

Architectural Ethnography

Ageing in the City



A Day in the Life of the Van Speijk Elevator (video still), by Anna Halleran, Jiang Zhu, Youyou Yang, and Zedi van Oostrom (Architectural Ethnography Spring 2024)

Tutors:

Nelson Mota
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Code	AR0106
Credits	5 ECTS
Location	The Hague
Excursion	Yes*
Costs	€30

* fieldwork in The Hague (2/3 visits)

The “Architectural Ethnography” elective explores how spatial organization, daily life patterns, and social dynamics shape buildings and public spaces. Using methods from anthropology and architecture, participants examine connections between space, place, and people in urban settings, applying architectural ethnography to uncover social and spatial practices often overlooked by traditional mapping.

In Spring 2025, the course will focus on Ageing in the City. With urbanization and population aging as defining trends, cities face rising challenges in creating age-friendly environments. The active participation, health, and security of older adults are essential for a sustainable urban future, yet many still face barriers to social and economic inclusion, impacting their quality of life.

Focusing on age inclusivity, students will study the experiences of older residents from diverse backgrounds in The Hague.

Through ethnographic research and spatial analysis, they'll explore how urban and housing design can promote or hinder age-friendly environments, identifying factors that enhance accessibility, participation, and well-being for older adults. The course consists of two phases: Observations and Narratives. In Phase 1, students conduct auto-ethnography and gather field data. In Phase 2, they develop a multisensory narrative and reflect on their findings in a research logbook.