

First-Year Seminar Course

Amsterdam at 750: Exploring Culture, Society, and Policy in the Dutch Capital

Overview: Join us on an immersive journey through the vibrant city of Amsterdam as it celebrates its 750th anniversary. This seminar will delve into the rich tapestry of Dutch culture, society, and policy, offering a unique perspective guided by a native Dutch academic (who celebrated Amsterdam's 700th in 1975!). Through a series of virtual trips, classroom discussions, readings, and multimedia resources, participants will gain an understanding of Amsterdam's past, present, and future.

Key Stops:

1. **Coffee Shop Culture:** Gain insights into Dutch society's approach to drugs as we examine the website of a coffee shop, exploring the nuanced policies and social dynamics at play.
2. **Artistic Heritage:** Explore the iconic Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum online, delving into Holland's illustrious art history and its influence on global culture.
3. **Financial Insights:** Visit the Nederlandsche Bank, the Dutch central bank (virtually), to gain valuable insights into European central banking practices and their impact on the global economy.
4. **Educational Contrasts:** Compare and contrast the American and Dutch educational systems, highlighting the differences in teaching, student experiences, and societal values.

In-Class Discussions: Engage in lively discussions on a range of topics including Dutch policies on finance, education, art, health, and crime. Through visual material, texts, and online resources, participants will gather the necessary information to contribute meaningfully to these interchanges.

Culminating Essay: Cap off the seminar with an essay that addresses the overarching question: What does Amsterdam's 750-year history reveal about its cultural and societal landscape? You will draw upon your take-aways from the course to craft a well-informed paper.

Language of Instruction: All readings, lectures, and discussions will be conducted in English.

Course Logistics:

- **Frequency:** TR 1:45am-3:15pm
- **Format:** In-person discussions and writing assignments
- **Requirements:** Open to any student with a keen interest in Dutch culture and society.