



CIEE Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Course name:	Contemporary Dutch Social Policy
Course number:	NLST 3001 NETU
Programs offering course:	Amsterdam Session III Contemporary Netherlands Studies
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3.00
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Summer 2019

Course Description

The Netherlands and specifically Amsterdam are known worldwide for their liberalism. In October 2013 Russell Shorto's 'biography' of Amsterdam *The world's most liberal city* was published in which he argues Amsterdam is the founder of the modern world. When you ask tourists and visitors from abroad they usually have the image of a country where everything is possible: drugs and prostitution are legal, euthanasia and abortion are very common. During this course the students will question these prejudices and learn the actual facts in light of these Dutch social policies.

The course seeks to accomplish this through lectures combined with guided site visits of organizations that deal with the social policy topics and issues covered in the lectures. In the lectures, social and legal policy will be discussed as it affects certain groups, e.g., prostitutes, drug addicts, and immigrants.

Themes to be covered in the course

- Drugs
- Prostitution
- Gender and sexuality
- Euthanasia and abortion
- Migration
- Housing
- Dutch justice system

These specific themes have been chosen to reflect the distinctive social policies for which the Netherlands is known. The underlying theme throughout the course is the issue of social tolerance. The key question is whether these policies are successful and what tensions exist between theory and practice. The background, history, and development for these policies will be analyzed. The course thus moves from the micro level i.e., the actual social issue at hand, to the macro level, where the interrelatedness of the issues is studied. For example, how do immigration policies affect housing policies and vice versa.

Explanation behind the choice of themes

- Drugs

The “soft” drugs policy of the Netherlands is known worldwide for its controversial nature. On the one hand, the drug trade is more regulated because the coffee shops are licensed and sell small quantities of soft drugs, such as marijuana, and therefore minimize contact with the criminal circuit. On the other hand, the policy attracts drug tourists from all over the world, tainting the image of Amsterdam as a drug haven. One of the questions students will ask is whether soft and hard drugs should be legalized and whether drug addicts are criminals or rather, patients in need of treatment.

- Prostitution

Prostitution is another controversial issue associated with the Netherlands. Many tourists are familiar with the Red Light District in Amsterdam since prostitution in the Netherlands is a legalized profession and a regulated industry. Here the reoccurring question can be raised as to whether regulation has been effective. Is the sex industry a cover up for a sex-slave trade when considering that many Thai and Eastern Europeans have been lured to the Netherlands under false pretenses and are forced into prostitution?

The guided site visit for this theme is to the Prostitution Information Center (PIC). This center, founded by a former prostitute, provides information and resources about prostitution to the general public. Special tours are organized in the Red Light District in which visitors are given the opportunity to talk with prostitutes about the sex industry.

- Gender and Sexuality

For some Amsterdam is known as the gay capital of Europe. The Netherlands is the forerunner in allowing same-sex marriages. The issue of gender becomes important when talking about homosexuals or transsexuals. What are the problems facing these groups for example in adoption issues? A guest speaker from the VU will inform students how the Netherlands deal with sex affirmation surgery.

Students will learn more about the actual transsexual operation as well as hear about the experiences of someone who went through the operation. Furthermore, students will get the opportunity to speak to several experts on gay and transgender issues (both on the medical and social activist perspective). A guest speaker from the Dutch LGBT association will discuss who Dutch schools discuss this topic.

- Euthanasia & Abortion

Two very controversial topics are touched upon towards the end of the course. The Netherlands was the first country in the world to legalize euthanasia. How do the Dutch deal with this topic? The Netherlands has one of the lowest abortion rates in the world. To what extend does sexual education play a role? We will discuss how the Dutch policy relates to U.S. policy.

- Migration

Amsterdam acts as a magnet for all sorts of segments of society. Not only is it a magnet for gender specific groups but also a melting pot of ethnic groups that are each trying to coexist or integrate alongside the Dutch. Currently there is a tendency in Dutch politics



towards stigmatizing and frowning upon these immigrant groups. The term used in the Netherlands for its society is multicultural. But how multicultural and integrated is this society? Has multiculturalism failed?

- Housing

The Netherlands is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Therefore, it's essential during this course to cover the theme of housing social policies. Students will explore the challenges that are faced especially in Amsterdam; from historical city planning in the Golden Age and its typical canal houses to more recent housing issues such as the squatter and anti-squatter movements and how they came to be.

- Justice System

This theme touches on the rest of the themes covered in the class. Why does the Netherlands need to close prisons due to a lack of criminals? There will be a guest lecture by a parole officer who will inform students about the rehabilitation of inmates.

