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Amsterdam University College 2009 – 2012



Amsterdam University College

Liberal Arts and Sciences for the 21st Century:
AUC's Experiences and Achievements 2009-2012



COLOFON

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Amsterdam University College

Liberal Arts and Sciences for the 21st Century:
AUC's Experiences and Achievements 2009-2012

Edited by Marijk van der Wende & Belinda Stratton

The Founding Experience

“Dude, this is the trip of my life.”

Dr. Ramon Puras

Director of Education and
Head of Studies Science



It is obviously difficult to describe the ‘founding experience’ of AUC in a few words, but it may be best captured in a quote from one of my former colleagues: “Dude, this is the trip of my life!”. Indeed, AUC has been for me an exceptional journey and like most trips it comes with different phases, with peaks and valleys.

First, the planning phase: exploring opportunities, fighting resistance and identifying ‘partners in crime’. All this in the ‘Ostblock’ offices at Sarphatistraat 104 (if you can make it there, you can make it everywhere!). Second, the move to

our academic building in Plantage Muidergracht 14, the first Faculty Meeting in May 2009 at the Artis Library and the welcome of our first students in September 2009. What a moment that was, looking into the eyes of all those excited students, the expectations were high on both sides. Third, the actual teaching, the growth of the AUC community, more incredible staff appointed, and yes, as a community we also had our frictions, but even those were always driven by the desire to improve and to create an ambitious learning environment. Now, the first students (class 2012) have graduated from AUC and we are all starting the next journey, exploring our new academic building, exploring our new biotope and its inhabitants at Science Park Amsterdam. I am grateful to all colleagues and students who joined me in this incredible trip, may the next steps be as exciting as the previous ones ...

“Looking back at the last three years and how AUC has developed, feels like doing a course on Life, Evolution and the Universe at full speed!”

Mariëtte Diderich, MA

Director of Communication,
Marketing and Internationalisation



Looking back at the last three years and how AUC has developed, feels like doing a course on Life, Evolution and the Universe at full speed! It has been extremely exciting and rewarding to be part of the development of AUC. We started with a blank sheet (in a memorable backoffice in the Sarphatistraat) and I am proud to

see how we have become the fully fledged college that we are today in a great new building. Personal highlights were the first admission interviews with students in the Artis Library, the Official Opening in 2009, the visit of Princess Máxima, the dorm fest in 2012, and the first graduation in 2012. I’m grateful to the founding universities VU and UvA, the students and all my colleagues for being part of this journey. I look forward to the coming years in which we will settle at Science Park, further strengthen our external networks both in the academic and private sector, and first and most importantly, will keep developing our college.



Class History of biological illustrations

“Like all good stories, my AUC experience has been a real page-turner.”

Dr. Rebecca Lindner
Head of Studies Humanities

From small beginnings come great things ...

Like all good stories, my AUC experience has been a real page-turner. As we've entered each new phase of development over the last three years, what has characterised the experience for me has been our shared sense of positive anticipation for what will come next: from expanding student numbers, faculty recruitment, and course development, to the creation and realisation of our new campus, which, at the close of our first 'degree cycle', now marks a new and exciting chapter in the AUC story.

Among the many achievements of the students and faculty in the Humanities, it is worth highlighting the full engagement of teachers

in developing the programme over the last few years; the immense creativity and sharp critical insights shown by students in both their academic work and college life; and, perhaps most importantly, the way that the Humanities curriculum has come to embody the broader interdisciplinary approach and values that distinguish AUC as a whole.



“I think of the first years of AUC in those same terms – small and intensive.”

Dr. Louise Vigeant
Head of Studies Social Sciences

I joined AUC in 2009 as both the Senior Tutor and the Head of Studies Social Sciences. The social sciences began with seven courses. For my first day of work, I attended the inaugural faculty meeting, where I met the seven teachers of those courses to discuss the very foundation of what would become the social sciences major. The energy and enthusiasm were palpable.

