as a process.

Origins

Thus it is that the genesis of Culture Lab emerged, and was tailored to the various curricular and planning parameters relevant to AUC. The course is an option delivered to second- or third-year undergraduates, majoring in Social Sciences and Humanities, and takes place in the intensive four-week period scheduled in June, with the middle two weeks consisting of a field trip to one of the year's European Capitals of Culture (ECoC)[1], and the first and last weeks primarily based in the classroom in Amsterdam. Structurally, it is fully integrated into the Anthropology and Culture 'tracks' that students use to build their sequences of learning, for credit, and the travel costs are met from the education budget. As with all AUC courses, the numbers are capped[2] such that the group is not too large to be able to engage in small-scale learning.[3] In 2017, the first year of delivery, the course focused on Paphos, Cyprus, and in the second year, Valletta, Malta. In 2019, the field trip was to Plovdiv, Bulgaria and in 2020 the host city will be Rijeka in Croatia. As lecturers, we have different levels of familiarity with these cities, and we share with the students a process of scouting and arriving in the location, paying attention to the questions that this contact with a new environment brings.

The aim was to develop a course that extended students' introductory learning in anthropology and cultural studies in ways that brought theory into contact with lived experience, opening up the kinds of space for reflection (on learning, ethics, dialogue, communication and cooperation) that the LAS approach fosters. Our pedagogical approach and ethos were grounded in problem-based learning, and more specifically its localisation to the context of AUC, where we often reframe this as project-based learning, as well as emphasising the connectedness of the problems we address to real world situations and communities. Put together, this creates a platform where students are supported in encountering cultural objects and theories, engaging with them through methodological lenses such as the scientific cycle that includes the formulation of hypotheses and fine-tuning their thinking through dialogue, observation and exploration. In this way (through referring to methodologies), the design of the course makes reference to scientific theory models for laboratory courses at AUC, while nonetheless retaining the flexibility needed to adapt this to social and cultural issues. Moreover, we acknowledge throughout the course that we are interested in experiencing (and attending to the experience of) difference, unknowns, novelty and puzzling through these encounters with the unfamiliar, as opposed to simply replicating or tracing well-trodden pedagogical patterns or paths.

There is also a clear emphasis on encouraging students to take ownership of their questions and enquiries, both individually and in groups, and from the outset they are encouraged to bring their own perspectives and prior learning to bear on the projects they develop. Importantly, and given the obvious time limitation of spending only two weeks in the field, there is no expectation that participants in Culture Lab come out the other end with deep expertise about the location. Instead of answers, the activities are designed so as to encourage learners to come up with and test out good questions. However, given the emphasis on promoting encounters with unfamiliar cultural practices or norms, as outlined above, the self-directed nature of learning that we also promote can mean that some students, certainly at the start of the course, have difficulty adapting to a learning landscape where orientation is neither pre-determined nor simple. Of course, learners each respond differently to classroom stimuli and circumstances. Given that AUC is a place where we encourage independent thought from week one, many of our students are already familiar with adjusting models of thinking against lived experience, and have the capacity for making interdisciplinary connections. So most of our participants took to the new challenges like ducks to water. On the other hand, confronted with a new cityscape, others experienced various forms of disorientation, took time to find a voice, or a niche where they could operate, and it has been important to build in, repeatedly, moments of meta-reflection where we make space for reflection on what we are doing, as well as scaffold support in the forms of listening ears and open doors.

Structure

One issue we encountered in the first year of delivery, both as teachers and as students, was how to keep a clear and guiding focus given the sheer diversity of inputs with which we were working. To study a phenomenon such as

ECoC requires learning about and keeping in balance a range of perspectives, lenses and approaches. Even conceptualising the object of study is complex, as it includes the city, the cultural programme, the concept of capitals, European and local identity, and the iteration of all of these together. Much of this introductory learning takes place during the first week, before travelling to the field, but it was also necessary to develop a clear way of structuring the course activities across all four weeks to make the process of learning clear and give direction to the students' practices and modes of engagement. Thus, by the second year, we were able to articulate the guiding framework that gave each of the four weeks a different activity focus. This innovation proved very useful, as it helps reassure, and remind, students of the nature of their engagement at any given time, and is reflected in an assessment structure that allows them to demonstrate, incrementally, that they are progressing through each of the four moments in the learning cycle we establish. For the remainder of this essay, our aim is to consider how this four-part structure helped frame and shape the learning that participants experience in the first two iterations of Culture Lab, and indeed expand on how it provides both a rationale and a platform that promotes productive encounters with the unfamiliar.

