

***Too Tolerant? Understanding Dutch Culture in International Perspective***  
***This class carries a Global Cultures Flag***

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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. This 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. As source material we use primary Dutch literature texts, media texts and images, film, government brochures and secondary (scholarly) literature on the topic.

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; gender relations and sexuality; race relations (especially after WW II and de-colonization); religious (in) tolerance in light of increased Muslim immigration. Finally, we discuss in some depth how the Dutch negotiate a relatively recent shift from a rather homogeneous to a more multicultural society and analyze whether or not the Conservative-Right and Nationalist/“nativist” backlash that can be found in other European countries and in the U.S. plays a similar role in the Netherlands in its upcoming March 15, 2017 election . In the Netherlands, these debates are often couched in the language of tolerance: how to respond to a Muslim community in which some hold radical views that are diametrically opposed to Dutch cultural values? Is it intolerant to reject the intolerance of others, even if it is in name of a defense of Dutch tolerance?

**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 required course pack (also referred to as the class reader) will be available from *Jenn’s Copies*, 2518 Guadalupe • (512) 482-0779 • [2518@jennscopies.com](mailto:2518@jennscopies.com)

**Grading:**

25% 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). 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! 10 minutes per presenter!

30% Three 1 page response papers, 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.

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. 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 only be used for note-taking per request. Students who use gadgets for non-class related activities will be marked absent for that class.

### **Concealed Handguns**

Although by law I am not allowed to expressly forbid you from bringing a concealed handgun to my class if you are a LTC holder, the administration of this university, the faculty, staff, and the majority of the students have expressed the wish to keep this campus gun-free. Weapons on campus pose a serious hazard: they can discharge accidentally, they can be stolen, they can become a tool of intimidation in a heated discussion, and unfortunately they can be used to coerce sexual consent. I thus strongly wish to dissuade you from bringing a concealed handgun to class - leave it at home, or if you must bring it to campus, leave it locked in your vehicle.<sup>1</sup> Campus carry requires that handguns remain concealed at all times with no exceptions, and if a handgun is visible, however briefly, it is a violation of university policy and law. If a LTC holder does reveal their weapon in class, whether accidentally or by choice, or discusses having a gun on or with them, they will be asked to leave the classroom and be counted absent for that day.<sup>2</sup> Guns are not permitted under ANY circumstances in my office. You will sign an “Acknowledgement of Oral Notice Prohibiting Concealed Handguns” form before visiting my office hours.

### **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](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php) as well as on scholastic dishonesty more broadly: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis.php>

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<sup>1</sup> LTC holders who choose to carry concealed handguns on campus are obligated to know the UT Austin policies. It is their responsibility to know where they cannot carry and plan accordingly. A LTC holder who carries on campus must carry the handgun in a holster that completely covers the trigger and the entire trigger guard area, and the holster must have sufficient tension to securely retain it even when subjected to unexpected jostling. Persons who violate these laws and policies are subject to penalties and fines in addition to disciplinary action imposed by the university. If an activity would make concealed carrying difficult or impossible (an athletic or dance class, for instance), they must make proper arrangements to work around it. Because storage of handguns on campus is prohibited, a student who carries should consider leaving his or her handgun at home, or stored securely in his or her vehicle. Similarly, a student who will be taking an exam that requires that the backpack be left outside should consider leaving their handgun at home or in their car before entering the exam room.

<sup>2</sup> What can you do if you see a handgun in a classroom or on campus? Notify law enforcement via 911 and UTPD will arrive and assess the situation.

*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**

T Jan 22

**Introduction**

Introduction to the course structure of class, syllabus, bios, first reading  
Cartoons “The Dutch...” “Italian...”

Assignment: get your class reader, order Buruma book, and look at material for Thursday, Think of which presentation you would like to do, and fill out your bio sheet!

Th 24

**Stereotypes versus Reality of the Dutch**

Discussion of first readings: “Netherlands Profile” “Conformist nonchalance,” “Dutch Soldiers Find Smiles Are...”

Assignment: Think of which presentation you would like to do, and fill out your bio sheet!  
Read Shetter CH 1

**Week 2**

T 29

**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 31

**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 5 Feb

**What makes the Dutch Dutch?**

Reader: Van der Horst “Egalitarian” part I  
Presentation:

Th 7

**What makes the Dutch Dutch part II**

Van der Horst “Egalitarian” part II  
Presentation:

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

**Week 4**

T 12

**Dutch Social Structures**

Shetter CH 6 “Planning a Society,” “The Dutch Social Welfare System in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” “Dutch Laws Pertaining to Tolerance”  
Presentation:

TH 14

***Response Paper 1 due!***

Reader: “Netherlands” (overview of social security) “Going Dutch”  
Shetter CH 19 “Dutch Society”  
Presentation:

Assignment: read texts for week 5.