The tutoring system also began with seven tutors, whether by accident or fate. With more documents than we could count spread out before us, we quickly rolled up our sleeves and learned the curriculum, policies and procedures that 180 new students would be asking us about in only a few weeks.

We often tell our students that AUC is small and intensive. I think of the first year of AUC in those same terms - small and intensive. A year of many firsts, and much excitement.





Science Practicum

“A highlight for me has been interviewing potential faculty, and discussing their outlines for potential courses, course materials and creative teaching ideas.”

Deirdre Klein Bog, MA

Head of Studies Academic Core and Curriculum Manager



The first three years at AUC as Head of Studies Academic Core and Curriculum Manager have been marked for me by the development of the curriculum, recruitment of academic faculty and the setting-up of the Human Resource Management system. I came to the AUC in 2008 and quickly started work on the curriculum and faculty recruitment together with the other Heads of Studies. Central to the AUC concept is the relationship with the VU and UvA faculties, who are asked each year to supply us with highly qualified teachers who have an affinity with Liberal Arts and Sciences education and an international, interdisciplinary outlook and

expertise. This procedure has been working well with very good cooperation from (almost) all the faculties of VU and UvA – the science faculties are especially assiduous in sending suitable faculty. In parallel we have established a ‘Core Faculty’ of teachers who are directly employed by AUC – these are also often tutors and thus in the front line of the education of our students. For these AUC employees it has been essential to develop a transparent Human Resource management system and we are working hard on faculty development. A highlight for me has been interviewing potential faculty, wherever they are from, and discussing their outlines for potential courses, course materials and creative teaching ideas. Parallel to this has been the development of the courses across the curriculum, and for me personally, the Academic Core courses. The range of courses is wonderful – from Chinese Studies, Phi-

losophy and Creative Writing to Logic, Calculus, Research Methods, and Big Questions. Not to forget the foreign languages, Amsterdam in the Golden Age and Moral Dilemmas in Medical Practice ... The development of these courses throughout the first three years has been interesting and exciting.

Establishing a College

Dr. Belinda Stratton, Managing Director



2007-2009.....ALL YOU NEED to build a college is an *excellent* plan, a *divers* team and some *global cities*..... But in fact, all the work was done in an "under-ground" office in the Sarphatistraat. Some people have very good memories of it, others just remember the dust and draft.



Curriculum development in Berlin (2008)



An excellent plan (2008)



Last details in Barcelona (2009)



The project office, Sarphatistraat 104, Amsterdam (2008)

2008 ... THE LOGO

Somewhere in the depths of the Dutch conurbation known as the "Randstad" we stand in what appears to be a converted garage in the midst of an excited team of young designers. A page is turned, the first proposal revealed, we look at each other, and, trying to conceal our own excitement, we know: this is it. The perfect logo. Got it in one.



2008 ... THE CURRICULUM

A flipchart in the corner of a nondescript meeting room buried in the VU campus, a diagram that is beginning to look a bit like a Greek temple. In front of it, a Humanities professor and Science professor give way to a Social Sciences student with a felt-tip pen who draws a new shape into the structure. VU or UvA, arts or sciences, professor or student, doesn't matter. They are all working together, all excitedly pointing and nodding and agreeing, yes, that gives room for both breadth and depth, that is what the curriculum structure should look like.



2008-2012 ... THE BUILDINGS

An almost-secret guided tour of Plantage Muidergracht 14, before the staff working there know officially they are going to have to move to make way for AUC. Trying to imagine what the Common Room will look like, when the offices that currently form a glass oval around the central pillars have been removed. Meetings with the building team in what would eventually become the Science teachers room (note the disposable coffee cups on the table, untouched since the previous meeting a week before). The sad emptiness of the rooms in the Artis Library, the hole in the ceiling, the dust and neglect, all except for the Library itself, an oasis of care and knowledge and beautiful books.

