



# Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2022-2023

## 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](#).

# Improving Planetary Health: A Learning Lab for Social-Entrepreneurship

Course Code	S_IPH
Credits	6.00
Period	P5
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen
Course Coordinator	dr. M.V. Tietschert MSc
Examiner	dr. M.V. Tietschert MSc
Teaching Staff	prof. dr. E.M. Merz, drs. J.A. Pach, dr. A.S. Yalcin-Muftugil, dr. M.V. Tietschert MSc, drs. S.M. Verhoog
Teaching method(s)	Study Group, Lecture

## Course Objective

### Knowledge

- Students will understand the concept of planetary health and the key challenges for improving planetary health.
- Students will understand the complex nature of wicked problems and the implications for addressing them
- Students will understand underlying principles of social entrepreneurship

### Academic Skills

- Students can reflect critically on recent academic evidence and practical issues related to social entrepreneurship and planetary health.
- Students can present their ideas (in English) in convincing ways that are grounded in academic knowledge
- Student are able to analyse complex problems using conceptual and analytical models, and to develop solutions based on academically grounded, structured approaches.
- Students are able to identify a challenge related to planetary health and develop an idea for a social venture to tackle this challenge

### Bridging Theory and Practice

- Students can use key principles and approaches from social entrepreneurship to tackle wicked problems
- Students can apply key activities to develop a social venture idea aimed at tackling planetary health as an example of a wicked problems.
- By collaborating with students and experts from different disciplines, students are able to develop a solution for wicked problems and to pinpoint implications for the implementation by taking into account different disciplinary views that connect academia, policy and practice.

## Course Content

Improving Planetary Health: A learning lab for social entrepreneurship comprises an introduction to concepts and various theoretical approaches to solving societally relevant, wicked problems through the lens of social entrepreneurship. Planetary health considers the the health of human civilization and the natural systems on which it depends, emphasizing the link between that human health and the health of our planet (e.g. the importance of human health and the sustainable management of natural systems as well as natural resources) .In this course, you will design and develop ideas for innovative social ventures aimed at improving planetary health. Social ventures are undertakings aimed at solving a social problem or effecting social change. Well known

examples are TOMS shoes, or microfinance institutions. You will learn about the concepts of planetary health, current challenges, and about ways of responding to these “wicked problems” in adequate ways through social ventures. You will learn that tackling wicked problems requires a coordinated reaction on the part of governments, public and private organizations, collaboration between different stakeholders, integration of different activities and hence asks for new constellations of actors and new forms of organizing and you will make use of design thinking tools that will help you think about wicked problems in novel ways. You will also learn that wicked problems can be tackled at various levels, including regional, national and global. You will also learn how to work in multidisciplinary teams and to pitch your ideas in compelling and convincing ways.

## Additional Information Teaching Methods

Students will receive in an introduction into the concept of planetary health, design thinking, how to create and measure impact, and how to pitch an idea. Students will enjoy a combination of learning activities, both on-campus and online, delivered by a transdisciplinary teaching team consisting of different social science disciplines including organization sciences, sociology as well as global and public health and speakers from the private and public sector working on innovative approaches to maintaining and/or improving planetary health. Interactive sessions, guest speakers, and lab sessions, knowledge clips and other online material will be combined with teamwork and student presentations and faculty and peer feedback to stimulate self-activated learning.

The main teaching method used is a combination of interactive lab sessions, both theoretical, in forms of interactive sessions and practicals (see section 5). In the interactive sessions, scientific research and core concepts on selected themes are discussed, applied, and explained. During the course, you provide active and critical input, while you are also working on developing a social venture idea in teams of peers facilitated by the lecturers. In addition, we will invite field experts that will present their experiences in approaching wicked problems through social ventures and examples they have confronted during their work lives.

## Method of Assessment

### GROUP ASSIGNMENT

The group assignments will consist of the presentation in which students pitch their idea and a portfolio that students submit in which they develop their idea reflecting on relevant literature.

Students will first pitch their idea in a presentation within their subtheme. This round will also serve as grading round. The best pitch from this round, as assessed by the fellow students and the theme mentor will then compete against the best pitches from the other themes. A committee will select the best presentation. This process is independent from the grade, which will be assigned by the theme coordinator.

In addition, student teams will submit a portfolio in which students will present a critical analysis of a “problem” related to planetary health and their social venture idea to solve this idea, making use and reflecting on the literature students studied throughout the course.

### INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS

Students will write an individual analysis of 1-2 pages in which they reflect critically on the team process, opportunities, and challenges in tackling wicked problems. In addition, students will reflect on what they would do differently next time.

## Custom Course Registration

It is only possible to take one of the courses "AI and Society," "The Human Dimension of Sustainable Development" or "Improving Planetary Health".

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.