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<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Education in the Netherlands</b>
T 19	Shetter CH 7 "Education" "Structure of the Dutch education System", "Higher Education in the Netherlands" "Dutch Higher Education Policy Refocuses on Quality" Presentation:
Th 21	<b>The Position of Women and Mothers in the Netherlands</b> "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

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<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Sex and Sexuality, Legal and IllegalI: Ideas about Sexuality, Motherhood</b>
T 26	"The Netherlands: Country of Mothers," "Fertility and Family" "Misconceptions about the Netherlands," "Adolescent Sexual Health.." "Teen pregnancy..." Presentation:
Th 28	<b>Sex and Sexuality, Legal and IllegalII: Prostitution</b> "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#2!

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<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Sex and Sexuality, Legal and IllegalIII: Homosexuality</b>
T 5 Mar	"Max en Sven," "Utopianism and Sexual Politics," "Same Sex Marriages" "Going Dutch?" "Same-Sex Marriage and Adoption: Unresolved Issues..." <i>COC in the Netherlands</i> Presentation:
Th 7	<b>Euthanasia Debates</b> <b><i>Response paper 2 due!</i></b> "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:
	Assignment: read texts for week 8

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<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Myths versus Reality: Dutch Drugs Policy</b>
T 12	"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" Presentation:
Th 14	<b>Dutch Drug Policy II</b> "The Origins and Future of the Dutch Approach towards Drugs" "Amsterdam responds to" Presentation:

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## SPRING BREAK

**Week 9**

T 25

**Dutch National Identity**

Shetter CH 15 "The Ethnic Heritage" and CH 20 "Cultural Identity"  
Presentation:

Th 27

**Religion/Religious Pluralism I**

Shetter CH 11 "Religion and Pluriformity" "Elastic Catholic..."  
Presentation:

Assignment: read texts for week 10

**Week 10**

T 2 April

**WW II and the Holocaust in the Netherlands**

"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 4

WATCH Willy Lindwer *Return to Holland* (film) in class  
"Anne Frank and the Dutch Myth," "Dutch Nix Anne Frank as Citizen"  
Presentation:

Assignment: read text for week 11 (LONG chapter!)

**Week 11**

T 9

**The Dutch "Multicultural Society" I**

Van der Horst "A Debt of Honour" "Is Zwarte Piet Racism? Race Relations in the Netherlands"  
"Thin veil of Dutch Tolerance" Dutch Parliament Paves the way for..." "Europeans Greatly overestimate..."  
Presentation:

Assignment: write response paper #3

Th 11

**The Dutch "Multicultural Society" II****Response paper 3 due!**

Gloria Wekker "The Case of Zwarte Piet" (Ch 5 in *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2016)  
Tamara Nisic "From Multiculturalism to Integration or from Marginalization to Assimilation?"

Assignment: read text for week 12, come up with topic(s) for final paper, this should be a ½ -1 page typed proposal.

**Week 12**

T 16

**Doing Dutch Politics**

Shetter CH 10 "The Political System," "The Political Wing of the Poldermodel,"  
"Political Systems in Europe,"

<http://www.politico.eu/article/netherlands-election-2017-mark-rutte-geert-wilders-right-wing/>

Presentation:

Th 18

**Hand in topic for final paper!****Political trouble since 9/11: Political murders, Pim Fortuyn, van Gogh**

"Rightist in Netherlands Is Slain, and the Nation is Stunned," "Brutal End..."

“Theo Van Gogh,” “Tolerating a Time Bomb”

Presentation:

Assignment: read texts for week 13 and create bibliography for final paper.

Continue reading Ian Buruma *Murder in Amsterdam*

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**Week 13**

T 23

**Dutch Response to Home Grown Intolerance: Buruma *Murder in Amsterdam***

Watch Van Gogh *Submission* in class

Discussion of Ian Buruma *Murder in Amsterdam* chapters 1-4

Presentation:

Th 25

**Ian Buruma *Murder in Amsterdam***

***Hand in bibliography for final paper!***

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**

T 30

**The New Intolerance?**

“Dutch Tolerance Tried,” “Letter from Amsterdam”

Presentation:

Th 2 May

**The Geert Wilders Phenomenon**

Geert Wilders File, BBC Profile: Geert Wilders, Ian Buruma “Totally Tolerant, Up to a Point” “Watch and discuss excerpt of *Fitna* and the controversy surrounding it

[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/10/netherlands-geert-wilders-politics-far-right?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/10/netherlands-geert-wilders-politics-far-right?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

Presentation:

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

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**Week 15**

T 7 May

**Final presentations!**

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 9

**Final presentations!**

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 14**

**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”