



## Tourism Education: Global Issues and Trends

Studying Tourism: Where's the Humanity in It?

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## Chapter 2

# STUDYING TOURISM

## Where's the Humanity in It?

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**Abstract:** Previous work has conceptually explored the value of the humanities for tourism education and has considered the pressures that likely serve as barriers to its greater inclusion in curricula. This chapter moves the debate from the conceptual level to the ground, reporting the results of a survey of tourism educators with regard to the role of the humanities in the programs in which they teach. The study explores the prevalence of the humanities as primary and supporting course content at the undergraduate and graduate levels, sheds light on barriers faculty members identify for incorporating more humanities content into their curricula, and offers examples of creative ways some educators are currently engaging with such content. **Keywords:** Humanities; liberal arts; curriculum; neoliberalism

## INTRODUCTION

Forty years in, tourism studies is maturing as an academic field (Airey, 2008). The subject matter is featured in organized programs at the undergraduate and graduate level at universities worldwide. In most cases, the

student numbers are robust (Airey, Tribe, Benckendorff, & Xiao, 2014). It is also becoming increasingly common to hear of differentiation in individual programs, such that students can specialize, within the broader field of tourism, in one of several more specific subfields, such as event studies or experience studies; thus, tourism studies has arguably reached such a point of maturity that it is helping to give birth to whole new fields in their own right. On the knowledge production side, scholars are engaging in increasingly sophisticated research, the outcomes of which are shared through their own conference circuits, in the several book series on tourism that are now produced by various publishers, and of course in the infamous “long tail” (Airey et al., 2014) of some 270-odd tourism journals now in circulation (McKercher, 2014). In the audit culture of today’s academy, tourism scholarship even has its own dubious sets of league tables (Tribe, 2003).

A natural component of the maturation process of a field-like tourism studies is increased concern about how knowledge is transmitted (Tribe, 2005). That tourism education has become an organized concern within the tourism academy is evidenced by the development of strong international groups, such as the Tourism Education Futures Initiative and the Building Excellence in Sustainable Tourism (BEST) Education Network, as well as by the existence of no fewer than three separate journals specifically devoted to issues in tourism education: the *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism Education*, the *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism*, and the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*. As discussed in more detail below, much work in this domain has been broadly critical, emphasizing the decline of a liberal approach to tourism higher education in favor of a vocational and managerial focus guided by the lights of neoliberalism. Such critiques often call for a greater infusion into the curriculum of content from the social sciences, but as argued elsewhere, they are not all that is missing. The humanities are also an important but largely absent content area for the contemporary curriculum, if tourism education truly seeks to prepare future leaders for this field, rather than simply to groom competent workers.

As summarized below, the humanities have a tremendous potential contribution to make to tourism education. Having analytically established this value through conceptual scholarship in the past (Caton, 2015), however, it is now time to move into the concrete world of tourism education in action. What is the current status of the humanities in tourism higher education’s curriculum space? To what degree do philosophy and the arts play a leading or supporting role in courses that compose undergraduate and graduate programs in tourism? When humanities content is featured, how is this generally done? In cases when it is not much featured, what are

the barriers to its inclusion? This chapter begins to explore these questions by sharing the outcomes of a preliminary survey, in which 52 academics, representing over 30 universities in 18 different countries, characterized the state of their tourism curricula with regard to humanities content and reflected on the reasons behind the state of affairs on which they reported.

## THE HUMANITIES IN TOURISM EDUCATION

The argument that today's tourism curriculum is both overly vocational and overly managerial is a common refrain among pedagogical thinkers (Belhassen & Caton, 2011; Inui, Wheeler, & Lankford, 2006; Ring, Dickinger, & Wöber, 2009; Tribe, 2002, 2008). Critiques in this vein typically characterize tourism studies as a bisected field, composed of one part business studies and one part social science (Tribe, 1997, 2010), and argue that both are important for tourism educational practice, but that the latter tends to get short shrift compared to the former.

Although one cannot credibly argue that the social disciplines have been absent in management programs, including tourism, it is the case that they have traditionally been drawn on primarily to advance business aims. Anthropology, for example, has often been applied in the context of understanding organizational culture in order to enhance efficiency (Smircich, 1983); psychology, to take another example, has long been used to inform understandings of consumer preference and tourist behavior (Pearce, 2011). Bending knowledge produced by the social disciplines in service of efficiency and profit has been critiqued for decades (Baritz, 1960), however, and although the use of the social sciences to advance business ends continues to appear as one justification for their inclusion in tourism curricula (Morgan, 2004), the typical critiques offered by tourism's pedagogical scholars (Inui et al., 2006; Tribe, 2002, 2008) take a different angle and tend instead to emphasize the need for students to understand the complex social territory on which their field rests, to critique today's problematic tourism practices, and to imagine better futures.

As Tribe (1997) argues, tourism's epistemological domain comprises a diversity of disciplines: sociology, geography, political science, law, psychology, philosophy, economics, and more. But does this ideal representation reflect the reality of tourism curricular practice? It seems rare to hear of philosophy courses in tourism curricula. Furthermore, the arts are missing entirely from this description, at least in the sense of not being named overtly (perhaps they are meant to be in Tribe's "et cetera" category, as his

own work stands as a wonderful exception to their typical absence in tourism scholarship). Again, as with philosophy, it seems rare to hear of courses in tourism higher education that draw heavily on the arts, and perhaps even rarer to read scholars advocating for change in this regard (see [Wheeler, 2009](#), for an excellent exception). Analysis of doctoral dissertations in tourism also indicates the dearth of humanities influence on tourism knowledge production. History, a discipline that arguably straddles the fence between the humanities and the social sciences, was the only representative of the humanities to make the list in a recent assessment of the top 14 disciplines informing tourism doctoral study in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand ([Weiler, Moyle, & McLennan, 2012](#)). Even the rhetoric that tourism scholars have begun to take for granted—that tourism is composed of “business studies” and “social science”—itself leaves little space for imagining other disciplinary influences on the epistemology of their subject matter. The humanities seem simply not to be viewed as a piece of the puzzle.

