

Summer School

Anthropology of Forgery. Multidisciplinary Approaches for Cultural Heritage Protection



How much is the art and collectables market worth today? What mechanisms govern it? When do forgeries arise? How can they be identified? What tools do we have to protect art and cultural heritage from false histories, misattributions or attempts at deception? How should museums behave when faced with a donation of objects without provenance?

In Italy alone, according to data provided by the Carabinieri Cultural Heritage Protection Unit, over 2,500 people have been reported for the crime of counterfeiting works of art in the last ten years, leading to the seizure of around 70,000 objects imitating archaeological, artistic, antique or collectable items which, if placed on the market, would have caused estimated damage of over 5 billion euros, without considering the ethical implications, the negative impact on the world of work and the cultural repercussions, with the spread of a false idea of archaeology and art.

To combat these genuine cases of deception, which are still prevalent today, the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Padua, in collaboration with the Department of Geosciences, the Department of Private Law and Legal Criticism and the Interdepartmental Centre for Research, Study and Conservation of Archaeological, Architectural and Historical-Artistic Heritage (CIBA), is organising the International Summer School “Anthropology of Forgery. Multidisciplinary Approaches for Cultural Heritage Protection”, an international educational forum for the promotion of a culture of legality, for the understanding of the often-hidden phenomena that characterise our cultural heritage and the dissemination of good practices for its protection.

The International Summer School “Anthropology of Forgery. Multidisciplinary Approaches for Cultural Heritage Protection” aims to answer these questions through historical, anthropological, social, scientific, and criminological analyses of the phenomenon of art forgery and cultural heritage protection. Thanks to the participation of leading international and national experts on the subject, the most critical police forces involved in the protection of cultural heritage and a wide range of professionals, students will be able to understand the art system (from the ancient world to the contemporary world) and its secrets, the underlying risk factors and how to prevent illegal behaviour against works of art and cultural heritage. The course includes a multidisciplinary theoretical part, practical workshop activities and guided thematic visits to the cultural and museum heritage of the University of Padua and the Veneto region

KEY INFO

Dates: 29th June 2026 – 10th July 2026

Target: Master's and PhD students, professionals of cultural institutions (museums, archives and libraries)

Minimum number of participants: 20

Maximum number of participants: 40

Location: Padua

ECTS: 6

Fee: 900 euros per 2 weeks / 20% fee waiver for students of partner universities / 50% fee waiver for Arqus students (including UNIPD students). A maximum number of waivers might apply.

Contact: summerschool@unipd.it

Application dates: 15th November 2025 – 15th March 2026 or upon reaching the maximum number of participants