



# 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](#).

# Towards Better Care and Welfare: Let's Stick Together

Course Code	S_TBCW
Credits	6
Period	P4
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Social Sciences
Course Coordinator	prof. dr. M.I. Broese Van Groenou
Examiner	prof. dr. M.I. Broese Van Groenou
Teaching Staff	dr. A.C. Vanajan, prof. dr. M.I. Broese Van Groenou, dr. S.S. Klokgieters, dr. D.B.D. Bannink, L.D. Hartveld MSc, K. Kee
Teaching method(s)	Study Group, Lecture

## Course Objective

Issues around care and welfare are often complex, including social inequality, conflicting values and expectations, and are therefore often referred to as wicked problems. In this course, we will learn about the main concepts and theories on care and welfare in the different social science disciplines (sociology, organisation science, public administration). We will discuss how integrating these perspectives might result in a better understanding of the care and welfare field. We will apply this theoretical knowledge and work together in smaller groups of students on solving a real-life issue in the domain of care and welfare using an interdisciplinary approach.

### Knowledge and understanding

Students will have basic knowledge and understanding of:

- Relevant concepts and theoretical perspectives on care and welfare within Sociology, Organisation Sciences, and Public Administration.
- The nature and complexity of current wicked problems related to care and welfare.

### Analyse and understanding

Students will be able to:

- Use different disciplinary perspectives in a team in their analysis of a current societal wicked problem related to care and welfare, e.g., loneliness, care shortages on the labour market.
- Describe the value of the different perspectives for the understanding of this wicked problem.

### Making judgements

Students will be able to:

- Judge how disciplines other than their own contribute to the analyses and understanding of wicked problems, and what the main differences between the approaches of the different disciplines are.

### Communication

Students will be able to:

- Communicate orally and in writing (in English) about an intervention that includes different disciplinary angles and explain how the participating disciplines contribute(d) to the (development of the) intervention.

### Learning skills

Students will be able to:

- Collaborate with students from different disciplines and actively integrate their perspectives in the design and development of an intervention.
- Develop a policy report or intervention (in English) by considering multiple disciplinary views, and to pinpoint implications for the implementation of the proposed solution or intervention.

## Course Content

Loneliness among the young, shortages in care personnel, and a shortage of blood for those that need it: how do we solve these complex issues of care and welfare in our societies? Solidarity and cooperation with others are vital to keep organisations and societies together, but making sure that people receive the care and support they need is a challenging feat. On different levels, individuals, communities and organisations, and welfare state arrangements in the domain of care and welfare are crucial vehicles in bringing about this solidarity. Societies and its citizens can face challenges when ensuring care and welfare in an individualised and digitalised society. Also, the reforms of collective arrangements in welfare states cause a shift towards more private responsibility for care and welfare. These shifts take place in times when, due to social demographic developments like ageing and migration, more citizens are in need of care and welfare services and citizens face inequality in access to and availability of such services. This makes costs and responding to demands increasingly difficult and unsustainable. In such a rapidly changing context, many stakeholders including policy makers, care organisation managers and care professionals face the challenge of how to make the care and welfare system sustainable, just, and targeted at the right people. Many problems are too large for one organisation, scientific discipline and profession to tackle by themselves. Instead, knowledge sharing among experts with different scientific disciplinary backgrounds, and cooperation between different stakeholders is much needed to safeguard the welfare and care of our citizens now and in the future.

## Additional Information Teaching Methods

Interactive plenary sessions, debate sessions, workgroups and sessions In this course, the primary aim is to work and cooperate in interdisciplinary teams on a real-life project related to one of the 'wicked problems' in the care & welfare field (e.g., staff shortages, loneliness, blood donation). These projects will be introduced by societal stakeholders (e.g., Sanquin and Actiz). Working together in interdisciplinary teams will allow for better and more comprehensive analyses of an issue in the care and welfare domain and contribute to the development of a more effective intervention or policies to contribute to solving the issue. At the end of the course, the proposed policy report and intervention will be presented to the societal stakeholder.

## Method of Assessment

Group assessments (presentation and paper), and individual evaluation of group members participation

## Additional Information Target Audience

2nd year bachelor students Faculty of Social Sciences.  
Exchange students from social science-related programmes.

## Custom Course Registration

It is only possible to take one of the courses "Beyond Gender Inequalities", "Confronting Commodity Chains" or "Towards Better Care and Welfare".

In this course, you cannot enroll for one of the study groups yourself, but you will be assigned by the course coordinator. The allocation will be announced via Canvas. Please note: You do have to register for the course and the other course components on VU.nl.