This absence is likely more than just innocent oversight. At least to some degree, it is the result of very real barriers rooted in the academic neoliberalization process. Higher education, once conceived as a public good to advance the interests of the citizenry at large, is today viewed more prominently as a private good, meant to advance individual economic interests ([Aronowitz, 2000](#); [Giroux, 2007](#); [Nussbaum, 1997](#)). The higher-education-as-public-good-versus-private-good debate is perennial, having at different points in history occupied the energies of, for instance, Socrates, John Locke, and Thorstein Veblen ([Giroux, 2007](#); [Grey & French, 1996](#); [Nussbaum, 1997](#)), but over the last several decades, voices on the public-good side of the argument seem to have become increasingly drowned out—or at least they have become dramatically less influential in setting policy.

Neoliberalization of the academy is a global trend with local particulars. [Belhassen and Caton \(2011\)](#) have written previously about the history of this process, which some scholars trace to the aftermath of World War II, with the political-economic rise of the United States, which involved an increasing instrumentalization of higher education as it became rapidly harnessed to national economic development goals—a process that intensified in the 1970s, when increased competition from Japan drove the desire for the West to step up its production of new, marketable inventions ([Washburn, 2005](#)). The rise of the New Right in the 1980s, especially in the United Kingdom and United States, reinforced this trend ([Fournier & Grey, 2000](#); [Grey & French, 1996](#)). The continued rise of consumer culture

has also played its part, such that social relationships previously based on trust and professional expertise, such as those of doctor and patient or professor and student, have become increasingly rekeyed in the public mind to model that of producer and consumer.

Examples of the neoliberalization trend in higher education abound, and include, in the case of the United States, the retreat of public funding from what would, at least nominally, appear to be public institutions. The University of Virginia, a leading “public” institution in the United States, for instance, today receives less than 10% of its funding from the government (NPR, 2012). New nomenclature has arisen to accompany the ebb of government monies, such that “state-supported” institutions have had to be rechristened as “state-assisted,” or else have been catapulted into the even more emaciated new category “state-allied” (Archibald & Feldman, 2003). Similarly, at Tourism Education Futures Initiative meetings, Airey has discussed Browne Report driven funding-structure changes in the United Kingdom that demand massive budget cuts—and sometimes even the total withdrawal of public monies—for higher education disciplines in universities in England that are deemed not to advance “skills needed in the economy” (Vasagar & Shepherd, 2010). Illuminating these policy moves, Ayikoru, Tribe, and Airey (2009) have published a detailed discourse analysis that demonstrates the economic thinking driving tourism higher education in England. Dredge et al. (2012) have reported on the trend toward standardization and outcomes auditing in Continental higher education degree programs, as manifested in the Bologna Process, and they have also highlighted the globalizing influence of this process, especially on the Australian higher education system, which is characterized in economic-speak as one of the country’s top five export sectors.

A central feature of the neoliberal university is the emphasis on auditing and quantification of both knowledge production and learning, a notion Tribe (2003) critiqued over a decade ago, with his exploration of the “RAE-ification” of tourism knowledge, after England’s infamous Research Assessment Exercise (today called the Research Excellence Framework). In this contemporary “audit culture” (Shore, 2008), public organizations of all kinds are increasingly required to generate (or receive) metrics of performance, and then to track outputs with regard to these benchmarks and formally report their results. These results, in turn, become decisionmaking and justificatory grounding for the hands that giveth and taketh away (Airey et al., 2014).

Others have written in much more detail about the trend of neoliberalization and its audit culture in higher education (Dredge, Airey, & Gross,

2015), as has the present author (Belhassen & Caton, 2011; Caton, 2014), but for the purposes of this chapter, it is sufficient to simply note that the humanities are not faring well under this potent ideological regime (Nussbaum, 2010). The intentions of audit culture are noble: the desire is simply for transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the use of resources (Shore, 2008). But the problem is that metrics are not neutral tools for demonstrating progress in every human endeavor. Some things are more easily measured than others, and these tend to be things that are immediately and directly observable, and things that are quantifiable. Thus, when straightforward measurability is elevated and elided with the notion of value, there are epistemological winners and losers. “Skills” and “competencies,” of the kind often emphasized in vocational and applied programs of study, thus become easier to justify in curriculum construction than do other, fuzzier types of knowledge.

But as Einstein is often credited with remarking, not everything that counts is countable, and not everything countable counts. The development of metrics becomes more difficult when dealing with things that are less directly observable—such as achievements in mental or emotional states, in values, or in worldviews—and also things that are less immediate, such as benefits that unfold over the course of a human career or life, that exert long-term influence over the trajectory of a place or community, or that reshape the operation of an industry over time. To create positive change in the world, students need more than concrete and discrete skills and competencies: they need the more oblique capacities that higher education, at its best, can also engender, including understanding, wisdom, creativity, empathy, compassion, and imagination, as well as the ability to take apart the logic of arguments that are handed to them, to critique the status quo, and to think for themselves (Barnett, 1994).

The humanities excel in promoting human development in these ways. The many, very practical benefits the humanities could provide for tourism education have been adumbrated more fully elsewhere (Caton, 2015), but a brief summary is useful here. From philosophy, for instance, students can learn from both method and content. The bedrock of the discipline is the dialogic method, popularized by Socrates so many centuries ago, in which logical arguments are alternatively advanced and critiqued. In the absence of an awareness of the importance of deconstructing arguments and critiquing their logic, and without having engaged in deep reflection about what one’s self and one’s community truly value, people are easily swayed in their decisionmaking by authority, celebrity, or peer pressure, rather than solid argumentation. Philosophy can help tourism students to become

aware of this need for critique and to practice performing it, such that when they enter (or continue on in) the working world, they will not readily accept arguments handed to them at face value, but instead consider whether the ideas and agendas of others truly square with the ethical judgments they have honed through their education and lived experience. It is today's tourism students who will participate in consequential decisionmaking about their world as future professionals in the field, and so it would behoove them to have skills in independent reasoning and critique.