In brief, the first week is characterised by *preparation*. Once we arrive in the field, this morphs into *exploration*, followed by *experimentation*. Back in Amsterdam, the fourth week focuses on *dissemination*. In this way, a logical sequence is established that replicates, to some extent, both the scientific cycle of learning through observation, and elements of other forms of in-country learning, whether more formal or extended cultural and anthropological research on the one hand, or, at the other end of the spectrum, the phases through which travellers, sojourners or tourists anticipate, make connections with and begin to operate within their destinations, and then recount, or otherwise process, their experiences 'back home'.

Week 1: Preparation

During the first week in Amsterdam, the course follows a relatively conventional classroom format. Classes are held four days a week, three hours a day, during which some key elements of studying cities and cultures from the perspectives of anthropology and cultural analysis are revisited. During this dense first week, rather than spending enormous amounts of time on close reading texts, we encourage students to take their prior knowledge of culture and anthropology and activate them through forms of 'hyper-reading' and 'scanning' (Hayles, 2012). The idea here is that, unlike the traditional methods of close and slow reading (in the Humanities) and sustained analysis over time (in anthropology), we need to take seriously our everyday practices of reading that entail quick access to information, scrolling on our screens and flicking through pages. For a short course like this, and in a global world where speed and short timespans have become norms, we need to adapt methodologies for acquiring data and engaging with them meaningfully. We therefore move away from an attempt in deepening one's knowledge of, for instance, the history of the capital of culture or of its socio-political issues, and seek to engage with a form of surface reading where students look for issues to address, highlight, make connections with and scrutinise. This we do by highlighting certain themes and notions to shape our collective, umbrella topics. From cultural analysis we take an object-based approach (Bal, 2003), which we use to question what sorts of cultural objects the ECoC could provide to analyse in the broader sense. These objects range from the particular city designated as the capital of the year to different types of events, art projects and festivals held for the event. In this investigation, we extend the idea of an object of analysis to incorporate seemingly non-physical phenomena such as processes and events. The bidding processes for the ECoCs of the year, and the politics involved in them, are among those processes to which we pay some attention, as well as thinking about the semiotics and social changes occasioned by the nature of a yearlong cultural event. From cultural analysis we also take a methodology focused on strengthening conceptual thinking. Concepts, cultural analysis tells us, are strong for providing underlying themes to connect objects and phenomena in research in ways that are not rigid but adapt and change as they travel (Bal, 2002).

Equipped with concepts and objects for the analysis of culture, we turn to anthropology to be able to engage with ECoC as field of research and take a first-hand encounter with it. Rather than an elaborate ethnographic research to observe a phenomenon over a period of time and understand its details, we question the implications of anthropological fieldwork for a short, intense field *encounter*. This we take to mean experiments within a world that is changing more rapidly than before, where narratives, practices and everyday realities are increasingly fragmented and in flux. While we read and discuss in class invaluable anthropological research about the areas of our destinations (for instance, Mitchell, 2002; Papadakis, 2005), we question how our group's approach to field study could adapt, and gain from, the limitations of time and resources we have for this course. We take the notion of 'embedded and embodied ethnography' from digital ethnographic methods (Hine, 2015) to realise how a focus on our own corporeal embeddedness in the digitally informed and mediated experience of the trip and encounter with the ECoC could provide a deeper level of anthropological understanding. For this reason, we question our own

position as (semi-) tourist – through the notions of tourist gaze (Urry & Larsen, 2011) and tourist reflexivity (Culler, 1988) – and we pay attention to our own modes of engagement with the city and events – mostly on foot but also driving upon arrival. We consider ways to engage our senses and embodiment in the intellectual work we conduct. For this we also read a literary account of arrival in and encounter with new places (for instance, Kincaid, 1988).

