



## **Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit**

**Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2020-2021**

## Social Media Analytics

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Course Code	L_AABACIW307
Credits	6
Period	P4
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Humanities
Course Coordinator	dr. P.H.F. Bos
Examiner	
Teaching Staff	
Teaching method(s)	Seminar, Lecture

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### Course Objective

The student will acquire knowledge of and insight in:  
how and where journalists and professional users of social media can apply data techniques;  
how to gather large quantities of data;  
how to analyse data;  
how to visualise data in a correct, insightful and attractive way;  
the pros and cons of different software programs;  
the specific tasks of different experts.

The student will develop skills in:  
finding, selecting and gathering data;  
processing, organising and analysing data in different formats;  
working with numeral data, in particular in Excel;  
working with unstructured, textual data, by using text mining software;  
visualising results, by using Excel and other software packages.

In addition to that, students will learn how to work in a team, and under time pressure, on a small assignment. The assignment will result in an oral presentation and a written report.

### Course Content

In this course, students will get acquainted with social media analytics. Nowadays, data are available in large quantities. Professional users of social media can make use of this. The challenge is to know where to find these data. At the moment you have access to relevant data, the second challenge is how to extract information from it. It is impossible to work through all these data by reading it, because there is simply too much. This means you will have to work through these data, organise and analyse them with the help of computer programs. We will use data visualisation for two reasons: this way of data-analysis will help you discover stories and it will help you tell

the reader what is going on. Big data and data visualisation create new possibilities but at the same time it also creates pitfalls.

In this course you will get answers to the following questions:

- What is the relevance of data mining for journalists and professional users of social media?
- How can you get access to the relevant data?
- What are the methods and techniques?
- How do we interpret and visualise results?
- What moral aspects play a role in working with big data?

We will make use of simple techniques as well as more advanced text mining techniques. In addition to that, we will pay attention to so-called structured data, such as data presented in spreadsheets and databases. Students will also learn how to work with Excel. In weeks 3 and 4, we will mainly work with textual data. In week 5, we focus on reflection and in the last week we will work with visualisation techniques.

We will work with weekly group assignments and reports. The final assignment is an individual assignment and consists of a small data project.

### **Teaching Methods**

Lectures, interactive seminars and practical classes, in total 6 hours per week.

### **Method of Assessment**

Group assignments and an individual assignment. First, the assignments will test your skills in finding, processing, analysing and visualising data. Second, they will assess your ability to tell a story, accompanied by data and appropriate visualisation. The end grade consists of the average of the group assignments (50%) and the final assignment (50%). Both components have to be graded at least 5.5.

### **Literature**

Gray, Bounegru and Chambers (eds.) (2012), The Data Journalism Handbook, <http://datajournalismhandbook.org/>  
Other Literature: TBA (on Canvas).

### **Target Audience**

3rd-year students in Communication and Information Studies, specialisation Language and Media. This course will be co-taught with

the course Datajournalistiek (2nd-year course for students of the Dutch specialisation tracks Journalistiek and Taal, Media en Samenleving).