



Call for Participation
Deadline: May 15, 2024

Summer session 2024:
Bartolomé de las Casas and Indigenous human rights
(Løgumkloster Høyskole, Denmark)

Our CFP in Brief

We warmly invite applications to our Study Circle “Praxis of Social Imaginaries” summer symposium at Løgumkloster, Denmark. As a community, our study circle operates within the Nordic Summer University and sets out to foster a platform for trans- and interdisciplinary research. By bringing people together from various different disciplines and fields of artistic work into shared laboratories of praxis, we aim to create a transformational learning environment. This summer, our praxis together will center on Bartolomé de las Casas’s early modern address of Indigenous human rights.

Though many missionaries, priests and theologians implicated in European colonial activities leave a record of astounding dehumanization, not all colonial-era Christian theological accounts failed to speak out against the grave anti-Indigenous violence and ecological crises perpetrated by the Conquistadores in Abya Yala (Latin America). **Bartolomé de las Casas** (1474/84-1566) advocated for the human rights of Indigenous peoples and wrote about the need to set the Indigenous populations free from slavery. In this summer gathering of our study circle “Praxis of Social Imaginaries”, we will together investigate the account of Casas.

At first a willing participant in the Spanish colonial *encomienda* system, through which the Spanish government enforced a politics of colonial land-grabbing and slave-holding, Casas gave a sermon in 1514 in which he sold his lands and renounced his repartimiento, and began his plan to travel back to Spain to argue for the abolition of the *encomienda* system. Initially, Las Casas suggested a plan of “sustainable colonisation”, in which the *encomienda* would be abolished and Indians would be congregated into self-governing Pueblos to become tribute-paying vassals of the king. He still suggested that the loss of Indigenous labor for the colonists could be replaced by trafficking Africans as slaves. His engagement with colonial activities expanded and continued, while his budding views on Indigenous rights took shape over the decades leading up to the 1550-1551 Valladolid debate, in which Casas argued Indigenous Americans deserved the same rights as the colonizers. A number of scholars and priests opposed his view, most notably the humanist scholar Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, whose argument ignored Spanish colonial brutality, pointing instead to storied Indigenous sacrificial practices and cannibalism as justification for universal oppression of Indigenous peoples.

In this symposium, we will be reading his [*Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*](#) - *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, which he wrote in 1542. This work would be an important basis for Casas's approach to the Valladolid debate, as within it, Casas laid out a description of colonial brutality that undermined any argument which sought to contrast Spanish "civilized Christianity" from the claimed "primitive violence" of Indigenous Americans.

[The Spanish version of the text.](#)

[English audiobook version of the text.](#)

[Project Gutenberg online versions of the text \(in English\).](#)

To learn more about our transdisciplinary approach and approach to Indigenous-centered research ethics, please see the section "About Our Study Circle" below.

How can you participate?

Send us a short bio with your name, information about yourself, your home institution/organisation, your artform or area of research and a short motivation as to why you want to participate. If you would like to facilitate a session or present artwork during the study circle, please include further information in your email about your plans. The options are as follows:

Lead reading sessions in a workshop format

Give us a small idea about how you would want to lead a reading session of either 30 minutes or max 1,5h.

Lead an intervention or artistic presentation for our community that is connected to the topic of this summer session

Give us a short description of your proposed talk or workshop related to the themes of Bartolomé de las Casas and Indigenous human rights.

Present some artistic work in the evenings - Cultural program of NSU

Give us a short description of your project and how you would want to set up the session that will be open to the whole Nordic Summer University community.

Student Participant

You can also participate in this transdisciplinary reading, listening and storytelling work by being an active member of the community. Please indicate if you intend to work towards credits or if you are part of the students and researchers from Åbo Akademi that are taking part in the course Medieval Cosmologies.

Scholarships and Grants

Please also let us know if you will have institutional support for participation, accommodation and traveling costs or if you would want to be granted a scholarship. The earlier you send in your request and a preliminary budget for the needed expenses, the better the chances we will be able to work with you to secure scholarships! People with institutional placement in the Nordic/Baltic region are given priority in scholarships as we partner with Nordplus for this event.

30 April is the deadline for applying for an NSU grant/scholarship – see below for more information. Our final call for applications to the study circle is **May 15th 2024**. Please reach out and express your interest earlier if at all possible.

Who can participate?