In addition to such underlying conceptual and methodological concerns, we equip ourselves with basic information about the history of the ECoC organisation and its development over the years (Miles, 2007; Sassatelli, 2008), theories and approaches to tangible and intangible heritage and cultural/historical preservation, and we question the implications of identity, Europeanness, mobility and the creation of certain kinds of global and urban imaginaries (de Waard, 2012) as key elements in the ECoC programmes. In practice, even within this first week, students are constantly moving between and among the objects of our attention and our modes for grasping them, bringing concrete cultural phenomena, from museum pieces to tourism advertising or social trends into the classroom, and beginning to think about what it means to consider each from different angles. All this we pack in a virtual suitcase (as an explicit classroom exercise), and take with us to the second and third weeks to the field trip.

Week 2: Exploration

The key idea underlying our vision of exploration is to acknowledge the limits of our knowledge and expertise (ours and the students') and to embrace our position as newcomers to a location. Exploration starts from the moment we land in the ECoC of the year, literally in so far as students often bring up their very earliest impressions of the airport and journey to the city as their first encounters with their new environment. In addition to self- and group observations and reflections, our explorations in week 2 (the first week of the fieldwork) include different types of activities to both gain knowledge and immerse ourselves in the new environment. Group activities differ each year depending on the circumstances and availabilities, and include visits to museums, galleries, events and the main areas of the city affected by the ECoC event; meetings with the ECoC organisers, city officials, artists and those active in the cultural sector; partaking in workshops and walking tours with academics and researchers; as well as group meetings, walks and talks among our own group.

Our individual and group explorations comprise a number of key practices. However, one that has emerged as particularly useful is to focus on the concept of learning by walking.[4]We explore by walking as an embodied and immersive mode of navigation that leads one to encounter and reflect. We ask students to pay attention to different kinds of walks they take, and to experiment with variety. These include, among others, walks following a leader (walk tours), quick walks to a defined destination, walks following google maps, slower walks in unknown alleys, designed walks as part of art exhibitions[5], walking in pairs, groups or on one's own. In walking, we ask students to consider what they see and hear, to take a pro-active role in looking and listening. In this whole sensory anthropological alertness, we ask students to not only consider how cityscapes are conditioned visually and aurally, but also think about where and what they individually attend to, and how this is conditioned by signifying structures they encounter. Signifiers of the ECoC abound in cities we visit, in posters on walls, ads in the airport and signs in restaurants. But students also discern unexpected signifiers. Among such examples were the preponderance of Cyrillic script encountered in Cyprus or the deafening noise of construction work in the centre of Valletta, or indeed the informal posters, sites or signs that accrue within any lived city. These unfamiliar and unexpected signifiers, once noticed, in turn often become the focus of students' work later in the course.

In their own practices of looking and hearing, in choosing from the whole range of things to see and hear vignettes to attend to, students start shaping their own 'discursive-material knots' (Carpentier, 2017). Having encountered this concept referring to the interconnectedness of ideas and phenomena in the first week, we remain alert during the field trip to the ways in which, on the one hand, the cityscape and its institutions embody and delimit the ideas and ideologies that are prevalent at all levels of the iteration of the ECoC, and how, on the other, the discourses of various groups find material form in the practices we see around us. Important in this regard is building a sense of immersion in what is around us, and remaining open to the unexpected in order to creatively shape ideas and form structures of thought and feeling from the serendipity of the world around. Encounter takes shape not only in the environment presenting itself to us unexpectedly, but in the form of actively creating encounters with people – in cafes, streets, buses and taxis, with shop keepers, tourists, etc. Such active encounters have, each year, proved to lead students to focus on areas previously unknown to them as they hear voices and perspectives that are not always prevalent in official communications. Following such simultaneous techniques of immersion, observation and encounter, students choose their own techniques of documentation to make archives of their own. They use their phones and other devices to take photos, make films and record sound; collect flyers, poster, brochures and

signs; search for events and make schedules; and write down ideas, take notes and make diagrams. They build an itinerary for their own research, at the same time as they are constructing, in ongoing dialogue with each other and with us, critical questions or problems.

