



International Summer School ***WATERSCAPES in HERITAGE and ENVIRONMENT***

Carloforte 12 - 17 October 2026

PROFILE

WATERSCAPES is an action-research method and a social research approach for the analysis of sustainabilities in complex societies. The study of the environment with its ecological and biodiversity dimensions is developed in relation with its related cultural, social and economic implications. Communities and heritage, intended in material and immaterial forms, are interpreted taking into account the natural contexts and their ecological challenges, observing such interdependencies in historical and dynamical perspective.

The **WATERSCAPES** approach focuses on the entanglement of socio-natural elements, and highlights the diffracted character of environmental knowledge. **WATERSCAPES** fosters the development of a critical and analytical gaze deeply rooted in multidisciplinary practices and in embodied processes of action-research.

LOCATION

Carloforte, Island of San Pietro

Islands represent preferential locations for the combined multidisciplinary analysis of cultural and ecological frames, as their natural spatial constraints shape, reflect and amplify relations, hybridization, oppositions, memories and mutual adaptation between human and non-human actors.

WATERSCAPES has explored Dalmatian islands in the editions from 2022 to 2025, and now it moves towards the Sardinian island of San Pietro, where historical and linguistic heritage shape the landscape, define the toponyms, contribute to shape unique cultural identity, protect the marine and terrestrial environment.

PARTNERSHIPS AND TARGET

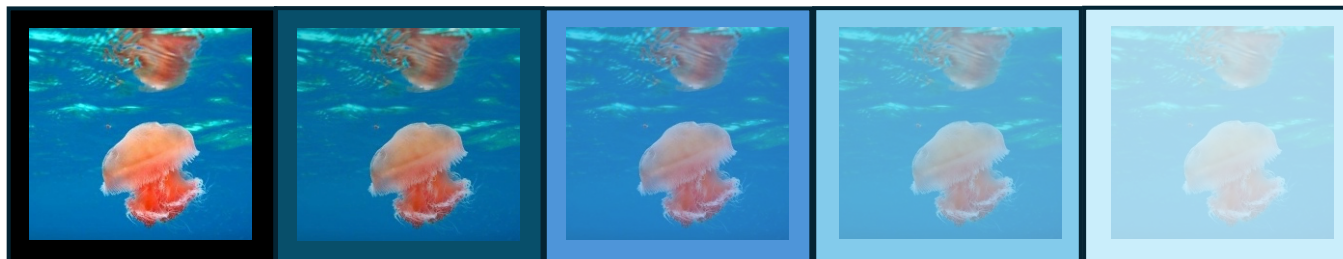
The School **WATERSCAPES** is promoted and organized by the University of Bergamo, in collaboration with the **University of Iceland**, **University of Milano Bicocca**, with the support of Comune di Carloforte. The School is open to PhD and Master students.

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Seminars / Activities / Abstracts

October 12

Elena Bougleux / Seminar

Waterscapes as a Tool and as a Method

Ethnographic methodologies require a prolonged and deep immersion in the context to study. Drawing on the similarities with the concepts of immersion and depth related the watery world, I will introduce the *Waterscapes methodology*, a particular form of ethnography taking place while being in/on the water, slowly moving across it, bearing in motion over water, and continuously gazing towards the coasts, the landscape, the others. Waterscapes is an immersive tool to develop a comprehensive and accurate understanding of where we are (Bougleux 2024, Bougleux and Iguman 2024).

Daniela Desperati / Activity

Getting lost to set the route. Semi-guided night flânerie in the town centre

The meeting point is in the main square after dinner. We will finally slow down after the long travelling day, breath some fresh air and let time drift by for a while, listening to what Carloforte has to tell us, on our first night on the island. Let's take a while to look around the main square, the town's beating heart during the day. But on a mid-October Monday evening? This is where we allow ourselves to get lost among the narrow alleys, stairways, balconies in a nocturnal flânerie, a seemingly aimless stroll, yet one whose path is deeply guided by our observations. We will pass by some of the most iconic points of the town center, trying to embrace both displacement – for we shall not reveal the details until the very end – curiosity, and introspection. Let's keep a gaze that is both poetic and attentive and on our first encounter with the island, its spatialities, its

history and stories will slowly unfold, while we locate our own paths on the intersections with the island routes.

