



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](#).

Amsterdam Jewish Culture

Course Code	L_GCBAALG007
Credits	6
Period	P2
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Humanities
Course Coordinator	prof. dr. J.V. Roitman
Examiner	prof. dr. J.V. Roitman
Teaching Staff	prof. dr. J.V. Roitman
Teaching method(s)	Seminar

Course Objective

At the end of the course the student will have gained insight into the historical development, internal dynamics, positioning within the city, and the image-formation of the Jewish culture and population of Amsterdam from 1600 up until today. The student will be familiar with the most important sources, theories and the historiography on Amsterdam - and Dutch - Jewish history; and with the world famous Amsterdam Jewish heritage institutions. The student will be able to analyse historical and actual Jewish spaces in and around the city, from local and transnational Jewish perspectives, as well as be able to contextualize, compare, and contrast Amsterdam and Dutch Jewish history within larger trends in (Jewish) and minority histories.

Course Content

Amsterdam developed into the largest Jewish metropolis of Europe in the eighteenth century and therefore provides an interesting case to study the urban and cultural history of the Jews in Europe - and worldwide. The image of Amsterdam as a 'Jewish City' – Mokum – has since become strongly connected to the city's identity.

This interdisciplinary course will study the historical development of the city's Jewish communities. The course will focus on (1) the Sephardi 'Portuguese Nation': the Iberian conversos who settled in Amsterdam around 1600, "reclaimed" or, in some cases, converted, to Judaism and constructed a complex identity; (2) the Ashkenazi 'High German Nation': the quickly developing migrant community of Central and East European Jews; (3) processes of segregation, concentration and integration; (4) process of identification as part and apart of Dutch society; (5) transnational connections through European, trans-Atlantic and colonial networks; (6) the impact of the Holocaust and the reconstruction of postwar Jewish life.

Excursions and visits to Jewish heritage institutions (Jewish Historical Museum, Portuguese Synagogue, Ets Haim Library, Jewish Cemetery, walking tour of old "Jewish quarter", etc.) are an integral part of the program and students can expect some extra costs to be incurred for admission to and travel to and from some institutions and places.

Additional Information Teaching Methods

Seminar, including oral presentations, and excursions. Attendance is mandatory. More than three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.

Method of Assessment

Podcast (25%), attendance (15%), and final written paper (60%)

Literature

- Blom, J. C. H., Renate G. Fuks-Mansfeld, and I. Schöffner. The History of the Jews in the Netherlands. Translated by Arnold J. Pomerans and Erica Pomerans. Oxford: Littman Library, 2002
- Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.

Additional Information Target Audience

Exchange and Dutch students interested in Amsterdam, urban history, Jews and Judaism, cultural history/ studies and art and architectural history. This course is also suited for students of the Master Heritage Studies (Erfgoed); they can follow the seminars and excursions and add their own research as 'Individuele Verdieping'.

Additional Information

This course is part of the minor 'European Urban and Cultural History'

Recommended background knowledge

A good grasp of English and some background in (European) History and/or Religion would be helpful. It is a research intensive course. Students without a background in humanities and who are not experienced with individual self-guided research and writing should be cautious in enrolling for this course.