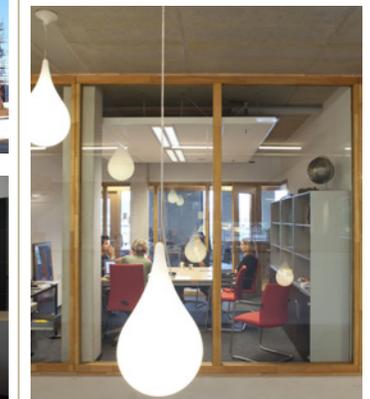


An early meeting about the new building, discussing the concepts, Robbert Dijkgraaf sketching on a paper napkin (preserved!). The first hard-hat tour of the building site: size 42 boots on size 36 feet, it ain't easy negotiating the ladders to the half-finished first floor. The weekly SIS project meetings are held in an office overlooking the building site, it never ceases to amaze how the vision of the architect is being turned into real bricks and mortar (or rather concrete, glass and steel). Back at the Plantage Muidergracht 14, it is our turn to watch owlishly as the new tenants tour the building and make plans for their changes. The Big Move: stickers, stickers and more stickers, and boxes, and stickers. What do you try first in a new building? That's right, the coffee machine and the toilets.



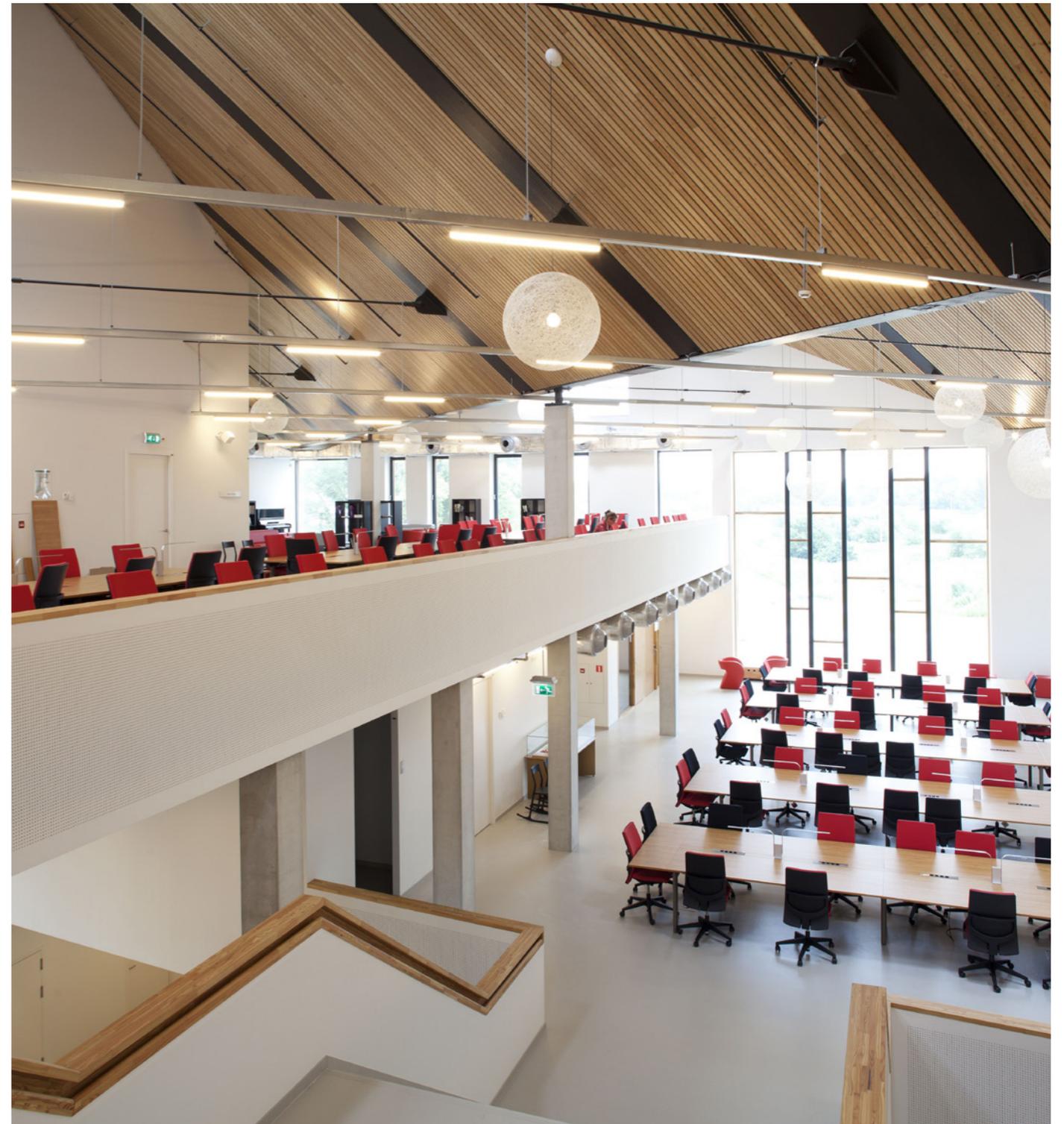
2012 ... NOW

It is only now beginning to sink in. Watching the film of the graduation ceremony, and feeling the emotions that you didn't have time for on the day. Walking around and around the new building, touching the new furniture, touching the walls, touching everything, to convince yourself it is real and we are there. Lifting your eyes from the dauntingly long list of "unfinished items" in the new building, large and small, and just enjoying the play of the light, the views. Now all we need are the students to return, to bring it to life.



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Dr. Belinda Stratton, Managing Director



Amsterdam University College

An Excellence Initiative in Liberal Arts and Science Education¹

¹ This is a shortened version of a book chapter by the same author published in: 'Managing World-Class Universities from the Institutional Perspective'. Centre for World-Class Universities. Jiao Tong University, Shanghai. Sense Publishers, 2012.

Prof. Dr. Marijk van der Wende,
Dean
Amsterdam University College

JOINING FORCES TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE

Amsterdam University College (AUC) was established in 2009 as an excellence initiative jointly undertaken by the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and VU University Amsterdam (VU). AUC is a selective and residential honours college that offers an international liberal arts and sciences Bachelor programme, leading to a joint degree from the two founding universities. These are both positioned between 102 and 150 on the Shanghai ranking (2011), with