Marta Fontana / Seminar

Participatory art installation “Formiche di mare” (Sea Ants)

Sea ants. In memory of the galanzieri, to their labor of sea and lead, to our horizon (Formiche di mare. Ai galanzieri, alla loro fatica di mare e di piombo, al nostro orizzonte) is the title of this environmental installation by the artist Marta Fontana. Started in 2020 and inaugurated in 2024, Formiche di mare is a more than a contemporary art installation. It's a relational work of art that engaged the whole community through several participatory initiatives.

October 13

Anna Karlsdottir / Seminar

Life as a maritime human being

Life as a maritime human being, I am a watery professor, my life, my gaze, my comfort zone, cruising, getting to your knowledge via the coasts. Research vessels often do their research activities without including the knowledge by the locals who may have lengthy insights into changes at the coasts. Their rational is observing and registering data which in itself is codified knowledge meant to manage the blue zones. Many governance decisions around the coast and harnessing the sea are in fact driven by top-down approaches. I will discuss these limitations across indigenous communities and how to overcome them. The understanding of the role of the sea has also changed drastically in western culture with fisheries declining to be the life nerve of coastal fisheries communities, while recreational understandings have taken over perceptions around the sea (Corbin, 1988). This manifests in cruises, sea excursions and passenger vessels that increase the seaborne traffic at least seasonally (Karlsdóttir, 2024). The terminology has also changed on sea-based activities where the blue economy terminology is prominent. I will spur discussion on the multiple meanings and its limitations and possibilities.

Elena Bougleux / Seminar

Ethnography, Materiality, Reflexivity

I will draw on the concept of reflexivity in anthropology (Bourdieu 1994), as it applies to basically any fieldwork, and discuss the biases and advantages reflexivity takes into the practice of action-research. I will reflect on the difficulties of projecting yourself into your research, on the pluses and shortcoming deriving from the emotional relations established on field, as lenses deforming the landscape of networks at stake. I will talk about the difference between biography and auto-ethnography, focusing on the needed distance, on the blurring boundaries between observing subject and the observed object. I will discuss how water becomes the relation that connects in a fluid continuous the objects and subjects, reflecting in terms of material turn, where materiality is the actor of an ontological jump. (A Book of Waves, Helmreich 2023; Barad on New Materialism 2012, 2013, 2027).

Valentina Bracchi and Daniela Desperati / Activity

The Island, the Earth and us. Floating gazes through Geology, History and embodied reflections

Our contribution to the Waterscapes methodology involves a series of activities designed to stimulate reflections while cruising around the island, incorporating the view of a geologist. The boats serve as both laboratories, and the metaphorical link between three distinct spatial and temporal observation scales: the geological, the human/anthropogenic, and the individual. We will engage with the Earth's time and space, through the lens of Geology and with the time and space of the human through the History and Geography of the island. We will then relate these to our own embodied and spiritual experiences during navigation. The activities and the input provided will encourage reflection on the interconnections between the different scales demonstrating that they cannot be separated from one another. The activities are planned to coincide with several main points of interest on the island and will stimulate creativity. As the aim of the day is to discover and integrate new temporal and spatial scales, we will break the ice with a shift in perspective. Rather than being on land, we will be on a boat which is inherently precarious. It will be the sea to decide where and what we discover that is unexpectedly thrilling about geology.

October 14

Cinzia Spinzi / Seminar

Language as immaterial Heritage

Linguistic landscapes are not simply collections of written signs: they are socially constructed spaces in which languages become visible, acquire symbolic value, and contribute to the representation of places and communities. This talk considers the linguistic landscape as a lens through which cultural heritage and local identity can be read. The discussion develops the perspective on linguistic landscapes and accessible tourism communication (see Maci & Spinzi, 2026), extending it to island and intangible heritage spaces. Place names deserve particular attention as linguistic signs through which communities map their histories onto space. Toponyms can preserve traces of earlier linguistic layers, movements of people, local practices and collective memories, while their selection, translation or replacement may contribute to particular representations of local identity (Alderman, 2008).