Philosophy is also valuable not only for its method, but also for the content that has been built from centuries of engagement in this discipline. It has produced a number of important works on ethics, for instance, which provide excellent fodder in spurring thought and discussion as students contemplate the tricky sorts of professional situations they will ultimately encounter working in a field with immense sociocultural, ecological, and economic impacts. Although the history of philosophy is rooted in the search to uncover answers to life's big questions—"What is the purpose of life?" for instance, or "What is worthy of our ultimate commitment?"—of late, philosophy has taken an anti-foundational turn, increasingly abandoning this goal in recognition that any attempts to achieve answers to such questions are merely the product of the reigning values and reasoning styles of the time (Rorty, 1989, 1999; West, 1991). Although it might seem that such a realization would lead to hopeless relativism, some branches of contemporary philosophy, such as historical realism and pragmatism, have forged a path away from this slippery slope by accepting that values and ethical norms are indeed particular and situated, but also arguing that the job of humanity is precisely to recognize morality as a negotiated human construct that people are empowered to contemplate and shape. In this sense, the goal of philosophy is not to produce universal answers, but rather to simply help people "hold our time in thought" (Rorty, 1989), such that it becomes possible to live life in a more aware and intentional manner. This turn has freed philosophy to grow in new, fertile directions that have brought it closer to cultural studies, as a form of social critique engaging with the local and specific, but without abandoning its roots as a dealer in life's big questions. Many of the ideas generated by pragmatism and related branches of philosophy thus hold great potential for tourism education because such ideas can help students to build a bridge of thought between tourism practice, broader social issues and forces, and deeper questions of value and meaning in human life.

The arts also have tremendous potential value for tourism education. Boyd (2009) has argued that art, in all its forms, is an evolutionary



adaptation of the human species because it serves as a type of cognitive play through engagement with pattern. Because people are information processing creatures—indeed, this is humankind’s greatest evolutionary advantage—people need lots of practice to be able to deal with pattern recognition and prediction on short notice, in situations that may be highly context-dependent, and thus not something they can directly “rehearse” for. Just as physical play allows humans to hone a range of survival skills that may be needed in suddenly arising unpredictable situations, art and the opportunity for cognitive play it provides nurtures creativity, forging new neural pathways in their brains and equipping them to imagine new options not constrained by immediate reality. Human progress in all its forms—from science to politics to entertainment—hinges largely on this kind of creative and imaginative capacity, and ideally, universities exist to nurture its development. In the safety of the classroom, students can “try on” new ideas, consider different sorts of problems, and apply new ways of thinking to well-worn situations. The arts are a tremendous resource for this kind of intellectual experimentation, because the fictional, hypothetical spaces they create provide people, with an alternative ontological platform to step on to, from which they can view the real world in a different way (Barone, 1995) and get a sense of what an alternative might look like. Thus, the arts can work hand-in-hand with philosophy in facilitating the development of autonomous, original thought and taking things one step further, into the realm of imagination for possibilities that might lie beyond the here and now for the tourism world. Such imaginative leaps are also crucial for building people’s empathetic capacity (Noddings, 1984; Nussbaum, 2010; Verducci, 2000) and moral imagination (Lederach, 2005), both of which are crucial in a practice so culturally complex as tourism.

Finally, the humanities have huge potential to increase student engagement in the classroom. If art is natural and fundamental to the human experience (Boyd, 2009), then people *need* play and creativity for their normal mental and emotional development. The technocratic, materialistic, economically reductive, and resultantly vocationalistic ideologies currently carrying the day (Ayikoru et al., 2009) tend to cause instructors to be out of touch with this basic human need, quite ironically to the detriment of their own field’s development, as one of their goals in tourism is theoretically to create engaging and fulfilling leisure experiences—a process which surely demands great creativity from tourism professionals. If instructors attend to their students’ basic needs for playful engagement with pattern, as part of their learning activities, then they will not only be creating education that is more learner-centric, and hence reaping the benefits of greater

student engagement, but also encouraging them to see effort spent for creativity as a natural life practice to be carried forward as a component of their future careers. They will also be attending, in a more effective way, to students' fundamental human need to engage with issues of deeper meaning, which transcend basic skill development for "competencies" needed in the economy (Rosales, 2012; West, 2009).

### *Starting the Conversation*

Having previously explored the potential the humanities hold for enhancing tourism education, the time has now come to begin assessing the situation on the ground. What do those working as tourism educators have to say about the current status of the humanities in their programs' curriculum space? Do philosophy and the arts play a role in their undergraduate and graduate programs, and if so how are these disciplines drawn upon? If not, what are the barriers to including content from these disciplines?

In order to begin to hear the voices of contemporary tourism educators on these issues, a short survey was undertaken in 2012. The survey was distributed via TRINET, which is generally acknowledged to be the leading forum for professional discussion among tourism educators. Although this approach meant foregoing the richness and detail that would come with interviewing educators to understand their institutional situations with regard to these questions, it made more sense to start with a simple survey, which would be quick to answer and would be of larger reach, in order to break the ice on this topic and gain an initial sense of the situation on the ground.

The survey consisted of 21 questions. It began by asking respondents to characterize how strongly each of a long list of disciplines influenced the undergraduate, and then the graduate (if applicable), programming in tourism at their university, with possible responses being "very strongly," "somewhat strongly," "a bit," and "not at all." The disciplines listed for consideration were business/management, communications, cultural studies, economics, film studies, geography and environmental studies, history, literature, performing arts, philosophy, political science or studies, psychology, sociology, and visual arts. Respondents were then asked to state, for both undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) tourism programs at their university, the number of courses in their curriculum that drew upon philosophy as the parent discipline, with choices being "0," "1," or "2 or more." The question was repeated for the arts (specified as literary, visual, and/or performing).

