



# 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](#).

# Experiment Minor Communication Science

Course Code	S_EM C
Credits	6
Period	P3
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	Dutch / English
Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences
Course Coordinator	L.S. Mastenbroek MSc
Examiner	L.S. Mastenbroek MSc
Teaching Staff	L.S. Mastenbroek MSc, drs. J.L. Arendsen MA
Teaching method(s)	Study Group, Lecture

## Course Objective

After completion of this course, the student is able to ...

- Critically reflect on the effectiveness of persuasive messages;
- Describe concepts relevant for experimental research;
- Apply good and responsible research practices;
- Design, program and conduct an experimental study;
- Collect, analyze and interpret quantitative experimental data;
- Write a short academic paper based on experimental data.

## Course Content

Organizations often use messages to influence people's minds or promote certain behaviors. For instance, marketers try to make consumers feel good about their brand so they will buy the brand, politicians try to convince the public to support policy measures, game designers want to entertain players so they continue playing, and public health organizations may want to promote exercise behavior. Persuasive messages can come in many shapes and forms, such as digital ads on social media, speeches, video trailers, or leaflets. Sometimes the content of these messages is relatively complex (e.g., a flyer presenting many arguments), while at other times the content is relatively simple (e.g., one visual, slogan or a simple nudge). Usually several ideas are put forward when designing a message, but what idea will work best? Testing your idea helps to determine if your message will be effective in changing people's mind or behavior. While in business this is often referred to as a/b-testing, scientists call this an experiment. Mastering the knowledge and skills to conduct a good experiment is essential for communication professionals.

In this project, you will work in teams on designing and conducting an experiment to test the effectiveness of a message. Using information and theories from previous (communication science) courses, you will then develop a research idea (what would you like to change; what should your message target; what should your message content contain and look like?) and turn this into a testable question. You will experimentally test the effectiveness of your message and learn to correctly report the results.

## Additional Information Teaching Methods

Introductory lecture, workgroup meetings (twice a week), and instruction video's.

## Method of Assessment

Assignments.

## Literature

Literature from the course 'Marketing- and Persuasive Communication' (bachelor- and minor program, period 1) is used. In addition, students will search for literature themselves that is needed to answer their research question.

## Additional Information Target Audience

Minor Communication Science.

## Additional Information

The statistical program SPSS will be used. Prior knowledge of SPSS is not necessary. The program can be purchased for a small price via Surfspot.

## Recommended background knowledge

This course will build on information from the course 'Marketing- and Persuasive Communication' (communication science bachelor- and minor program, period 1). Knowledge about this content is preferred (but not mandatory).