some 32,000 (UvA) and 25,000 (VU) students, yet quite distinct histories dating back to 1632 (UvA) and 1880 (VU). The fact that these two major research universities in Amsterdam joined forces to create a liberal arts and sciences undergraduate experience was based on the vision that the leaders of the future will have to work together across the boundaries of nationalities, cultures and disciplines, in order to be successful in the globally engaged and culturally diverse society of the 21st century.

From a strategic perspective, the two universities decided to join forces as a way to strengthen excellence, which can be seen as an example of local cooperation for global competition. This approach was supported by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the City of Amsterdam, and locally headquartered multinational corporations. AUC is considered a successful model in this context since it combines the strengths of both institutions through a process of careful selection and evaluation of students, faculty, staff, and services, based on well-defined principles and criteria for excellence in teaching and learning.

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: FROM DISCONTENT TO REDEFINITION

The need for an excellence initiative in undergraduate education was fuelled by the general discontent in this area, as experienced in virtually all countries with massified higher education systems. Central elements of dissatisfaction and critique refer to low performance in terms of retention rates, achieved learning outcomes, student disengagement, stagnant or decreasing graduation rates, and rising time to graduation. Deteriorating conditions result in overcrowded lecture halls, impoverished staff-student ratios, loosening of the research-teaching nexus, and a lack of motivation for undergraduate teaching among faculty. Contrary to the disappointing record for undergraduate education, research performance has been greatly boosted in recent decades, fuelled by global rankings and the concurrent reputation race, and with growing research dominance to the detriment of undergraduate teaching as a looming consequence. Clearly, the tide is shifting and the need to re-balance institutional missions is recognised. For institutions, re-defining excellence in teaching and learning implies the development of a vision on what should be learned, why, and how. A future-oriented perspective on the knowledge, values, and skills essential for the 21st century.