The linguistic landscape becomes part of the wider waterscape: a space shaped by mobility, historical trajectories and encounters across languages and cultures. The talk concludes by proposing Linguistic Landscape analysis as a fieldwork tool for investigating how language, naming, space and memory participate in the ongoing construction and mediation of island heritage.

Andrea Luxoro / Seminar

The Polo Linguistico Tabarchino in Carloforte

The Tabarchin Language Desk offers language courses and consultancy services for translations of all kinds into Tabarchin.

Rossana Bonadei / Seminar

Islands

"No man is an island" (John Donne)

"I am part of all that I have met" (Tennyson, Ulysses)

Recent research in Island Studies has increasingly challenged traditional understandings of islands as isolated or peripheral spaces, emphasizing instead relational approaches to islandness based on mobility, circulation, maritime networks, and archipelagic interconnections. The idea of the sea as "a space of mobility", and of the islands as temporary pieces of land formed by a never ending "turbulent geology", was by the way still clear to more classic studies, and a galaxy of images has been flowing from these two opposed paradigms of islandness as isolated or connected, with consequent narrative frames and metaphorical stances. The imagery of the island has in fact nourished one of the largest archives of human creativity- The Island, a recurrent presence in many myths, has been floating in the literatures of different ages and languages, being also a significant persistent sign in the contemporary hybrid world of multimedia narrations. From "Islands in the stream", as solid as mysterious, to fantastic "never lands" of dreams or nightmares: we will try to taste something of the heteroclit flavour of the island focusing on three matrix texts developed in constellations expanded in diverse time and space: Homer's *Odyssey*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. A compass of our own- an arbitrary choice, of course, for the sake of a 'dense' brevity.

Luca Navarra / Activity

Walk-along with the Anthropologist

Leaving the village behind us, we will walk up the heights and through ancient, paved paths, stretches of asphalt, hiking trails and unpaved ways and backroads we will cross the island East to West. We will climb the Tortoriso Mountain (200m high) and reach the majestic and dramatic cliffs looking over the Nasca rock pools. The way, easy to walk but characterized by constant ups and downs, offers the chance to admire the island's in-land: its geological features, pine forests, Mediterranean scrub, and the scattered houses that once used to be farms and are now tourists' accommodations. There will be plenty of spectacular views over the sea and coasts, of the island as well as of Sardinia. The hike takes all in all 5 hours of pure walking, without considering stops. As an anthropologist, trekker and a long-time resident of the island, I will share stories during stops concerning the island socio-cultural landscape and the strong identity of its inhabitants, as well as historical insights into the use of resources and origins of the place names we will encounter.

Letizia Luini

Exploring environments through the Nature Toolkit: an experiential approach to developing situated knowledge of places

This workshop explores a methodological approach for supporting situated, attentive and multimodal encounters with places through the use of the Nature toolkit. Developed within the activities of the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Team (BEAT) of the National Biodiversity Future Centre (NBFC), the proposal adopts an experiential, place-based and open-ended approach.

Participants encounter the place through different actions and progressively shifting perspectives, supported by a range of tools designed to help them observe more closely and notice aspects that might otherwise remain overlooked. Personal exploration is combined with multimodal documentation practice through individual notebooks, using words, drawings, photographs, measurements and other traces to retain what becomes significant in the encounter with the environment. Particular attention is given to the interpretability of the prompts, the gradual introduction of different observational lenses and tools, and documentation as a process of noticing, selecting and making meaning. Photography, in particular, is explored both as a way of observing and making visible personal, situated perspectives on places, and as a tool for dialogue and collective re-elaboration of the experience.

October 15

Anna Karlsdóttir / Seminar

The contribution will build on professor Karlsdóttir's research experience in the Arctic, where she works on the interactions between the local narratives of resilience and broader categories of external narratives: environmental science, public policy and regional development. Through her research she developed a narrative-centered, locally rooted, place-based understanding of resilience. This calls for developing tools and strategies to increase community resilience in other communities and for sharing the lessons learned with regional planners and policymakers. Working towards maximizing impacts or enhancing resilience from research conducted for the benefit of communities involved in the research requires reflexivity and relationship building. How did this commitment emerge in our research practices? How do we meet ethical considerations? How do we contribute to decolonizing research whose imperative is towards culturally responsive research?