The next section of the survey shifted to consideration of the humanities as playing a supporting, rather than a primary, role in respondents' institutions' curricula. Respondents were asked to consider, for undergraduate, and then for graduate (if applicable), courses in their programs that drew predominantly from the business-oriented disciplines for their framing, the degree to which those courses relied on supporting content from philosophy, literature, film studies, visual arts, and/or performing arts, with the possible answers being "frequently", "occasionally", and "seldom" for each of these individual disciplines. The question was then repeated for courses that drew predominantly from the social science disciplines for their framing.

The next section of the survey turned to the issue of barriers to the inclusion of humanities content. Those respondents who answered that their program seldom or never drew upon humanities content were asked to share their perceptions of why this was the case. First, they were asked to consider not their own view but what they perceived to be the view of their overall unit. They were given the following fixed-response choices, and told to select all that applied: "We simply haven't thought much about it; we lack sufficient faculty expertise to incorporate such elements effectively; we're time- and space-constrained and don't feel there's enough room to add such content in our curriculum; and we don't feel that such content is relevant to our curriculum goals in preparing students for the future." Respondents could also tick an "other" box, in place of or in addition to any of these choices, in which case they were asked to elaborate. They were then asked to explain whether or not they personally agreed with the overall position of their unit on this matter.

Those who responded that their program did indeed draw moderately or heavily on humanities content were asked to provide their program's rationale for this in an open-ended response box. All respondents were asked, if applicable, to offer one or more examples of the way content from any humanities discipline was incorporated into their programs.

Finally, respondents were asked a handful of demographic questions about their universities, including country of location, language of instruction (English exclusively, a mix of English and another language, or another language exclusively), size of student body, type of unit in which their tourism program was housed (standalone, in a business school, in a geography program), types of tourism credentials offered, and length of time their institution had been offering tourism credentials. They were given an optional question to provide the name of their university, in order to help demonstrate the survey's reach, and finally were provided with an

open-ended box and asked if they had any additional comments they would like to offer.

Responses totaled 52 and represented 18 countries, from all continents, but with the vast majority coming from Australia, Europe, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and New Zealand. Based on the replies of those who chose to answer the optional question of providing their university's name, it was possible to see that respondents represented at least 32 different institutions. Most respondents (73%) were from institutions that offered graduate as well as undergraduate programming.

As Table 1 conveys, respondents represented the full spectrum, in terms of the size of the institution at which they worked, and they were also diverse in terms of the kinds of larger units in which their tourism program was located, with the largest percentage serving in business or management schools, but with significant representation from other configurations. The vast majority (89%) taught in well-established programs, which had been granting tourism degrees for at least 10 years.

It was not possible to obtain a complete list, nor a solid estimate of the number and geographical spread, of tertiary-level tourism programs offered throughout the world, but clearly the respondents to this survey represent only a small fraction of such programs. Projects like that of Severt, Tesone, Bottorff, and Carpenter (2009), which develop mechanisms to rank the "top 100" tourism programs, demonstrate that there are clearly well over that number in existence. The information reported here should thus not be read as statistically representative of tourism programming globally. Rather, the goal was exploratory: to initiate a conversation with those Trinettors who wished to participate about the situation of the humanities in tourism education. These data should thus be interpreted as initial insights, worthy of further exploration in terms of both breadth and depth, as discussed in this chapter's conclusion.

**Table 1. Respondents' Institutional Demographics**

Institution Size	Percent	Unit Housing Tourism Program	Percent
Fewer than 10,000	19.2	Business/Management School	43.1
10,000–14,999	17.3	Arts School	3.9
15,000–19,999	28.8	Leisure/Recreation Program	9.8
20,000–30,000	19.2	Independent	25.5
More than 30,000	15.4	Other	17.6

*Voices from the Field*

Having introduced the survey itself, the responses are now considered. What does the situation for the humanities in tourism education look like on the ground?

*Status of the Humanities* Quite predictably, respondents reported business or management studies as the discipline that most strongly influenced their academic programming in tourism at the undergraduate level; 75% stated that business or management studies influenced their program very strongly, with an additional 15% reporting a somewhat strong influence, creating a combined total of 90% selecting these two response categories. Business or management studies was, in fact, the only discipline on the list at all that the majority of respondents felt influenced their undergraduate curriculum “very strongly.”

After business or management studies, the most influential disciplines at the undergraduate level were reported to be geography and environmental studies (67% answered very or somewhat strongly), economics (59%), sociology (57%), cultural studies (47%), psychology (46%), and communications (43%). It is worth noting that, for each of these disciplines, a much greater proportion of respondents reported a somewhat strong influence than a very strong influence. Political science/studies and history came in mid-pack, with 34% and 22% of respondents, respectively, reporting a very or somewhat strong influence of these disciplines on their curricula (Figure 1).

At the other end of the spectrum were the humanities. Philosophy was reported to be very strongly influential by 4% of respondents, and an additional 14% reported it to be somewhat strongly influential, for a total of 18% in these two categories. No other humanities discipline received any “very strongly” responses and tallies for those answering “somewhat strongly” were as follows: performing arts (8%), visual arts (6%), literature (6%), and film studies (0%). A look at the other end of the response category spectrum revealed that 43% of respondents felt philosophy did not influence their undergraduate programs at all, 67% perceived no influence at all from literature, 71% perceived none from visual arts, and 75% perceived none from performing arts or film studies (Figure 2).

