



# Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

## Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

# Nudge: Influencing Behavior

Course Code	E_MFDM_NIB
Credits	6
Period	P2
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	School of Business and Economics
Course Coordinator	dr. L. Anik
Examiner	dr. L. Anik
Teaching Staff	F. Krywuczky, mr. J.P. Butler, dr. L. Anik
Teaching method(s)	Seminar, Instruction course, Lecture

## Course Objective

Throughout this course, we will:

- Practice what it means to be a behavioral scientist;
- Develop the capacity to critically read and understand academic literature and translate academic research to practically relevant outcomes;
- Identify new trends and paradigms and explore key concepts, theories, tools and strategies to tackle different business and societal issues;
- Experiment with a range of levers that can influence consumer behavior in unexpected ways and at efficient cost;
- Design novel and impactful interventions to change and improve behavior;
- Evaluate the ethicality of their ideas and interventions;
- Design field experiments and evaluate their results to develop effective and novel business strategies;
- Develop a deeper understanding of the human condition, including the forces that impact conscious and unconscious decision-making and a livelier curiosity about how its irrationalities, sensitivities and deviations can inform your actions;
- Establish a competitive advantage: the ability to predict consumer responses and create value by making more insightful societal and business decisions across different contexts and industries.

## Course Content

Can eating avocado toast set you back financially? What is one question you can ask on a first date to figure out if they are the one for you? Could rain on Election Day change your vote? Can betting against yourself help you keep your resolutions? Can trusting your gut improve your health? If questions like these about human behavior keep you up at night or if you would like acquire a savvy about how asking such questions can help you develop and evaluate strategies that will benefit consumers and citizens alike and enrich the marketplace and the society, join me in Nudge: Influencing Behavior. Nudging is the art of subtly influencing people to change behaviors to serve societal and commercial goals such as reducing the number of phone calls to helpdesks, cutting down on energy use, reducing pollution, stimulating healthy behaviors and so on. In order to design and implement effective nudges, we need to understand how people process information and make decisions, and identify how they deviate from the "optimal" choices that they would make if they were fully rational and selfish. In this course, we will focus on understanding the nature, causes and consequences of these deviations. We will discuss the systematic biases in decision making and how they impact the citizens and business alike across a range of contexts. You will learn about key theories, concepts, tools, frameworks and strategies to tackle these biases and align societal and business practices with human behaviors. This is a dynamic course that will offer creative challenges including but not limited to developing a nudge to help a client, and designing and testing persuasion techniques to influence and improve behaviors for the better (both for the individual as well as for organizations and communities).

## Additional Information Teaching Methods

(in-person) classroom discussions and tutorials, (in-person and online) assignments

## Method of Assessment

Individual exam – individual assessment

## Entry Requirements

You need to have taken Judgment & Decision Making (course from same minor) Furthermore, this course is designed for those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of new trends in the marketplace and aspiring to change (nudge) consumer behavior in order to help customers lead healthier, happier and more productive lives. Bring your intuitions to meet the latest paradigms, tools and strategies from consumer behavior, behavioral economics, sociology and social psychology. My ultimate goal is to move, motivate and mobilize you through a rich, pragmatic, thoughtful, and humane course. Course prerequisites include risk appetite, curiosity in the human condition and willingness to believe in magic.

## Literature

Academic articles, managerial articles, mini cases and other relevant materials

Specifically, you will need the following two books:

- Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. R. (2021). Nudge (The Final Edition). Yale University Press.
- Cialdini, R. B. (2021). Influence, New and Expanded: The Psychology of Persuasion. HarperCollins.

Additional literature (e.g., research articles) will be communicated in the Course Manual and on Canvas.

## Additional Information Target Audience

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

As a student, you are expected to attend the classes and tutorials (mandatory) and take an active role as learners because the exchange of ideas and discussions are core to the learning experience. You are expected to be responsible and accountable not only for doing your individual work but also for contributing to the learning and growth of your classmates. As instructors, we will create a safe, kind, warm and welcoming environment to foster such connections and expect that you show up - physically, mentally, psychologically - to push the discussions forward. This class is not suitable for those, who want to sit back and be a one-way recipient of information. Rather, you are expected to bring and contribute to the knowledge and skills, deepen the collective thinking, and move the conversation forward.

We have designed the assessments to reflect this pedagogy. Anything we discuss during the class discussions and tutorials (what is included in the slides as well as whatever we discuss that might not be included in the deck) as well as any required preparation (e.g., readings, exercises, videos, surveys) are all fair game. In other words, attending and actively participating in the class discussions and tutorials as well as thorough preparation are necessary to do well in the final exam.

## Additional Information

Part of this course builds on the course Judgment & Decision Making.

## Explanation Canvas

All course information will be on Canvas

## Recommended background knowledge

Course prerequisites include background knowledge on consumer behavior and more generally, academic method and thinking as well as risk appetite, curiosity in the human condition and willingness to believe in magic.