

Department of Germanic Studies Spring 2013
EUS 347 (364950) - WGS 340 (47300) - GRC 327E (38285)

Too Tolerant? Understanding Dutch Culture in International Perspective

Bridging Disciplines Programs course in Conflict Resolution/Peace St, Cultural St, and Global Studies

Instructor: Prof. Pascale Bos

Email: pascale.r.bos@mail.utexas.edu

Class meets: TTH 12:30-2:00

Classroom: BUR 130

Office: 314 BUR

Voice mail: 232-6373 (but email me instead!)

Office hours: TTH 11-12:30, or by appointment

Home page: <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/german/faculty/bos.html>

The Dutch are commonly known for their “tolerant,” laid back attitude towards religious, gender, and sexual differences, as well as such issues as drug use, prostitution, and euthanasia. This course explores both the stereotypes and the actuality of these Dutch attitudes and policies and examines the background to the latter within the context of Dutch and European cultural history.

An exploration of these issues in the Dutch and the European context allows for a consideration of what makes each of our culture(s) “tick” and offers a revealing look at cultural differences and their genesis. At the same time, we need to wonder how many of these cultural differences will remain in an increasingly global culture in which the Netherlands is strongly tied to both the European Union and to an American economy and world view.

We first discuss some of the well-known stereotypes held about the Dutch and then explore Dutch history, in particular the influences over the centuries of geography, of (international) trade and shipping, and of a number of wars. We trace the rise of an unusual feature of Dutch society, called *verzuiling* or “pillarization.” We then move on to explore some of the specific debates that form a central role in today’s Dutch culture: the role of the state in matters of religion, the Dutch school system, changing attitudes toward social and economic safety nets, race relations (especially after WW II and de-colonization), gender relations, and sexuality. We also discuss in depth the question of how the Dutch respond to a growing Muslim community in which some hold radical views that seem diametrically opposite of liberal Dutch cultural values. Is it intolerant to reject the intolerance of others, even if it is in name of a defense of Dutch tolerance? What if intolerant views lead to death threats and murder? Here we discuss the murders of Theo Van Gogh and Pim Fortuyn and the anti-Islam politics of Geert Wilders.

Texts:

Ian Buruma *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (should be available from Co-op, if not, order this text yourself from Amazon!) and a course pack from Speedway Copies/Abel’s Copies, 715 W. 23rd street (ground floor of parking garage for University Towers Dormitory, Phone: 478-3334).

Grading:

- 20% *Discussion and participation in class:* show up on time and come prepared to discuss the week’s texts. Missing 4 or more class sessions leads to a reduction of one half letter grade. If you have to miss class for a legitimate reason, email me. For excused medical absences: bring doctor’s note.
- 10% *Class presentation* of a particular’s week’s reading, alone or in a pair (once during semester). Come prepared to give a 10-minute talk about that week’s text, and the issues it brings up. Presentation rubric will be provided, ask for my help if needed.
- 40% *Four short 1-2 page response papers* (10% each) due every 2-3 weeks (see schedule), questions will be provided. There will be a reduction in grade for late papers.
- 25% *One 6-8 page final paper.* Choose a topic with relevance to the class theme, find 3-6 sources on it (some of them can be web-based but run them by me first!) and explore the subject in some depth. A proposal is due by week 11, a bibliography is due by week 13. Comparative topics such as: “X in the U.S. versus X in the Netherlands” work especially well for this kind of a paper.
- 5% *Brief final presentation* of about 4-5 minutes (in which you tell the class about your paper and your findings during our last class session).

Calendar-Syllabus

Readings are listed on the day they will be discussed so read them *before* you come to your next class.
Always bring the assigned text to class!

Week 1 Introduction

T Jan 15

Introduction to the course structure of class, syllabus, bios
Assignment: get your reader, look at (hand out) material for Thursday

Th 17

Stereotypes of the Dutch

Cartoons “The Dutch...” “Italian...” Discussion of first readings: “Conformist nonchalance,” “Dutch Soldiers Find Smiles Are...”

Think of which presentation you would like to do, and fill out your bio sheet!

Week 2

T 22

Stereotypes of the Dutch debunked

Sign up for presentations, return bio!

Shetter CH 1 “Approaches to the Country,” “Lessons for U.S. from a Flood-Prone Land”

Th 24

Introductory History of the Netherlands

Discussion of Shetter chapters 13, “A Historical Dimension” and 14, “The Modern Netherlands”

Assignment: read texts for week 3.

Week 3

T 29

What makes the Dutch Dutch?

Van der Horst “Egalitarian” part I, up to “The 1960s were...”

Presentation:

Th 31

Reader: Van der Horst “Egalitarian” part II from “The 1960s were...” to end

Presentation:

Assignment: read texts for week 4 and work on response paper #1

Week 4

T Feb 5

Dutch Social Structures

Shetter CH 6 “Planning a Society,” “The Dutch Social Welfare System in the 20th Century”

Presentation:

TH 7

Response Paper 1 due!

Shetter CH 19 “Dutch Society”

Presentation:

Assignment: read texts for week 5.