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is open to all who want to engage in transdisciplinary and mutual learning under the values of equality and openness. You can be a student at bachelor's, master's, or doctoral level, and you can be a researcher, a scientist, an artist or work in a cultural or other third sector organization. Our study circle is explicitly open to people of all faiths. As a community investigating historical and living cosmologies, we are welcoming to Indigenous and artistic research with spiritual dimensions.

The NSU Summer sessions are events where you can **bring your whole family**. There is a special children's circle with activities and leaders who know all the Nordic languages and English that take care of your smaller family members while the study circle program is happening.

What do we offer?

First and foremost, we offer a platform for learning and collaboration.

For scholars, we plan for joint publications in open-access peer reviewed journals. And for artists and academics who want to collaborate, we will organise events where your works can be disseminated to the public. In our extended research network we are partnering up with forums like *aboagora* and Sigtunastiftelsen for presenting arts and science collaborations.

For students, we can offer: **5 ECTS points**. If you are an MA or PhD student, active participation in this Winter Symposium can afford you 5-7 ECTS points. If you further study at Åbo Akademi University (or any other Finnish university under the JOO sopimus) this event can be accounted for as the following course (TE00CL12 [Medieval Cosmologies and the Art of Sustainability for the Future](#), 5 sp) in the minor-subject [Social Justice and Sustainability](#) which can be taken through Åbo Akademi University.

We further offer the chance to learn Digital Humanities methods of working with and annotating historical texts, as well as the opportunity to connect with the vibrant Nordic Summer University; a one-of-a-kind, radically non-hierarchical, democratic, and community oriented institution of education and research.

Where?

The summer session will take place at the [Nordic Summer University](#) from the **29th of July - 5th of August 2024**, which will be held this year at [Løgumkloster, Denmark](#). Arrival is expected in the afternoon on the 29th and departure in the morning of the 5th.

Dates to keep in mind:

April 15th: Calls for proposals are shared

30 April: Deadline for applying for grant/scholarship.

1 May: Webshop opens – pay for registration, room/board etc.

15 May: Deadline to apply to the Summer Session 2024 (late applications may be accepted. So reach out to the coordinators of your study circle for more information). Preliminary general program of the Summer Session is published online

1 June: Deadline for registration through the webshop

Prices:

The price range for the full week includes membership, lodging, meals and the program.

- 175 EUR — grant/scholarship receivers - bed in a twin rooms. While applying you need to express your need for support.
 - 250 euros — children aged 4 to 12
 - 425 EUR — for those who bring their own tent. We will have a camping area.
 - 475 EUR — a bed in a glamping tent for 5 people.
 - 550 EUR — a bed in a twin/double room.
 - 675 EUR — single room.

 - Family room for 2 adults and 1 child - 1300 euros
 - Family room for 1 adult and 2 children - 1025 euros
 - Family room for 2 adults and 2 children - 1550 euros
 - Family room for 2 adults and 3 children - 1800 euros
- Bigger family rooms are usually available at different sizes and prices.
Children aged 0-4 are welcome free of charge.

Contact arrkom@nsuweb.org for detailed information.

Scholarship and grant program

Scholarship and grant applications are due **April 30th**.

- Scholarship: exclusively for Nordic/Baltic students

- Grant: inclusive for all other students and people in need, also non-Nordic participants.

If you would like to apply for a scholarship and/or grant, the relevant documents need to be sent to coordinators at the email praxis.social.imaginaries@gmail.com with the following:

Full name, e-mail and citizenship

Current employment/academic status

Number of NSU events attended so far (including both Winter and Summer Sessions)

Reasons for applying: Why should NSU give you the grant? Include an estimate for your travel costs to and from Denmark with public transportations.

Priority consideration will be given to:

Years and/or active participation in NSU

Strong reasons for need. E.g. low disposable income, or high travel costs when coming from the peripheral areas of the Nordic region, being an independent scholar, impaired physical fitness, family traveling with two or more children, or single parents traveling with one or more children, etc.