The material students gather and create are shared among the group during sessions, both planned and informal. The location and timing of these sessions are crucial for a good result. In the first two years, we held group gatherings in the vibrant cultural centre Kimonos in Paphos, but also in an open air amphitheatre we discovered near our accommodation, and in a classroom booked previously for this reason in the University of Valletta. We also used public spaces, plazas, stairs and cafes for this reason. Best times for these meetings have proved to be either at the start of the group activities in the morning or at the end of the day. Such meetings are important for reflecting on thought processes and sharing experiences and impressions. For example, one student's initial observations in the tourist-friendly harbour of Paphos cross-referenced his prior experience of growing up in another resort area. This led to unexpected lines of enquiry, at once adding complexity and providing personal perspectives, that the class could take the time to unpack together in ad hoc group discussions, and work with as their projects acquired focus. Indeed, one phenomenon that has been interesting to follow is the extent to which through such meetings student projects begin to cross-reference each other's impressions and perspectives, as the insights they gain from a dialogic exploration of their observations and deductions often, in turn, spark further connections within a different set of research parameters.

In this way, students receive comments and feedback from their teachers and other students; learning takes place at the scale of the whole group – teachers and students alike. In addition to these organised sessions, learning and sharing continues in informal settings during the days, in jovial fashion, over coffee, lunch or dinner. Group reflections extend to small chats; immersion extends to a whole way of experiencing ECoC as a group, walking and talking and tasting – living. Towards the end of this week students write a blog entry, sharing a first impression of their visit.[6] Students also start thinking about individual (or group) projects they would like to conduct in the second week of the field trip.

Week 3: Experimentation

After explorations and documentations, it is time to experiment with form and content to create a meaningful form of critical engagement with ECoC. An underlying idea here is that academic research needs to experiment with new forms of analysis and output. We use the term experimentation as a way of encouraging students to look for forms of interaction with their environment that go beyond traditional academic papers (in the sense that the researcher observes and puts those observations into writing) and seek different, creative modes of engagement as tools for thinking, intervening and describing/analysing at the same time (Elliott & Culhane, 2017; Hjorth et al., 2019) Students are encouraged to work on creative projects using different media to analyse a particular issue and raise critical questions. Ethnographic observation follows practices of visual and sensory ethnography (Pink 2013, 2015) and could be presented in formats others than academic writing, such as creative writing, film, photography, painting or performance. And critical cultural engagement with the object of study takes other modes than criticism or analysis (Felski, 2015), such as the creation of moods and affects, confrontation and contestation, interference and participation. One example of what this looks like in practice is the response of a student to the many statues installed throughout Valletta during the year as ECoC. These were noticeable by representing and depicting local sayings in the form of surreal objects and animals, and installed all around the city. In this instance, the unexpected nature of bumping into a new statue during our walks gave rise to the idea of more systematic mapping, observation of how we and others responded to the statutes, and ultimately gave rise to a multimedia response to them, including both video and poetry.

At the start of this week students are asked to independently consolidate their ideas towards feasible projects within the limits of the course. They are asked to come up with ideas and plans for their execution. They are also asked to meet the teachers twice during the week to discuss their work-in-progress. The role of lecturers in this setting is to support and enrich student projects, facilitate their thought process and help them lead their projects towards feasible outcomes. This is a supervisory role that entails patiently and eagerly listening, suggesting directions, and intervening if necessary. Ideally in this week students carry out experiments and try approaches, refining questions and adapting feedback. The focus is placed on the process rather than the fine tuning of the completed project. New challenges could show up in each project and students should be able to confront those and adapt. Thus early questions, such as 'how European do people in Paphos actually feel', or 'is migration visible within Valletta and its hosting of the ECoC' took shape through this dialogic process, and found unusual expressions. In the first instance, some students devised a 'Europeans of Paphos' campaign for social media that

encapsulated the many facets of their question. In the second, a format was found whereby students were able to engage both recent migrants to Malta and inhabitants with longer affiliations. The process respected individual dignity while nonetheless opening up conversations that were then recorded as postcards to new neighbours, and the messages actually shared among those who got involved in the project, opening up spaces for dialogues and encounters.

