

A!

A! Walks Summer Course 2025

Co-creating and experimenting with
walk-based learning

Space21 16/7/2025
Janne Halme & Zhuoyan Xu



Course Concept

- A! Walks is a summer course based on the concept of “walking.” We organize ca. 12 themed walks on and around the Aalto campus
- encouraging students to gain interdisciplinary inspiration
- through interaction with the environment.

The course aims to:

- Break the boundaries of the classroom to experiment on other ways of learning by moving, observing, sensing, and conversing outdoors
- Combine themes of nature, urban life, technology, and culture
- Ideate, test and develop meaningful walk-based learning contents and activities that complement theoretical studies
- Document each exploration through sound and visual content

Why we need to walk?

"Can we truly develop sustainable technologies and ways of thinking while being disconnected from nature?"

1. Walking is not only a physical activity — it is also one of the oldest and most effective ways of learning and communication:

- observing, sensing, thinking, and talking while walking — this is what the human animal has evolved doing

2. All our work, be it **science, engineering, business, art, design, architecture**

- happens in nature, uses nature, affects nature, and is nature
 - How to conduct our work mindful about this?

3. Getting out of our brain and using all our senses for research and learning

- Expands our field and ways of 'knowing'
- Exercises our curiosity skills and ways of connecting with nature
- Broadens our understanding of the nature and how our actions shape it

From Sound to Insight: Using AI to Process Walking- Based Field Recordings

Step 1: Sound Collection

- Record ambient sounds, conversations, and reflections during themed walks

Step 2: AI Transcription

Use AI tools (e.g. Whisper, Otter.ai, ChatGPT voice input)

- Convert audio into clean, readable text

Step 3: Content Curation with AI

- Identify key ideas, recurring themes, or questions (Aalto AI assistant)
- AI-assisted summarization, tagging, or concept mapping

Step 4: Creative Applications

- Use curated content in audio essays, podcasts, zines, or visual storytelling
- Explore new formats of interdisciplinary learning and expression

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Pocket-Sized Pro Audio



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Welcome to the Aalto AI Assistant

Optimize your workflow with Aalto AI Assistant.

-  [Open Aalto Prompt Book](#)
-  Spark creative ideas
-  Break down complex information
-  Boost your productivity
-  Refine your writing



Course Format

- **1 ECTS (passed/failed)**
- **1.5 months (July-August)**
- **12 themed walks (2 per week) on different topics guided by**
 - a) Invited guests
 - b) Student teams (course participants)
- **4 Meetups at Space21**
- **6 Assignments**
 - Reflective audio essays / walk notes
- **1 Walk design experiment**
 - Design and guide one learning walk activity in a team of 2-3 students



Walk Topic Ideas

(tentative, to be co-created)

Design Challenge:

How can your academic discipline learning be enhanced and meaningfully enriched by a walking-based learning activity?

1. Perceiving Nature
2. Ocean and the City
3. Herbs and Healing
4. Urban Drinking Water
5. Sunlight and Energy
6. Forests and Building Materials
7. Art and Employment
8. Birds and Urban Ecology
9. Futures Under Construction
10. Berry Picking
11. Fungal Ecology
12. Final Gathering with Dinner and Sauna

How to join the course?

Course Schedule: July to August 2025

Location: Otaniemi campus and surrounding areas

Format: On-site walks + creative outputs + audio recordings

Credits: 1–3 ECTS (*)

Registration: Visit the A! Walks official website

Opening Info Session: July 16th, August 1st at 15:00, Space 21 — with ice cream and strawberries!

Contact: Responsible teacher: Janne Halme (janne.halme@aalto.fi)

Course assistant: Emma Xu (zhuoyan.xu@aalto.fi)



Web link



Telegram group

(*) 1 ECTS for July-August summer course
+ 1-2 ECTS for a personal project developing new walk activities