At the graduate level, philosophy fared considerably better, with 36% of respondents reporting a very or somewhat strong influence on their program’s graduate curriculum, although it was disconcerting to note that 30% felt it did not influence their graduate programming at all, and

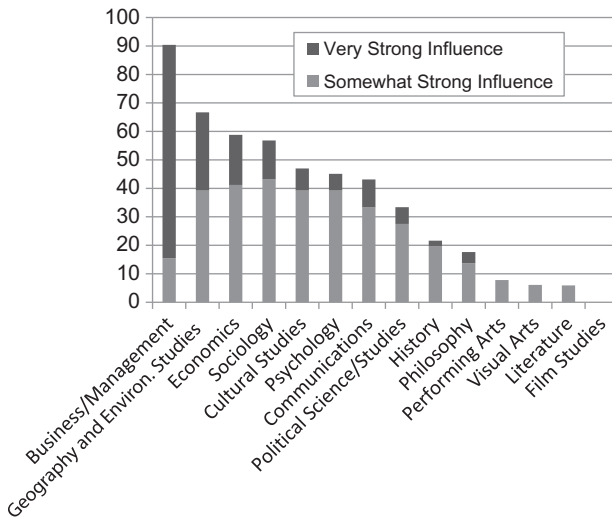


Figure 1. Percentage Reporting Strong Influence of Disciplines on Undergraduate Curricula

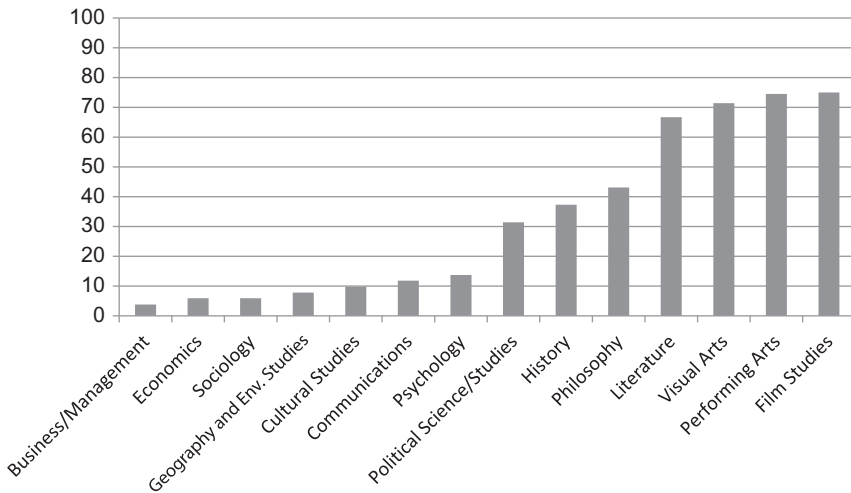


Figure 2. Percentage Reporting No Influence for Disciplines on Undergraduate Curricula

another 34% perceived only a bit of influence. The other humanities disciplines considered in the survey fared similarly—or even worse, in terms of the “no influence at all” reporting—at the graduate level than the undergraduate: percentages reporting a very or somewhat strong influence versus percentages reporting no influence at all for each of these disciplines were as follows: performing arts (9% vs. 74%), literature (7% vs. 77%), visual arts (7% vs. 81%), and film studies (2% vs. 84%). The social sciences made a similar showing at the graduate versus the undergraduate level, and business and management studies continued to dominate, with 58% reporting a very strong influence and 29% reporting a somewhat strong influence, for a total of 87% in these two categories (Figure 3).

Next, respondents reported on the existence of courses in their program drawn from the humanities as primary parent disciplines. Philosophy was reported to be the primary parent discipline for zero courses in the undergraduate programs of 77% of respondents, while

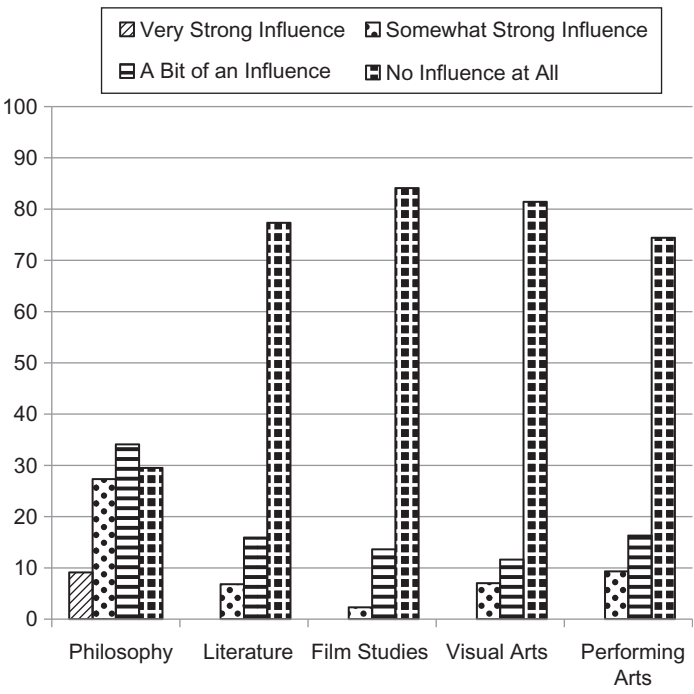


Figure 3. Percent Reported Influence Levels of Humanities Disciplines on Graduate Curricula

19% noted the presence of one philosophy course in their curricula, and 4% reported two or more such courses. For the arts (literary, visual, or performing), 86% reported zero undergraduate courses in their curricula, 10% reported one course, and 4% reported two or more courses. At the graduate level, 55% of those for whom the question was applicable reported zero courses in their program with philosophy as the parent discipline, while 39% reported one such course, and 1% reported two or more courses. The numbers for the arts disciplines were 80% reporting zero courses at the graduate level, 14% reporting one course, and 1% reporting two or more courses.

In terms of the humanities as supporting content in courses deriving from other primary parent disciplines, respondents were asked to report on both the business-focused courses in their program and on those with a social science focus. For undergraduate business-oriented courses, philosophy was noted as seldom drawn on for supporting material by 57% of respondents and occasionally drawn on by another 37%. The arts were much less frequently drawn upon, with between roughly 80% and 95% of respondents reporting that supporting material from each of these disciplines was seldom featured in their institution's undergraduate business coursework in tourism. For graduate business-oriented courses, the philosophy numbers were much stronger: philosophy was frequently drawn on by 20%, occasionally by 45%, and seldom by 35%. As with the undergraduate scenario, the arts were much less frequently drawn upon as supporting material, with between roughly 70% and 90% of respondents replying that material from each of these disciplines was seldom featured in their graduate business-oriented courses (Figure 4).

