

Lecture and Workshop on *The Digital Turn in Tourism*

This lecture and workshop explore how the digital has become fully entangled in the organization, production, and consumption of tourism over the last decades. They will question how processes of digitalisation have shaped places, mobility, interactions, and everyday lives. To prepare for the workshop, students will read and summarize articles that theoretically, conceptually, and empirically evidence the digital transformation of tourism in all its spatial manifestations. During the workshop we will question if the benefits of this so-called “digital revolution” have been evenly distributed and if digital inequalities can be linked to the specific social, cultural, political, and economic conditions that underline certain contexts. We will conclude the workshop with a collaborative exercise that seeks to establish what role digital technologies might play in the development of more inclusive and responsible tourism geographies.

Learning Outcomes:

1. to engage with and explain key issues with the digital turn in tourism
2. to develop different theoretical perspectives on tourism and “the digital” using academic texts and applied knowledge
3. other skills: presentation, critical thinking skills, source evaluation, critical discussion, reading and assessment of information, class participation, conducting research, developing knowledge to an applied context, connecting theory to lived experience

Lecture 4 May 11:00 – 13:00

The first part of the lecture provides a brief historical overview of the complex relationship between digital technologies and tourism. It interrogates how digital technologies have become fully entangled in the organization, production and consumption of tourism over the last decades. The lecture will draw on case-studies around the world to discuss the various impacts that digital innovations in tourism have on society, economy, and environment.

The second part of the lecture will focus on digital methodologies; it provides a selective overview of the tools and frameworks that help us think about the role that digital technologies play in the development of a more inclusive, responsible, and sustainable tourism trajectory. This last part of the lecture will serve as a preparation for the workshop that takes place the following day in which students carry out an in-depth analysis of a digital platform (app/application) or digital technology of their choice (see description below).

Required reading:

- Roelofsen, M. (forthcoming) Digital Tourism Geographies. In J. Wilson and D. Müller (eds) *The New Routledge Handbook of Tourism Geographies*. London: Routledge.
- Capitolo 5: “Metodi misti e digitali di analisi del contenuto su dati da social media: esempi per l’analisi del turismo nella reta”. In F. Corbisiero. 2021. *Manuale di ricerca sociale sul turismo. Concetti, metodi e fonti*. UTET Università

Workshop 5 May 11:00 – 13:00

In groups of two or three, students will examine a digital platform or digital technology of their choice (a case-study) using the methodologies that have been discussed in the lecture on 4 May. As they analyse their case study students can apply their knowledge derived from their required readings, the lecture, as well as from other (online) resources such as the company website and media articles.

The groups of students have the first hour of the workshop to carry out their examination of the case study and to explore the questions in the context of their chosen platform or technology.

Guiding questions could be:

- What purpose or objective does the platform or technology have?
- Who are involved in this platform or technology (e.g., designers, users, workers, investors), where are they located and what is their position in terms of power (agency) to shape the platform/technology?
- Upon what (public) infrastructure and/or resources does the platform technology rely?
- How does the platform/technology affect tourism spaces and places?
- What are the main advantages and issues present in the platform/technology?
- Are they of social, environmental, political, economic nature? (specify)
- What are the (un)intended harms present in the platform/technology?
- Are there uneven outcomes of the platform/technology that specifically present themselves spatially?
- How could these harms or inequalities be mitigated?
- If you had to design a platform/technology that would counter the chosen platform/technology what would it look like?
- If you had to advocate for a policy that would improve the equity and justice dimensions of the chosen platform/technology, what would be the key points of the policy?

The aim is not to have definitive answers, rather to make linkages from the theoretical questions to an applied case.

In the last hour of the workshops, the groups share what they have learned about their chosen case study through a short presentation, in which they also reflect on the assigned readings. They can also discuss what questions remain to be asked and answered in relation to their case study.