A typical day in the summer session

- 07:30-9:00 Breakfast
- 08:15-9:00 Morning Exercise
- 9:00-10.30 Study circle activities
- 10.30-10.45 Fika/Coffee
- 10.45-12.15 Study circle activities
- 12.15-13.45 Lunch
- 13.45-15.15 Study circle activities
- 15.15-15.30 Fika/Coffee
- 15.30-17.00 Keynote/NSU workshops, assemblies, meetings and discussion
- 18.00-19.30 Dinner
- From 19.30 Cultural Program

About our Study Circle

The Nordic Summer University study circle Praxis of Social Imaginaries: Cosmologies, Othering and Liminality invite all who are interested in joining our group to investigate the praxis of reading together, the praxis of listening and the praxis of telling stories. We welcome applications from researchers, scientists, and artists, as well as students at bachelor, master, or doctoral levels. As a community investigating historical and living cosmologies, we are welcoming to Indigenous as well as artistic researchers (and others) who engage with spiritual practices. Our study circle is open to people of all faiths.

About Our Approach to Transdisciplinary Research

In transdisciplinary research scholars create collaborations with artists and activists in ways in which all are equal partners in a joint endeavor to study and change complex problems. In interdisciplinary research, scholars come together with researchers from other fields than their own, in order to establish collaborations where complex phenomena can be approached from various angles at the same time. Both trans- and inter-disciplinary research requires time and in-depth work in order to become truly fruitful. This study circle wants to provide room for these kinds of processes. The central method toward that end is the reading of medieval traveling accounts. We follow European theological elites as they and their learned scholarly communities encounter "Others" on their borders as well as within their lands. We will also be studying the Indigenous epistemologies, relationships to lands, nature and cultures, and social change.

About Our Incorporation of Indigenous-centered Research Protocols

In alliance with the ethical guidelines of Indigenous research this study circle is guided by the principals of Respect, Responsibility, Reciprocity and Consent that are formulated in the imagineNATIVE document ON-SCREEN PROTOCOLS & PATHWAYS: A Media Production Guide to Working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities, Cultures, Concepts and Stories (2019) as well as the OFELAS - The Pathfinder Guidelines for Responsible Filmmaking with Sámi Culture and People (2021) by The Sámi Film & Culture Advisory Board. In the latter it is specifically articulated that culture, aesthetics, music, language, stories, histories and traditional cultural expressions are not things that can be the personal property of individual people nor given away as open resources. Rather, stories, languages, people, connection to space and place as well as specific crafts or arts are all interconnected and belong to a community which also includes ancestors and non-human kin (both spirits and animals). One of the aims of this study circle is thus to explore how we can approach historical documents and transdisciplinary research that respects Indigenous epistemological practices and wherein traditional forms of seeking knowledge are given space, time and resources.

The reading material at the center of our work is filled with depictions of cultures, peoples, lands and religious, artistic, culinary and sacred practices from times and places different from our own. Questions we envision will come up during the sessions are: What happens when we practice standing, sensing and listening with another in our explorations? What can we learn from encountering worldviews and scientific perspectives different from our own? What are the various media through which we can engage with texts and stories written hundreds of years before our time? What do we do if and when we find passages that are disturbing to us? How do we remain ethically grounded in practices that open for dialogue and critical scrutiny yet do not shut down or close off the possibilities of learning from what is uncomfortable? And how do we do all of this together with people from various different fields of study and cultural backgrounds that also have their own perspectives and contributions to how we can learn and explore together? These are some of the thematic questions we will pursue through-out this study cycle.

Ongoing research

In parallel with the different symposia of this study circle ethnographic fieldwork and artistic research is happening within the project ***Praxis of Social Imaginaries - a Theo-artistic Intervention for Transdisciplinary Research***. The aim of that study is to follow and examine the processes of trans-disciplinary research that arise from the circle meetings as well as investigate the texts through transdisciplinary methods of engagement. Participation in the events of the study circle does not require participation in the ongoing research. However, due to GDPR regulations we want all the participants to be aware that research is conducted in collaboration with these events. We will thus also ask all participants to sign agreements on [data collection](#). For those that are further interested in being collaborators in the ongoing investigation on trans-disciplinary research processes, [informed consent](#) agreements will be part of the procedures.

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We want to Thank [Otto A. Malm foundation](#), [Nordplus](#), [Gustaf Packalén Minnesfond](#) and [Åbo Akademi University Foundation](#) for supporting the research and events of this study circle.

Contact us with questions and send your application to:

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<https://www.nsuweb.org/study-circles/circle-3-the-praxis-of-social-imaginaries-cosmologies-othering-and-liminality/>

<https://scalar.usc.edu/works/praxis-of-social-imaginaries/index>