The last session of the course will be a summary of all the themes discussed in order to help the students understand how these social issues are interrelated. Time will be given for questions about any of the themes or regarding the final paper

Summary:

- The Dutch Contemporary Social Policy analyzes specific themes within Dutch Society dealing with social policy issues and practice
- The combination of lectures and guided site visits of organizations related to the themes of the course will allow students to study how social policy plays out in practice. Students will develop a sociological and anthropological perspective of their surroundings and develop greater social consciousness.
- The six themes covered are: Drugs, Prostitution, Gender and Sexuality, Migration, Euthanasia, and Abortion
- For each theme there will be an introductory lecture. Some of these lectures will be supplemented with guest speakers who are professionals in that specific field. This may also include a group guided site visit or group project.
- At the end of the course a final research paper of 10-12 pages will be handed in
- Recommended credit: 3 US credits



Learning Objectives

- Students will gain greater knowledge and understanding of the Netherlands and will increase their social awareness of the Amsterdam community in which they are living.
- Students will “see” their surroundings from a sociological and anthropological point of view, and to examine where policy and practice are working well and where they may be less successful.
- Through the guided site visits, students will have the opportunity to form their own opinions about the effectiveness of the implementation and practice of these social policies

Course Prerequisites

No prerequisites

Methods of Instruction

The course will run for 4 weeks, meeting each day and will be divided into units (Drugs & Prostitution, Gender & Sexuality, Euthanasia & Abortion and Migration & Justice). The first week will involve a general overview of Dutch society (political system, history, Amsterdam the city, etc.) in order to provide a broader context in which students can better understand the themes at hand. Each unit following the introduction will focus on two specific themes related to contemporary Dutch culture and social policy with specific readings related to each topic. In turn, these themes will be reflected with guest speakers and in guided site visits.

After each unit, students have time to decide which topic they would like to present on more in depth at the end of the three weeks in a 15 minute presentation. In the afternoons and evenings, students are given time to study and prepare their presentations and final papers on their theme of choice. At the end of the course, all students must have completed a 15 minute presentation on one of the themes and a related final paper (10-12 pages). The presentation should explain the research and hypotheses of the final paper.

Assessment and Final Grade

Participation: 20%
Presentation: 20%
Assignment 1: 15%
Assignment 2: 15%
Final Paper: 30%

Course Requirements

**Participation (20%)**

Each student is required to attend all sessions of the course and to participate actively in class discussions and during guided site visits.

Presentation (20%)

Students must conduct a 15 minute presentation on one of the themes discussed and may use other audio visual equipment such as a film if this a way the student is used to expressing himself/herself. Examples of topics that can be covered within the presentation are the effectiveness of the policies or the effect they have on the image of Amsterdam.

The course encourages students to do presentations and papers through the eyes of the discipline in which they are majoring. For example, if a student is discussing the theme of drugs: the sociology major could approach the issue by looking at the reasons that addicts as a social group resort to drug abuse. The psychology major could approach this by looking at the effects of drug abuse on the individual and the psychological effects.

Assignments (15% for each assignment)

During the course students must complete two extra assignments (in groups of three or four students). For this assignment you have to include at least two sources/articles on which you have based your questions/research. The assignment must be 3-4 pages each:

Assignment 1 (15%)

- Visit a gay venue with your group in Amsterdam and write your impressions related to the social policies regarding (homo) sexuality and gender in the Netherlands.

Assignment 2 (15%)

- With your group, conduct several interviews in Amsterdam and other Dutch cities about the social policies in the Netherlands. Do the social policies we discuss in class, reflect in the Dutch people's perspective?

All findings will be discussed in class.

Final Paper (30%)

The final paper will consist of a 10-12 page paper. This paper must be an in depth analysis of the tensions encountered within the social policies discussed in the course. All papers are research papers and must therefore have proper annotation, and must be double spaced.

All papers must include:

- A title
 - Your name, date, name lecturer
 - Page numbers
 - Notes and literature
 - An introduction
 - A conclusion
- The deadline of a first lead for the final paper is TBA



- The deadline of the final paper is the last day of the program in hard copy.

Attendance, class participation and classroom policies

Each student is expected to attend all sessions of the course and to participate actively in class discussions. Attendance will be taken every class session by the course instructor. Absences will be penalized according to the CIEE Amsterdam attendance policy outlined below:

1 absence = allowed

2 absences = extra assignment (1 page in consultation with the instructor)

3 absences = 10 points (out of 100) are deducted from the student's final grade

4 absences = the student fails the course

- If a student comes in 15-30 minutes late to class, this counts as a ½ absence.
- At all times, the student needs to inform the instructor – before the start of class – in case he or she will incur an absence. Failure to notify the teacher in advance will result in an extra assignment.
- Note about all assignments: Late assignments will be marked down by 10 points (out of 100) for every day the assignment is late. Assignments that are more than 3 days (72 hours) late will not be accepted.

Students who make active connections to the concepts from the reading materials in class discussions, students who actively ask questions, and students who actively reflect on out-of-class experiences in class will receive extra points for participation. Participation points will be deducted when students do not participate in class or have not read the assigned reading materials before coming to class.

Since we will be discussing culturally sensitive issues in class, the classroom must be a safe space in which students are able to express their opinions openly. Discriminatory comments or language of any kind will not be tolerated.

