Rethinking Urban Deltas: A Transdisciplinary COIL Journey Across Continents

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COIL Seminar
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Presentation

- Why COIL?
- Designing the Experience
- Student Learning & Reflections
- Final tips & takeaways

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The Lives of the Deltas (since 2020)

MA-level Initiative

Deltas of Maputo, Rio de Janeiro, the Netherlands, and Hong Kong (six students from each city)

1. Why COIL?

Motivation

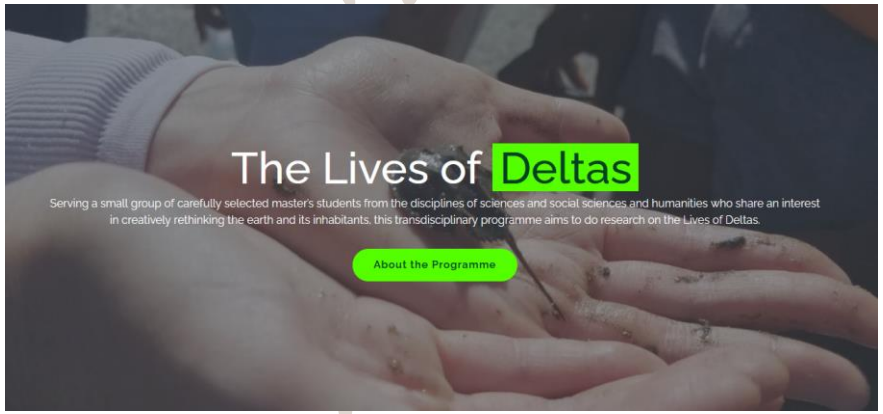
From Challenges to Opportunities: COVID

Transdisciplinary, Cross-cultural, and Inclusive (MA level)

Dialogues between Global North and Global South

Combining Online Teaching and Physical Exchange

2022/23
The Lives of Deltas: A Global Research Exchange on Sustainability and the Imaginary



"For let us make no mistake: the climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination."

Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*

Educational Outcomes & Enhancing Student Learning

- Understand ideas, concepts, debates in environmental studies, and the lives of the deltas (ecocriticism, post-materialism, the Anthropocene)
- Develop critical analyses to appreciate the relations between the arts, the humanities, and the sciences (meet artists and professionals)
- Appreciate diverse cultural practices and interdisciplinary dialogues within a global frame (collaborative work)

2. Designing the Experience

Working with Your Partners

2023 Theme: Pollution/Pollination

- Aim: To explore in what way an affirmative approach to *pollution and pollination* allows us to look at how the urban delta is producing both challenges and opportunities for nature-human coexistence today, between universities in the cities of Rio de Janeiro, Hong Kong, Maputo, and Utrecht

Working with Your Partners

FIRST MONTH: ONLINE (MAY)

- Co-designing Modules: Theorization and Hands-on Experience
- **Introduction**: 1 Week
- **2-hour Seminar on Mondays and Wednesdays**
- **Content**: Each city will coordinate two (2 hour) seminars in which they discuss (academic) texts, invite local artists/activists, and generate discussion on the themes that are central to the programme (land, water, waste, work, city, technology, senses etc.) and that demand further research in the critical zones/urban spheres to their responsibility.

- Frontier urbanisation: land, water and environmental challenges in Maputo city
- Environmental experiences: processes and conflicts in the territories of Guanabara Bay, Rio de Janeiro
- Problematizing Nature: Hong Kong in between Urbanization and Conservation
- Nature-scapes: Technology and life in the Netherlands

Working with Your Partners

SECOND MONTH: PHYSICAL EXCHANGE (JUNE)

- Each city hosts a research exchange (in clusters of two). Students visit government organizations and NGOs, and prepare for creative assignments
- Each student taking part in the programme is both a host and is invited to take part in the exchange (12 students: 6 locals, 6 guests)
- Online Film Presentation

Working with Your Partners

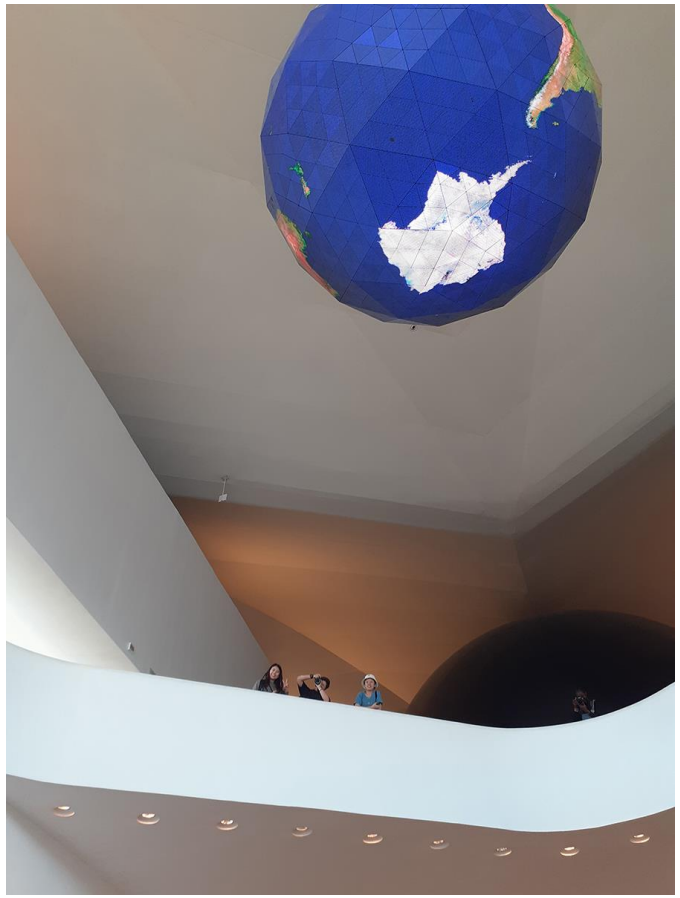
- Learning Activities
- Interdisciplinary partnership (internal): Environmental Management, Landscape Architecture, Literary and Cultural Studies
- Cross-over between Arts and Sciences: Guest speakers and artistic elements (installation artist Morgan Wong and documentary filmmaker Fredie Chan)
- Deltas: Local Issues and Global Concerns

3. Student Learning & Reflections

Student Learning and Challenges

- Open conversations
- Change of perspectives
- Cultural exposure
- Collaboration and Assessment: Short video production by students in groups of 4 (two local and two international students)
- Online Symposium and Screening

Student Learning and Challenges



Areas for Improvement

- **Academic level**: UG or MA
- **Scale**: Institutional support
- **Duration**: Semester/Holiday
- Activities planning
- Financial support and sustainability

Final Tips & Takeaways

- Find the right topic
- Find the right partner
- Find the right time/semester
- Be flexible
- Be creative

Thank you

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https://complit.hku.hk/malcs/

https://complit.hku.hk/malcs/summer_programme/lives_of_delta.html

Q & A