

Too Tolerant? Understanding Dutch Culture in International Perspective

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

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Class meets: TTH 12:30-2:00

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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 fundamentalist views that seem diametrically opposed to 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 and the Dutch response to the terrorist attacks in Paris of December 2014 (*Charlie Hebdo*).

Texts:

Ian Buruma *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (order this text yourself from Amazon) and a *course pack (also called the reader)* from Speedway Copies/Abel’s Copies, 715 W. 23rd street (ground floor of parking garage for University Towers Dormitory, Phone: 512-478-3334). This pack should be available by 1/23 or 1/24. *Get it before the 2nd week of class!*

Grading:

30% *Discussion, quizzes, and participation in class.* Show up **on time** and **come prepared** to discuss the week’s texts. **Short quizzes by which I check on your reading knowledge are part of your participation grade!** Missing 4 or more class sessions without a valid excuse 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 a doctor’s note. Some make up work may be possible.

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. Prepare a short analytical summary: what is the text about, who is the author, and what are his/her views? What can we learn from this text? Create a hand-out for your fellow classmates. You may prepare a Powerpoint for this purpose, but you will be graded on the basis of content and coherence, not on pretty slides!

- 20% One 2-3 page response paper, questions will be provided.
- 30% 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 12, 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.
- 10% 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. You are graded on organization, clarity, and timing.

Disabilities

The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 512-471-6259, 512-471-6441 TTY.

Writing Center

I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 512-471-6222: <http://uwc.fac.utexas.edu/>. The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Their services are not just for writing with "problems." Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing.

Use of cell phones and computers

Cell phones must be put away during class, and computers may be used only for note-taking. Students who use gadgets for non-class related activities will be marked absent and asked to leave for the remainder of that class.

A note on scholastic dishonesty

While doing research on the internet, it is tempting to copy and paste when you find a text that suits your need. However, this constitutes plagiarism, a form of scholastic dishonesty that we take very seriously at UT. Please quote properly, or paraphrase (while disclosing your original source).

For more information: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php as well as on scholastic dishonesty more broadly: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis.php>

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 20	Introduction to the course structure of class, syllabus, bios, first reading 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!
Th 22	NO CLASS
T 29	NO CLASS
	Assignment: get your reader, look at material for NEXT Thursday

Week 2 Th 29	<p>Stereotypes of the Dutch debunked Sign up for presentations, return bio! Discussion of Shetter CH 1 “Approaches to the Country,” “Lessons for U.S. from a Flood-Prone Land”</p> <p>Assignment: read texts for week 3.</p>
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Week 3 T 3 Feb	<p>Introductory History of the Netherlands Discussion of Shetter chapters 13, “A Historical Dimension” and 14, “The Modern Netherlands”</p> <p>Presentation:</p>
Th 5	<p>What makes the Dutch Dutch? Van der Horst “Egalitarian” parts I AND II Presentation:</p> <p>Assignment: read texts for week 4</p>

Week 4 T 10	<p>Dutch Social Structures Shetter CH 6 “Planning a Society,” “The Dutch Social Welfare System in the 20th Century” Presentation:</p>
TH 12	<p>“Netherlands” (overview of social security) Shetter CH 19 “Dutch Society” Presentation:</p> <p>Assignment: read texts for week 5.</p>

Week 5 T 17	<p>Education in the Netherlands Shetter CH 7 “Education” “Structure of the Dutch education System” (a, b, c) Presentation:</p>
Th 19	<p>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:</p> <p>Assignment: read texts for week 6</p>

Week 6 T 24	<p>Sex and Sexuality, Legal and Illegal: Ideas about Sexuality “Misconceptions about the Netherlands,” “Adolescent Sexual Health..” “Teen pregnancy...” Presentation:</p>
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Th 26 **Sex and Sexuality, Legal and IllegalII: Prostitution**
 “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, write response paper!

Week 7
 T 3 March **Sex and Sexuality, Legal and IllegalIII: Homosexuality**
Response paper due!
 “Max en Sven,” “Utopianism and Sexual Politics,” “Same Sex Marriages” “Going Dutch?”
 “Same-Sex Marriage and Adoption: Unresolved Issues...” *COC in the Netherlands*
 Presentation:

Th 5 **Drug Policy I**
 “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”

Assignment: read texts for week 8

Week 8
 T 10 **Drug Policy II**
 “The Origins and Future of the Dutch Approach towards Drugs,” “Why the Dutch don't
 do drugs,” “Amsterdam responds to “white heroin” deaths”
 Presentation:

Th 12 **Euthanasia Debates**
 “Push for the Right to Die Grows in the Netherlands” “Holland's Euthanasia law”
 Dutch Courage,” “The Dutch Way of Death,” “Euthanasia for Babies?” “Jack's death...”
 Presentation:

SPRING BREAK

Week 9
 T 24 **Dutch National Identity**
 Shetter CH 15 “The Ethnic Heritage” and CH 20 “Cultural Identity”
 Presentation:

Th 26 **Religion/Religious Pluralism I**
 Shetter CH 11 “Religion and Pluriformity”
 “Elastic Catholic...” “Thin veil of Dutch Tolerance”
 Presentation:

Assignment: read texts for week 10

Week 10	The Dutch "Multicultural Society"
T 31	Van der Horst "A Debt of Honour" part I Presentation:
Th 2 April	Van der Horst "A Debt of Honour" part II Presentation:
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Week 11	WW II and the Holocaust in the Netherlands
T 7	"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 9	WATCH Willy Lindwer <i>Return to Holland</i> (film) in class "Anne Frank and the Dutch Myth," "Dutch Nix Anne Frank as Citizen" Assignment: read text for week 12, come up with topic(s) for final paper, this should be a ½ -1 page typed proposal.
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Week 12	Doing Dutch Politics
T 14	<i>Hand in topic for final paper!</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" Presentation:
Th 16	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) Presentation: Assignment: read texts for week 13 and create bibliography for final paper. Continue reading Ian Buruma <i>Murder in Amsterdam</i>
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Week 13	Political murder II, Theo: Van Gogh
T 21	"Theo Van Gogh," "Tolerating a Time Bomb" Discussion of Ian Buruma <i>Murder in Amsterdam</i> part II (chapters 3 and 4) Presentation:
Th 23	Ian Buruma <i>Murder in Amsterdam</i> <i>Hand in bibliography for final paper!</i> Final discussion on Buruma: chapters 5, 6, and 7 Presentation: Assignment: read texts for week 14, work on final paper.
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Week 14	The New Intolerance?
T 28	"Dutch Tolerance Tried," "Netherlands Introduces Dutch test," "Netherlands: The end of Indifference," "Letter from Amsterdam" Presentation:

Th 30

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"

Presentation:

Assignment: work on your final paper, prepare for presentation.

Week 15

T 5 May

Final presentations! Students 1-12

Student presentations of about 4-5 minutes in which you talk about your final paper project. Be concise and precise, present topic/thesis/findings and/or problems thus far.

Th 7

Final presentations! Students 13-25

Student presentations of about 4-5 minutes in which you talk about your final paper project. Be concise and precise, present topic/thesis/findings and/or problems thus far.

May 12**Final paper due, 5 PM.**

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