Laptops are allowed, but only when they are used to take notes or to look up information directly related to the class discussion. The instructor reserves the right to prohibit laptop use in case this distracts other students or this privilege is abused.

CIEE Grade Conversion Scale and Rubric

Your performance in this course will be graded in accordance with the CIEE course grading scale and rubric adopted for all CIEE courses, which you can access in your Canvas course page under Files.

Weekly Schedule (may vary due to circumstances)

Week 1

- Introduction: the Dutch political system and pillarization
- Drug policy + site visit to a rehabilitation center
- Prostitution (1)

Week 2:

- Prostitution (2) + site visit to the Red Light District
- Gender and sexuality
- Abortion

Week 3:

- Euthanasia
- (Im)Migration and social integration

Week 4:

- Law and justice
- Housing
- Student presentations

Readings

The course will use a compilation of articles and statistics taken from the following texts and other journalistic sources (this is called a reader). The articles will be photocopied and sent to you via Wettransfer. The main text for the course however, *Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands* (Emmeline Besamusca & Jaap Verheul, 2010) is approximately 30 Euros and can be purchased at a local bookstore, Athenaeum. There are several used copies available at the CIEE office each semester for 20 Euro.

Some of the texts used for the reader include:

Cultural Heritage in the Netherlands, (Ministry of Cultural Affairs)

Dealing with the Dutch (Vossestein, J. 1998)

The Dutch Seaborne Empire (C.R. Boxter 1990)

The Holland Handbook, (Nuffic) 2005

Focus on the Netherlands, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009)

The Dutch, I presume? Icons of the Netherlands (de Rooij, 2006)

Further readings:

Shorto, Russell. *Amsterdam. A history of the world's most liberal city*. New York: Random House Incorporated, 2013.

Contents of the reader (will be sent through Wettransfer)

Introduction classes	Source
On images and stereotypes & Different other articles	Dealing with the Dutch – Jacob Vossestein
In the beginning	Only in Holland, Only the Dutch – Marc Resch
History	Focus on the Netherlands
Political system	Dealing with the Dutch – Jacob Vossestein
The Dutch, I presume? & A sea of succes	The Dutch, I presume? – Martijn de Rooi
Final Cut	The New Yorker – I. Buruma
Meet the chilly, passionate Dutch	Han van der Horst
Regions versus Randstad	Dealing with the Dutch – Jacob Vossestein
Going Dutch	New York Times - Russell Shorto

Drugs	Source
FAQ Drugs - A guide to Dutch Policy	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
The consequences of pragmatism	Rob Schoof
The liberal society	The Dutch, I presume? – Martijn de Rooi
The Dutch way of managing the unmanageable	NRC Handelsblad - Marc Chavannes
Why the Dutch don't use drugs	De Gids. Misunderstanding the Netherlands – Arjen Mulder
Inside Holland's 'Half Baked' Pot Policy	CBS News – Brian Montopoli

Prostitution	Source
Dutch Policy on Prostitution	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Why Amsterdam's Prostitution Laws are Still Failing to Protect or Empower Women	International Business Times - Lily Rae
The Audacity of Tolerance: A Critical Analysis of Legalized Prostitution in Amsterdam's Red Light District	Humanity in Action - Joshua Cruz , Swaan van Iterson

Sexuality & Gender	Source
Conformist nonchalance	The Dutch way of managing the unmanageable – Marc Chavannes
FAQ Same-sex marriage	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
When Women Become Men at Wellesley	The New York Times Magazine – Ruth Padawer

Migration	Source
Allochtonen	Dealing with the Dutch – Jacob Vossestein
Focus Migration – Netherlands	Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI)
Conclusion	Immigrant integration. The Dutch case – Hans Vermeulen and Rinus Pennix
The egalitarian city: images of Amsterdam	Understanding Amsterdam – Susan Fainstein
Where St. Nicholas Has His Black Pete(s), Charges of Racism Follow	International New York Times – John Tagliabue

Abortion & Euthanasia	Source
Origins of egalitarianism	Dealing with the Dutch – Jacob Vossestein
Q&A Abortion in the Netherlands	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
FAQ Euthanasia 2010	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
A Chronicle of Dutch Euthanasia	International Herald Tribune – Laura Höflinger
The case for starting sex education in kindergarten	

Useful Websites

All websites are in English.

www.euro.eu.int

www.koninklijkhuis.nl

www.CBS.nl

www.minbuza.nl/english

www.coc.nl

www.IAmsterdam.com

www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/The-Netherlands.html

Website of the European Union with lots of information

Site on the Dutch monarchy, its organization and its kings and queens

Facts and figures on the Netherlands

Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the policy of the Netherlands

Concise information of the Dutch gay association

Information on Amsterdam. Agenda with (free) activities, background information on the city.

Lots of information and facts on the Netherlands, including history, geography and politics.