



Bachelor's courses Faculty of Social Sciences

VU University Amsterdam - Student- & Onderwijszaken - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2018-2019

New Media Challenges

Course code	S_NMC ()
Period	Period 4
Credits	6.0
Language of tuition	English
Faculty	Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen
Coordinator	dr. M.A. Tanis
Examinator	dr. M.A. Tanis
Teaching staff	dr. A.P.M. Krouwel, dr. I.E. Vermeulen, dr. M.A. Tanis, dr. C.F. Burgers, dr. B.K. Johnson
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Study Group
Level	300

Course objective

Upon successful completion of the course, the student is able to:

- Define, describe, and discuss important new media challenges from a micro, a meso and a macro perspective.
- Critically analyze and assess relevant communication-scientific theories in light of new media challenges.
- Compare, differentiate, and use relevant theoretical perspectives and argumentation in evaluating results of empirical studies related to important new media challenges.
- Apply communication-scientific theories to understand and advise about new media challenges.

Course content

Media are omnipresent in our society. While many digital media offer exciting new possibilities for interpersonal contact, customer service and democratization, they also have a dark side and can bring about negative effects (such as privacy violations, or fake news influencing elections). A crucial question for any communication scientist is thus how to deal with these new challenges posed by media. Did recent developments in the media landscape fundamentally change society and do we need new theories to explain how media are used? Or can still we explain their use and effects through classic theories?

In this course, we will take a theory- and evidence-based approach to address these issues. That is, we will focus on a number of core topics related to media challenges such as trust vs. truth, power over information, wellbeing of media users, and information overload and bubbles. We will zoom in on each of these challenges by looking at communication-scientific theory and recently published empirical studies. This approach will teach you how to approach and address such challenges from an academic perspective.

We will specifically focus on the challenges through the lens of the three spheres of communication: (1) the micro sphere which focuses on the individual, (2) the meso sphere which deals with organizations and their stakeholders, and (3) the macro sphere which concerns society at large. These three lenses help students to understand how different subfields of communication science (micro: media psychology; meso: organizational and marketing communication; macro: public communication) deal with new media challenges.

Finally, this course prepares students for writing a bachelor thesis and for a comprehensive start in one of the specialization tracks in the master's program in communication science.

Form of tuition

Lectures and assignments.

Type of assessment

Written exam and assignments.

Course reading

The mandatory literature will include published journal articles and relevant book chapters. Students will have to retrieve these themselves from the online databases of the VU library. The reading list will be announced in Canvas.

Target group

Third-year bachelor students in communication science and premaster students in communication science. International exchange students are also very welcome to attend, and should note that this course is at the level of Bachelor 3. If they do not have a background in communication science, they are strongly recommend to take the course "Communication Classics" in P3 as a preparation, as we will build on this knowledge in this course.

Remarks

This course serves as a stepping stone for the bachelor thesis course in periods 5-6.

The course will be entirely in English, including all lectures, correspondence, assessments, and assignments.