The humanities made a stronger showing as supporting content in social science-oriented courses, with philosophy being drawn on frequently in such courses at the undergraduate level in the programs of 8% of the respondents, and occasionally in the programs of 54% more. The arts were reported as being drawn on at least occasionally in such courses by 36% for literature, 17% for film studies, 17% for visual arts, and 8% for performing arts. At the graduate level, in social science-oriented courses, philosophy was reported as being frequently drawn upon in the programs of 26% of respondents, and occasionally in the programs of another 49%. For the arts at the graduate level, the numbers of respondents reporting occasional or frequent influence from these disciplines in the social science coursework in their programs were as follows: literature (38%), film studies (28%), visual arts (23%), and performing arts (15%) (Figure 5).



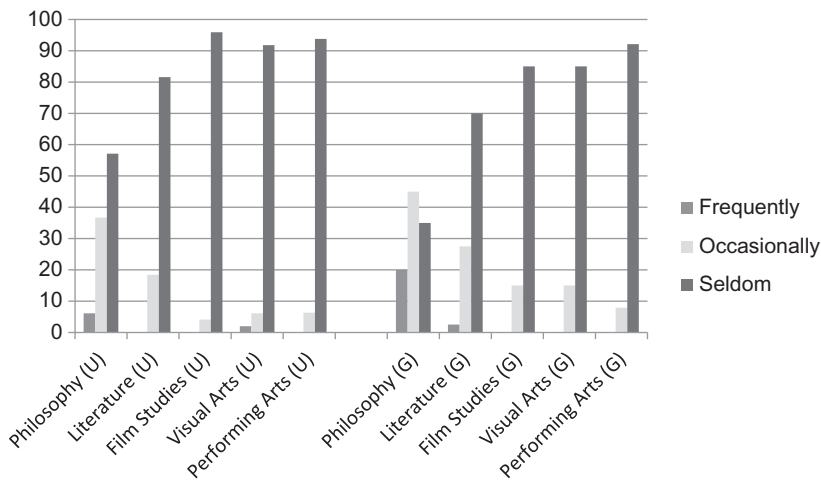


Figure 4. Humanities in Business-Oriented Courses at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels

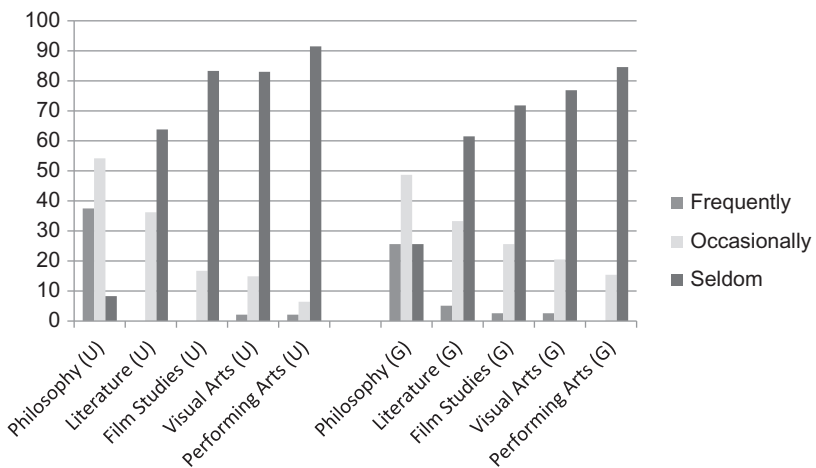


Figure 5. Humanities in Social Science-Oriented Courses at Undergraduate and Graduate Levels

*Barriers to the Inclusion of Humanities Content* The survey then turned to the question of why the humanities tended to be included or not in the curricula of respondents' programs. The first question in this section was directed only at those respondents who reported that their programs seldom or never drew on humanities content. They were asked to convey why they thought this was the case, and to do so based not on their own personal reasoning but on what they perceived the overall view of their unit to be on this matter. As noted above, respondents were given four pre-articulated choices, as well as an "other" box, and were asked to tick all that applied and to elaborate when choosing "other." The most popular response (45%) was that people perceived their units as not recognizing the relevance of humanities content for advancing their curricular goals in preparing their students for the future. Many also perceived that their units simply had not thought much about the humanities in the context of offering tourism education (40%). The opinions that there was a lack of faculty expertise to include humanities content (34%) and that there simply was not room for such content in an already tight curriculum space (32%) were also expressed. Other reasons were rarely supplied, and when they were, the responses were idiosyncratic.

Respondents were then asked whether they personally agreed with what they perceived to be their overall unit's assessment. While some did, many did not. Most of the disagreement seemed to center around the issue of the humanities' relevance to the study of tourism in preparing students for the future. As noted, a unit's perception of lack of relevance was the most common reason ticked for why humanities content was not included, and while some respondents agreed with their unit's view in this regard, many were vocal in their disagreement. Quite in accord with this chapter's previous arguments about the consequences of university neoliberalization, they often located the problem in the ideological dominance of an instrumentalist perspective regarding the purpose of a university education, which one respondent articulately labeled the "employability agenda." As one such respondent expressed:

I see the value of such content, but ... I think my colleagues would rebel at such an idea because a) it isn't industry/job focused and most of our education is vocational, b) most of our modules are taught by business "subject" specialists, whose focus is on teaching their specialism: management, accountancy, marketing, etc.

Others suggested that student expectations played a large role in perpetuating this circumstance:

I would like students to be engaged with humanities [and social sciences] ... but it appears to be ... what neither students nor the faculty want. Our students seem to be only interested in the degree as a paper which will guarantee them a job. The faculty is interested in saving money, and cutting costs. This is done by inserting more generic business/management courses into the tourism degree.

... the university has a funding model that dictates you cannot teach into another faculty's disciplinary areas (and maybe steal their students). There is also the matter of student satisfaction measures in a market driven system. Students want business skills not skills for life and for thinking. It [is] all very instrumental and very narrow. The market (students) don't always know best, but try telling that to university managers and national policy makers.

Interestingly, this last quote highlights not only the macro-scale politics of universities in response to the market system in which they are increasingly enmeshed, but also the micro-scale intra-university politics that are triggered as a result. If markets determine which programs stand and fall across the campus landscape, then individual departments and divisions become competitors, rather than collaborators in creating a larger whole, and this lack of collaboration can in turn have a negative effect on the quality of individual programs, which could actually be made better for their students were collaboration encouraged and rewarded.