Erika Locatelli / Seminar

Who does landscape belong to?

I will explore the involvement of local community —associations, tourism operators, authorities, museums, and producers—in shaping the tourism offering. I will talk about destination storytelling, distinguishing between telling a community's story and speaking on its behalf.

I will discuss the role of the host as a local observatory. Hosting infrastructures may become genuine "human observatories" since they welcome people seeing the area for the first time, asking a wide range of questions, traveling for diverse reasons, noticing details that locals may overlook; they compare the location with other places, and hold varying perceptions of distance based on where they come from.

October 16

Daniela Desperati / Seminar

The history and geography of the mine era through the story of Galanzieri

As “island of an island” San Pietro serves as an interesting microcosm for exploring the spatial dimensions of insularity and its relation to the history of the mine era in Sardinia. This introductory seminar to the navigation toward the Sardinian coast and its mines will highlight the material and symbolic production of space that took place here under maritime capitalism. Focusing on the history of *galanzieri* – the maritime workers responsible for transporting galena (*galanza*, in tabarchino language) from the Buggerru mines to the more welcoming port of Carloforte. During mine era, Carloforte’s harbour was the second biggest in Sardinia and a central node of the network connecting the mines of Sardinia to the rest of the world. The little island challenged the hierarchical spatiality where a small island is supposed to be subordinate to a bigger one. Through the story of Giuseppe Cavallera, this seminar introduces how Carloforte became, at the beginning of 1920’s the birth site of a first proletarian consciousness in Sardinia.

Filippo Menga / Seminar

Planetary Waters and Local Contestations: The Geopolitics of Infrastructure and the New Frontiers of Extractivism

This intervention subverts the classical territorial perspective, adopting a sea-to-coast gaze to investigate the geopolitical osmosis between land and water. By examining the shifting utility of coastal and maritime infrastructures, it explores how large-scale energy networks transform the littoral zone into a contested hydrosocial territory. The infrastructuralization of fluid space generates new frontiers of extractivism, sparking local mobilizations that politicize the friction between the global flows of “green” capital and the marginalization of host communities.

Ulderico Daniele / Seminar

Who, when, why... and us?

Anthropologist and in the process of becoming heritage

The space of the offshore mines that forms the physical frame for this seminar can be interpreted as a place where materiality has essentially remained unchanged over time or has even been immortalized through its transformation into an open-air museum. At the same time, the environment we experience reveals a profound transformation of place, with a ‘social nature’ appearing now radically different. The distance between the past and the present is the key element that makes this place a heritage site. As with the mines, a range of practices, places or symbols that are defined as ‘traditional’, or tied to a specific aspect of local identity, are situated within a framework of otherness that enables them to be recognized as heritage.

The anthropological approach invites to investigate the concrete forms and material histories of the ‘becoming of heritage’ – that is, becoming ‘other’ – by conceiving them as complex and conflict-ridden social and cultural processes involving groups, places and narratives. The question arises as to which histories can aspire to be recognized and identified as heritage. We know that the anthropological perspective has multiplied and diversified the phenomena and narratives that could aim to be recognized as heritage, finally including the histories and cultural

productions of countries and social groups once considered subordinate and marginal, both within and outside the West. However, we now know that terms such as ‘tradition’, ‘identity’, ‘place’ and ‘community’ have been widely used in the context of political conflicts – such as those fuelled by nationalistic or localist claims – or economic competition, such as that taking place in the tourism market.

Within this scenario, “heritage anthropology” is following two lines of research, which we shall present in this paper as potential resources for rebuilding our relationship with local narratives, places and the people who inhabit them.

On the one hand, it has critically examined the process of heritage capitalization as one characterized by social, political and economic conflicts, both within and outside the group directly involved in the process, such as former workers and miners. From this perspective, ethnographers view the concepts of ‘tradition’, ‘identity’ and ‘community’ as forms of capital that social groups can invent and reuse strategically, thereby revealing the ideological content of these concepts.

On the other hand, many anthropologists have embarked on the complex path of participating in heritage-building processes, aiming to put the discipline’s critical and reflective potential into practice in specific contexts and in their relationships with various groups and institutions.