Week 4: Dissemination

In the final week, once back in Amsterdam, students work as a group on forms of disseminating projects and insights from the trip. 'How to share the experience of the course with broader publics?' is the question we ask. Knowledge production and sharing are important (and often neglected) parts of cultural practice that the course takes seriously through experimentation with this dimension. Our aim in this week is to reflect on forms of knowledge production and sharing, and in doing so be able to find a way to form and share a collective understanding of the course's cultural experimentation with ECoC. We focus on questions about storytelling, archiving and curating, so as to give the individual learning experiences a collective form. After workshops and guest lectures in the beginning of week 4 on these issues, students work as a group and make decisions collectively. In 2018, students curated a group exhibition, repurposed the classroom into a gallery, and presented their individual works in that setting, including audio installations, mappings and original artwork. They invited friends and colleagues to join. In this format, in addition to presenting their final works, students had to perform or position them too. One example was a student whose project was in the format of an academic paper, but who, in explaining her thought process to the audience, used the available space for laying down her ideas written on pieces of paper on the floor, and thereby bringing to life the issue she was exploring (awareness of resource use and recycling during ECoC 2018) through talks, gestures and visual arrangements of papers. Another student played her recorded voice reading a poem she had written, and another read a short story she had written with characters representing different kinds of visitors to ECoC.

Conclusion

As educators, it is perhaps, at least in part, our responsibility to continuously reflect on how the opportunities we shape for learners remain alert to the contemporary and relevant to learners themselves. Learners often look at the world quite differently to their teachers, and our objectives, approaches and expectations need to adapt too. Within the optic of the liberal arts and sciences, the implications of these realisations are far-reaching. How can new generations of students best prepare for encounters with new knowledge? What frameworks can they draw on to process and analyse what they discover and encounter? How can they communicate their findings in ways that become meaningful for themselves and for audiences? And, crucially, how do we work together to scaffold learning in ways that introduce them to the notion of attending and taking notice, to anticipate the unexpected, embrace difference and happenstance, and acquire knowledge from encounters with the unfamiliar? Culture Lab has provided us, the lecturers, the students, the institution and our many partners in learning, with one small opportunity to explore and experiment within the wider European laboratory of culture. Each year we continue to be surprised by where our students' learning journeys have taken them, and impressed by the resourcefulness, adaptability and ingenuity they have developed and demonstrated. Our challenge now is to continue to innovate, within each new city context, and our ambition to keep facilitating unexpected learning in ways that extend and expand students' unexpected encounters with culture.

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Notes:

[1] Each year (in its current iteration) two cities receive this designation and host a year-long series of cultural events, ranging from concerts and performances, to exhibitions and events. The initiative is well known within Europe as a way for cities to revivify their cultural offer and enhance their reputation, thus social change is often visibly taking place alongside the formally programmed activities. For the purposes of the course we choose one of these cities based on its propensity for raising interesting social and cultural issues.
[2] In the first two years of delivery we kept the cap at 15 (rather than the AUC norm of 25) to ensure that we were able to deliver personalised support to the students. As of 2019, now that we have developed the approach and are familiar with it, we are accommodating up to 20 students.
[3] AUC has a mandate to provide 'small-scale and intensive' education.
[4] See for example Ingold and Vergunst, and O'Neill and Roberts for excellent considerations of walking as a method of learning.
[5] For instance, in Paphos we walked a street that was turned into art space by Nick Costa's hidden installations.
[6] Students upload their blog posts to the course webpage: http://aucculturelab2017.blogspot.com