One respondent, whose program was located in a recreation and leisure studies division, noted that the problem ran even deeper, as he or she already found it difficult even to convince others in his or her unit to see "tourism" as a valuable area of study in the first place, much less to believe that the humanities might have value in a leisure and tourism education context. Such a response is a reminder that tourism studies' "crisis of legitimacy" has long arms. The need for tourism to be taken seriously as a field of study can act as its own source of pressure in shaping the curriculum, as faculty and administrators define their identities and pursue disciplinary alliances in ways that lend legitimacy to their pursuits, in terms of both research and educational programming.

Another respondent expressed the view that he or she had personally paid the price for resisting the dominance of economic and managerialist thinking in conducting research and in delivering his or her courses:

[P]recisely because my views [on the relevance of the humanities to tourism] do not match with the views of my unit's full professors, my work contract has not been extended .... My example would be another example of discrimination towards humanities oriented/qualitative researchers within business ....

Those who indicated disagreement with the larger views of their unit also tended to be those who selected that lack of faculty expertise was part of their unit's rationale for not integrating more humanities content into the curriculum. Although no one chose to elaborate on this point, disagreeing with one's larger unit in this regard suggests that such respondents may feel their units are missing opportunities because they are not aware of the full range of ways that humanities content might be incorporated into tourism courses, instead assuming that a professor would have to be an expert in philosophy or the arts in order to fruitfully draw from these disciplines. Such thinking patterns, if they do exist, are not surprising, given that the contemporary university landscape is still quite a siloed place (Frodeman, Klein, & Mitcham, 2010). If instructors are not very inter- or multi- or post-disciplinary in their research behaviors, or in the knowledge that they themselves consume, then it is not surprising that the possibilities they see for their classrooms will be similarly limited.

Concern over room in the curriculum, however, was an issue that respondents seemed to find more legitimate, in considering whether they agreed or disagreed with their larger unit's assessment on the barriers to introducing humanities content. As one respondent articulated this position:

... it's a balancing act—we include [humanities content] where appropriate, but curriculum is only so big ... based on student and faculty numbers. Personally I'[d] love to add more, but at the expense of what?

Dredge et al. (2012) have written at length about the complexities of the "curriculum space" in tourism higher education, arguing that ideals like Tribe's (2002) "Philosophic Practitioner Education" are important but that

they must inevitably take shape in the real world, with all its attendant pressures, brought to bear by tourism education's various stakeholders, including students, students' families, faculty members, administrators, and those in government and industry. There are very real challenges associated with either making the curriculum bigger or shifting it in one direction at the expense of another, and disciplines like the humanities—latecomers to the tourism education table—will logically be in a disadvantaged position, fighting for scraps.

*Advocates' Position* Despite the barriers that appear to discourage some units from introducing humanities content into their tourism programs, other units—or at least individual instructors within them—are already successfully doing so. Respondents whose programs or personal courses did draw on the humanities were asked to share the rationale for this. Commonly cited responses fell into five general categories.

First, respondents argued that tourism is, at base, a human field. The humanities should be incorporated because of their benefits for helping students to understand human concerns and behaviors, and for illuminating the complexity of the field. An economic view of tourism currently dominates, and these respondents highlighted the usefulness of the humanities in helping to challenge this ideology and open students' eyes to tourism as a sociocultural phenomenon and not merely a business activity. To the degree that tourism is a business concern—the world's largest industry, or however phrased—that economic phenomenon rides atop more basic currents of human desire and behavior, group dynamics, and social power structures, history, and popular culture.

Second, tourism inevitably deals in culture. Some respondents noted that a central reason for tourism development is to preserve or revive cultural traditions, so students need to be able to understand these traditions and their value. They need to understand the nature of the subject matter they are seeking to manage. Relatedly, others commented that training in the arts can benefit students in terms of building skills in experience design and staging—practical pursuits that many may undertake in their future careers.

Third, students need tools for analysis and critical thinking, and the humanities were perceived as a valuable resource in this regard. Literature, for instance, was cited as providing a valuable historical lens on the phenomenon of tourism across time, thus helping students to understand the history of their field. Philosophy was noted to nurture criticality in general, and to provide a toolkit to help students analyze current situations in the

field. Multiple respondents also highlighted that philosophy provides a basis for ethics, which should be central content in any tourism curriculum, and that philosophy also undergirds research approaches, which are themselves the basis of tourism knowledge production, and therefore are important to think deeply and critically about. Even in a business context, philosophy was mentioned as valuable, as it can help to bring taken-for-granted business practices into the light and render them open for questioning.

Fourth, students need reflexivity. The humanities are useful for helping students to build skills in reflexive thinking, and reflexivity is an essential capacity for future tourism managers because they will hold power. Tourism's great consequences for culture, for the environment, and for the economy mean that those who hold decisionmaking power, even in small ways, hold responsibility to not compromise the greater good. Amid the realities of stakeholder pressures in the corporate, nonprofit, and government worlds, an internalized tendency toward reflexive thinking can help tourism professionals to act with greater awareness and intentionality.

Fifth, for all these reasons, the incorporation of humanities content could actually make individual tourism programs more competitive in the cutthroat global "education industry." As one respondent pointed out, many business programs look pretty much the same. The equivalent could be said for many tourism programs. Could drawing on the humanities and clearly articulating their value be a positive strategy for differentiation? Is there perhaps a possibility for turning the classic argument that the market will not bear humanities content in the tourism curriculum on its head?

After being asked for their rationale regarding their own or their programs' support for humanities content, respondents were finally asked, if applicable, to offer specific examples of how their courses or programs incorporated content from the humanities. The results in themselves offer a broad justification for the value the humanities can add to the study of tourism. One of the most common examples was introducing students to a variety of philosophical positions on ethics and then analyzing concrete tourism situations through these various frameworks. Also frequently mentioned was the use of travel writing and other artistic outputs in class to give students an historical perspective. Research education was noted by several respondents as a program segment that particularly benefitted from humanities content, with examples being given of both the value of philosophy in helping students think about where knowledge comes from and

what counts as truth, and the value of the arts (e.g., drawing, photography, video) in providing ways to document fieldwork.

