

Art and the Stewardship of the Ocean

e-Course Syllabus



Introduction

All of us, and indeed all life on this planet, depend on a healthy ocean. And yet, the way that we currently govern the ocean is ridden with challenges. Fragmented regulations, inadequate enforcement mechanisms and insufficient cooperation among international stakeholders all impede our capacity to effectively address the interlinked threats affecting ocean health, such as overfishing, pollution, and climate change. At the same time, ocean-related decision-making processes often exclude the perspectives of the very people whose livelihoods as well as culture and heritage depend on the ocean the most and who are most directly involved in the stewardship of the ocean, such as coastal and island communities, whose voice should be heard in the matters of ocean stewardship.

These challenges call for a new system of transformative and transdisciplinary ocean governance, one that recognizes the importance of different ways of knowing systems and that includes local and Indigenous knowledge systems that are currently underrepresented in decision-making processes. Art can play a key role in ocean governance transformation. Art is a form of expression universal to humanity, cutting across boundaries of places, spaces, cultures and generations. Integrating art into ocean governance has the power to make complex environmental issues more accessible to policymakers, local communities and the general public. By incorporating various forms of artistic expression into policy-making and decision-making processes we can catalyze public awareness, open more generative spaces for dialogue between diverse stakeholders, rightsholders and knowledge holders, and inspire a more profound connection between the ocean and humankind.

This new course brings together skills, expertise and experiences from artists, researchers, Indigenous communities, ocean lovers, and policy-makers to explore the profound connection between artistic creation and transformative change in how we govern our ocean and address the triple-planetary crisis. It addresses the pressing issue of heightened vulnerability among marine life and coastal and island communities. For many, the ocean holds deep spiritual significance, making these challenges even more profound. Unfortunately, the current structures governing the ocean often fail to recognize the connection between these communities and their knowledge about the ocean and the opportunity for transformative ocean governance whereby both the ocean and humanity can flourish.

This e-learning course explores the transformative potential of art in generating tangible changes in the way that we perceive, relate to, and govern our ocean.

Overall Goal and Learning Objectives

The main objective of the UNITAR-One Ocean Hub e-course “Art and the Stewardship of the Ocean” is for participants to explore the intricate interplay between art, knowledge co-creation, and ocean governance. Participants will gain insights into how art can serve as a vessel and a bridge, connecting marginalized communities with decision-making processes. By the course's conclusion, students will be equipped with practical tools and a deeper understanding of how art can empower communities, fostering more equitable and sustainable practices in ocean governance.

After completing the course, participants will be able to:

- Discuss threats to ocean health and the challenges faced by ocean-dependent communities.
- Identify the potential roles art can play in decision-making processes, particularly in relation to ocean governance.
- Outline the key steps and identify entry points for implementing art and art-based approaches in decision and policy-making processes.

Target Audience

This course will appeal to learners primarily interested in ocean governance; youth, artists, ocean-dependent communities and researchers who may be interested in learning about integrating art and art-based approaches to influence governance. It may also be of use to policymakers, non-state actors and stakeholders interested in learning about influencing decision-making and policy-making processes in ocean governance and other cross-cutting issues such as climate change.

Programme Scope and Structure

The course begins with an introductory module and aims to foster critical thinking beyond just understanding and remembering. The course takes learners through approaches to ocean health challenges, the rich knowledge systems of ocean-dependent communities, and threats they face and dives deep into case studies from around the world, showcasing specific examples where art and art-based approaches have been used to influence ocean-related decisions and policymaking. It is spread across three modules as follows:

Module 1: Introducing Art as Method of Participatory Ocean Governance

Module 1 provides an overview of the complex set of threats that are currently challenging ocean health and discusses the important relationship between the ocean and ocean-dependent communities. It further defines and looks at ocean governance and explores how participatory approaches and methods can contribute to a just, inclusive and more sustainable form of ocean governance.

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Discuss the challenges currently faced by ocean-dependent communities.
- List at least three threats to ocean health.
- Define ocean governance and explain the main characteristics of transformative ocean governance
- Explain what participatory approaches, and particularly art-based participatory research, mean in the context of ocean governance.

Module 2: Art influencing ocean related decision-making Policy

This module delves deeper into the role of art in decision-making. It looks at how ocean-dependent communities and traditional knowledge holders engage and participate in ocean governance processes and practices and share case studies from around the world showcasing how art and different art forms can be used to address and influence different governance-related issues.

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Identify the potential roles art can play in decision-making processes, particularly in relation to ocean governance
- Discuss how communities and traditional knowledge holders have engaged with ocean governance processes through art
- Provide examples of how art can influence ocean-related decision-making

Module 3: Do it Yourself – An Art-based Toolkit for Transformative Ocean Governance

Module 3 identifies potential entry points for art and art-based approaches in international, national and local policy-making processes. It also presents a few key tools for applying art-based methods in these processes and offers participants an opportunity to submit their own art and stories about an issue of their choice.

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- Outline the key steps and identify entry points for implementing art and art-based methods in policy and decision-making processes.
- Provide at least two examples of applying art-based methods to influence decision-making in the context of ocean governance.
- Discuss key ethical considerations when using art to contribute to decision-making processes.
- Identify an issue pertaining to ocean governance in their own communities, and how to contribute to it through art or art-based approaches.

Methodology, Certification and Feedback

The course is self-paced and not moderated. It has been divided into three modules and includes an intent to use survey. We recommend that participants take the intent to use survey before starting the course and follow the modules sequentially for the best learning experience.

Each module contains interactive content including videos, reflection points, discussion boards and case studies. Each module takes around 1-1.5 hours to complete. The modules also contain a wealth of links to other resources on issues discussed, but these are meant for extra reading if of interest. This extra reading will not be part of the final quiz at the end of each module.

Each module has a final quiz which aims to assess the achievement of the learning objectives. The assessment contains 10 multiple-choice questions. After passing each module's final assessment with at least 70% within three attempts, the participant is automatically awarded a badge per module. After obtaining all three badges (from the 3 modules), the participant can download a UNITAR-One Ocean Hub digital Certificate of Completion from the 'Certification' tab. Participants are encouraged to provide feedback on the course by completing a feedback form, which can be accessed via the 'Certification' tab on the course page. The total seat time of the course is 4 hours.

An impact survey one year after the course completion may be carried out to evaluate its impact.

Technical requirements

Please verify that your web browser and Flash Player are up to date.

If you continue having technical issues, please verify the following requirements:

Browser:

- The course works best with Firefox 3.6 or higher ([download for free](#)).
- The course is also compatible with Google Chrome ([download for free](#)).
- For technical reasons, it is not recommended to use Internet Explorer.
- Note JavaScript and cookies must be enabled.

Software:

- Adobe Acrobat Reader ([download for free](#)).
- Adobe Flash Player ([download for free](#)).

Microsoft Office (Windows or Apple version) or Libre Office ([download for free](#)).