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| Week 5 | Education in the Netherlands |
| T 12 | Shetter CH 7 "Education" "Structure of the Dutch education System" (a, b, c) |
| | Presentation: |
| Th 14 | The Position of Women in the Netherlands "The Netherlands: Country of Mothers," "Netherlands Claims Progress In Improving Situation of Women," U.S. Dept of State on "Women in the Netherlands," "Working (Part-Time) in the 21st Century" |
| | Presentation: |
| | Assignment: read texts for week 6 and work on response paper # 2 |

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| Week 6 | Sex and Sexuality, Legal and Illegal |
| T 19 | "Misconceptions about the Netherlands," "Adolescent Sexual Health.." "Teen pregnancy..." |
| | Presentation: |
| Th 21 | <i>Response Paper 2 due!</i> "The Red Thread and Prostitution in the Netherlands," "A new trick: Dutch taxman hunting prostitutes," "At Issue: is sex for the disabled a right?" |
| | Presentation: |
| | Assignment: read texts for week 7 |

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| Week 7 | Homosexuality |
| T 26 | "Max en Sven," "Utopianism and Sexual Politics," "Same Sex Marriages" "Going Dutch?" "Same-Sex Marriage and Adoption: Unresolved Issues..." |
| | Presentation: |
| Th 28 | Drug Policy "Why Dutch drug policy threatens U.S.," "The Disasters of War: American Repression versus Dutch Tolerance in Drug Policy," "Law Could Hamper Drug Tourism in the Netherlands," "Don't Pass The Dutchie: Amsterdam Bans Pot From Schools, Playgrounds," "Why the Dutch don't do drugs" |
| | Presentation: |
| | Assignment: read texts for week 8 and work on response paper # 3 |

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| Week 8 | The "Right to Die? Euthanasia in the Netherlands |
| T March 5 | "Push for the Right to Die Grows in the Netherlands" "Holland's Euthanasia law" |
| | Presentation: |

Th 7 **Euthanasia Debates**
Response Paper 3 due!
 Dutch Courage,” “The Dutch Way of Death”
 “Euthanasia for Babies?” “Jack’s death...”

Presentation:

SPRING BREAK

Week 9 **Dutch National Identity**
 T 19 Shetter CH 15 “The Ethnic Heritage” and CH 20 “Cultural Identity”

Presentation:

Th 21 **Religion/Religious Pluralism I**
 Shetter CH 11 “Religion and Pluriformity”
 “Elastic Catholic...” “Thin veil of Dutch Tolerance”

Presentation:

Assignment: read texts for week 10 and work on response paper # 4

Week 10 **WW II, the Holocaust and Change in Dutch Culture**
 T 26 “WW II and the Holocaust in the Netherlands: Revising Myths,” “Chronologie-
 Directives,” “Number of victims in the Second WW in the Netherlands,” “Relative and
 Absolute European Jewish Death Rates”

Presentation:

Th 28 “Anne Frank and the Dutch Myth,” “Dutch Nix Anne Frank as Citizen”
 In class we will watch an excerpt of a film
 Presentation:

Assignment: read texts for week 11, come up with topic(s) for final paper, this
 should be a ½ -1 page proposal.

Week 11 **The Dutch “Multicultural Society”**
 T April 2 **Hand in topic for final paper!**
 Van der Horst “A Debt of Honour” part I: The Dutch and their ethnic minorities”

Presentation:

Th 4 **Trouble with Tolerance: Multi-Ethnic Tension**
 Van der Horst “A Debt of Honour” part II

Presentation:

Assignment: read text for week 12, work on response paper # 5

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| Week 12 T 9 | <p>Doing Dutch Politics <i>Response Paper 4 due!</i> Shetter CH 10 “The Political System,” “The Political Wing of the Poldermodel,” “Political Systems in Europe,” “Dutch Voters May Point Way for Rest of Europe”</p> <p>Presentation:</p> |
| Th 11 | <p>Political trouble since 9/11: Political murder I, Pim Fortuyn “Rightist in Netherlands Is Slain, and the Nation is Stunned,” “Brutal End...,” Discussion of Ian Buruma <i>Murder in Amsterdam</i> part I (chapters 1 and 2)</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <p>Assignment: read texts for week 13 and create bibliography for final paper. Continue reading Ian Buruma <i>Murder in Amsterdam</i></p> |

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| Week 13 T 16 | <p>Political murder I, Theo: Van Gogh “Theo Van Gogh,” “Tolerating a Time Bomb” Discussion of Ian Buruma <i>Murder in Amsterdam</i> part II (chapters 3 and 4)</p> <p>Presentation:</p> |
| Th 18 | <p>Ian Buruma <i>Murder in Amsterdam</i> <i>Hand in bibliography for final paper!</i> Final discussion on Buruma: chapters 5, 6, and 7</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <p>Assignment: read texts for week 14, work on final paper.</p> |

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| Week 14 T 23 | <p>The New Intolerance? “Dutch Tolerance Tried,” “Netherlands Introduces Dutch test,” “Netherlands: The end of Indifference,” “Letter from Amsterdam”</p> <p>Presentation:</p> |
| Th 25 | <p>The Geert Wilders Phenomenon Geert Wilders File BBC Profile: Geert Wilders Ian Buruma “Totally Tolerant, Up to a Point” “Analysis: Dutch critic of Islam warns Bush”</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <p>Assignment: work on your final paper, prepare for presentation.</p> |

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| Week 15 T 30 | <p>Geert Wilders’ <i>Fitna</i> and the Limits of Freedom of Speech “SPIEGEL Interview with Dutch Populist Geert Wilders” Watch and discuss excerpt of <i>Fitna</i> and the controversy surrounding it</p> |
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Presentation:

Th 2 May

Final presentations!

Student presentations of about 4-5 minutes in which you talk about your final paper project/ findings

May 8

Final paper due. Papers need to be sent to me in as a word and as a PDF version by 5 PM per E-MAIL attachment. Format the title as follows:
"Last Name Too Tolerant Final Paper"