A RENEWED FOCUS ON LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

The renewed conversation emphasises a broad interdisciplinary curriculum focused on creativity, critical thinking, cultural awareness, problem solving, and communication skills. This renewed focus on liberal arts is recognised as a more



"We decided to establish AUC because the leaders of the future will have to be successful in working together across the boundaries of nationalities, cultures and disciplines. They will have to perform on an international competitive level in scientific, corporate and public service sectors. The global city of Amsterdam with its two major research universities is the perfect context where excellence and diversity can meet very naturally."

Rene Smit (President of the VU University Amsterdam) Lodewijk Asscher (Alderman of Finance, Youth Affairs and Education) Karel van der Toorn (President of the University of Amsterdam) (Press conference, April 2008)

global trend (see below). In Europe, liberal arts initiatives can be seen as a response to the need to differentiate the massified and (overly) egalitarian European higher education systems. First by introducing broader and more flexible Bachelor programmes, with the aim to overcome the disadvantages of too-early and over-specialisation, by re-establishing the balance between breadth and depth of the curriculum, while enhancing learning effectiveness. And second in terms of establishing more selective branches of higher education, focusing explicitly on excellence, i.e. to redefining elite education in overly egalitarian systems.

Known as 'University Colleges' in the Netherlands, in the Dutch context they represent a new branch of excellence in Dutch university education, addressing the situation which was described by the OECD in 2008 as demonstrating an insufficient level of differentiation, where excellence is underrepresented, the international dimension should be enhanced, and too-early specialisation should be avoided. These University Colleges recently obtained special status in the higher education legislation, granting them more autonomy than regular university programmes with respect to the selection of students and the level of tuition fees.

AUC'S VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

AUC capitalised on previous initiatives in the country (notably in Utrecht and Maastricht), in Europe and on the American experience, but not without a critical stance. It drew on recent accounts – including candid critiques – of the liberal arts tradition. It took these 'lessons

learned' into account in formulating its own vision on why and how liberal arts and science education is most relevant for the 21st century:

- Today's society is in a constant state of flux, and our future leaders need to be flexible, creative thinkers, able to cope with the complexity of the issues facing the world. A liberal arts and sciences education is an excellent foundation in this context.
- In addition to factual knowledge, a liberal arts and sciences education prepares students to become a multilingual, informed and engaged global citizens, with well-developed intercultural competences, able to read intelligently, think critically and write effectively on the processes shaping our world. Students should become better able to make complex connections across disciplines, cultures and institutions; more creative in their problem-solving; more perceptive of the world around them; and more able to inform themselves about the issues that arise in their life, personally, professionally and socially, and to transform such knowledge into practical and ethical action.
- A liberal arts and sciences education therefore enhances their personal development as well as their academic and career development, and provides them with a range of skills that they will be able to use throughout their life.
- In addition, the frontiers of knowledge, both in academia and the world of work now call for cross-disciplinary inquiry, analysis and application. New pathways across the traditional dividing lines between liberal arts and sciences and the professional fields are needed. Students need to integrate and apply their learning, by addressing

OUR PRINCIPLES OF EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

- *A reciprocal commitment to demanding academic standards and engagement on the side of the teacher and the student.*
- *Students take ownership of their learning process: prepare, participate, interact, and engage in self-reflection.*
- *Students are encouraged to learn more than expected, think critically, and make connections with what is going on in science and society.*
- *The teacher is an inspiring source of knowledge and provides guidance to learning.*
- *The student needs knowledge, to develop understanding, to analyse, and before being able to critically discuss a subject.*
- *While focusing on core concepts in their course, teachers relate course subjects to other fields and disciplines.*
- *The teacher varies the forms of class activities and evaluation.*

OUR MISSION: OUR EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY IN A GLOBAL CITY

Both excellence and diversity matter, as both competition and cooperation are key to success in a globalised world.

Leadership does not only require excellence, but also the understanding and valuing of diversity.