Although most examples of the incorporation of humanities content were in relation to helping students build understandings of tourism (and tourism knowledge production) as a sociocultural phenomenon, the humanities were also drawn upon by some programs to aid directly in conveying business-related content. Some made reference to the arts as driving niche tourism sectors, such as film or literary tourism; as such, students were introduced to particular works in order to better understand the cultures of touring that had sprung up around them, as well as the product development and service provision implications of that process. One respondent mentioned that his or her program used techniques borrowed from art criticism to explore the effectiveness of tourism marketing materials. Cultural education, for instance in local or national art, history, music, and dance, was offered by some programs in order to help graduates assist in a more informed way with cultural tourism development in their country or region.

In addition to these common examples, there were also unique, highly creative instances reported. In one case, a respondent shared that he or she had recently hired the city's leading jazz pianist to play alongside his or her cultural tourism module, such that the students were able to experience the history of music firsthand, in a way that accompanied lecture and seminar activities. Another commented that the lyrics of popular youth music made great fodder for studying changing attitudes toward travel in society over time. A third reported applying the positions of classic philosophers (Plato, Descartes) in creative ways to illuminate central notions in tourism theory (such as authenticity). Responses to this question thus both illustrate the diversity of creative approaches through which humanities content can be incorporated into the curriculum and hint at the breadth of the spectrum of benefits that doing so ultimately holds for the study of tourism.

## CONCLUSION

The responses to this survey suggest that the influence of the humanities on the tourism higher education curriculum is indeed not widespread. Particularly startling was the high percentage of respondents who reported that philosophy and the arts do not appear to influence their curricula at all. Also startling were the reports that things do not get much better when

moving from the undergraduate to the graduate level. Indeed, respondents' reports that graduate programs tend to be dominated by business and management concerns suggest that vocationalism may well be a driver beyond the undergraduate level.

Vocationalist ideology appears highly relevant in understanding the absence of humanities content in tourism education, both as revealed through frequent references made to it by the respondents to this survey when assessing curriculum change barriers and through inferences that can be made regarding where the humanities do make a showing when they actually do appear—namely, in social science-oriented courses and not in business-oriented courses. There appears to be a perception of incompatibility between the humanities and business or management subject matter, or a lack of relevance of the former to the latter, which is less the case with the social sciences.

Nevertheless, many respondents to this survey, writing from program contexts in which business and management concerns dominate, readily saw the value of the humanities to tourism education and were keen to see philosophy and the arts drawn upon more heavily in their programs. Although some expressed concerns about limited curriculum space or lack of faculty expertise to incorporate humanities content, more commonly they reported challenges of convincing colleagues to see the relevance of this content or else suggested that their units simply had not given the matter much thought.

Gaining an understanding of these barriers is valuable in mounting advocacy efforts. If the failure of programs to reap the benefits of including humanities content is in some cases simply due to a lack of awareness and consideration of the idea in the first place, then scholarship that seeks to raise awareness and articulate the benefits can have value. Tourism education journals and conferences, as well as publications like the present volume, constitute excellent forums for such discussions. If individual academics feel like the lone wolf voice at their respective institutions in pressing this issue, then connecting with one another to share information and to strategize can be valuable; as strong arguments emerge about the value of the humanities for tourism education, they can be shared, debated, and developed further by such a community of educators. The present author plans to begin organizing a database of resources for tourism educators who wish to incorporate humanities content in their classrooms, as part of her work on the Tourism Education Futures Initiative executive. In particular, the database will feature examples of effective use of such content, as well as space for discussion of successes and challenges in classroom



practice. Examples of the successful incorporation of humanities content would not only constitute a resource base of ideas that could be adapted by others for their own classrooms, but would also aid in advocacy efforts, as well as helping to overcome confidence issues by illustrating that one need not be an expert in, say, philosophy, literature, or music, in order to draw on elements from these areas effectively as supporting content in one's teaching.

For tourism education and the humanities' place within it, this chapter represents the beginning of a conversation. While not providing anything near what could be claimed as a large or representative sample, it is heartening that 52 academics, representing at least 32 different institutions, from 18 countries around the world, were up for the discussion. In addition to practical steps, such as the one described above to create a database of examples and success stories, it will certainly be valuable to undertake further research into the contemporary curriculum landscape, with regard to the current presence and future possibilities for humanities content. A broader analysis of properly sampled program curricula, for instance, could reveal important information regarding whether there are any patterns with regard to greater or lesser inclusion of humanities content. The present survey was not of sufficient reach, for example, to statistically explore comparisons between countries, school sizes, or types of larger units in which tourism programs are institutionally housed. A broader set of disciplines should be included in the future, as well; anthropology and outdoor education/conservation studies, for instance, were inadvertently left off the list in the current survey, and of course, surveys and curriculum analyses can only go so far. There is an artificiality in the way such tools organize complex information—for example, people sometimes hold very different ideas about what even constitutes a “humanities subject” or a “social science,” and some programs may be so truly multi- or post-disciplinary that content from original parent disciplines cannot be meaningfully teased apart by blunt categorization systems. The voices of those involved in the system—teachers, administrators, and students—need to be heard in depth.

Finally, tourism scholars should also not dissociate these issues from considerations of the role of the arts in tourism knowledge production. Issues of epistemology and knowledge transmission are closely bound, as both are rooted in notions of what knowledge is considered valuable and what means of producing it are considered legitimate. The question of the

humanities in tourism education is part of a larger conversation about how people can make sense of tourism as a phenomenon, why they value it, what they can (and should) know about it, and how they can (and should) shape its trajectory. If [Airey \(2008\)](#) is right that tourism is beginning to come of age as a field—that for tourism studies “life begins at 40”—then such a conversation is an important one to have, indeed.