OUR VALUES

A commitment to excellence, diversity, and the global perspective defines and drives AUC.

We seek excellence in all that we do and believe that it is not only the responsibility of each individual to strive for his or her best, but to create the conditions for the success of others.

Diversity is our strength. Different approaches, ideas, and values are integral to the creation of a vibrant and challenging learning environment.

We believe that a global perspective is central to the success of every student. A global perspective requires active engagement with other individuals, communities, and the world.

the 'big questions' in science and society, and connecting analytical skills with practical experience by putting knowledge into use.

AUC's mission: 'Excellence and Diversity in a Global City' reflects the belief that both excellence and diversity matter, as both competition and cooperation are key to success in a globalised world. Leadership does not only require excellence, but also the understanding and valuing of diversity. Consequently, AUC's values express a commitment to excellence, diversity, and the global perspective:

- We seek excellence in all that we do and believe that it is not only the responsibility of each individual to strive for his or her best, but to create the conditions for the success of others.
- Diversity is our strength. Different approaches, ideas, and values are integral to the creation of a vibrant and challenging learning environment. Diversity, however, requires tolerance. Tolerance, understanding, and open-mindedness are therefore expected of every member of the AUC community.
- We believe that a global perspective is central to the success of every student. A global perspective requires active engagement with other individuals, communities, and the world. This engagement is celebrated and valued at AUC.

AUC'S CURRICULUM CHARACTERISTICS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This vision inspired the development of a new curriculum, drawing on eminent scholars in all disciplines from the two founding universities. The bare question of what should be taught in order to equip graduates for success in the

21st century led them to outline an engaging curriculum that reaches across disciplinary boundaries, focusing on the 'the big questions in science and society'.

The AUC curriculum aims to create an academic community that is rooted in the very best traditions of the liberal arts and sciences, but actively oriented to the demands and challenges of the 21st century. Students live and study on an international campus, following a three-year English-taught Bachelor programme that creates new pathways across traditional dividing lines. The AUC curriculum places particular emphasis on:

- **INTERDISCIPLINARITY**
Integrating insights from two or more academic disciplines in order to develop a greater understanding of problems that are too complex or wide-ranging to be dealt with using the knowledge and methodology of just one discipline.
- **SCIENTIFIC REASONING**
The development of academic thinking and strong analytical skills is an integral part of the curriculum for all students. The curriculum offers ample opportunities for students to focus on science and science-related majors in a liberal education context.
- **GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE, INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**
Understanding of economic forces, interdependence and political dynamics, as well as second-language competence and the ability to respond to cultural perspectives other than one's own.

- **CIVIC KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges, including in-company internships and off-campus community engagement.

- **RESEARCH-BASED LEARNING**

Multiple opportunities to work, independently and collaboratively, on research projects that require the integration of knowledge with skills in analysis, discovery, problem solving and communication, engaging students in active learning based on their own questions.

These elements form the main principles and elements of AUC's curriculum and shape a learning experience that aims for learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, academic skills, interdisciplinary skills, learning skills, communication skills, engagement at local and global levels, and personal and social responsibility.

GLOBAL TRENDS AND DRIVERS FOR LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The renewed conversation on the value of liberal arts education can be considered an emerging global trend. The US and European trends are not isolated from each other, although they do demonstrate both similarities and differences, nor from developments in other regions. A growing commitment to liberal education, i.e. to educating the whole person and not just training the specialist, which may seem counterintuitive in an age increasingly dominated by science and technology and by pressures for ever-earlier and ever-greater specialisation, is now the cornerstone

of curricular reform in leading universities in China (including Peking, Fudan, Jiao Tong, Zhejiang, Wuhan, and Sun Yat-sen Universities). In the same region, Hong Kong benefits from the extension of the undergraduate phase from three to four years to give liberal arts a major role in the first two years of the new Bachelor curriculum. Similar approaches are being considered by some leading Japanese universities and have been set up in Taiwan and in Singapore, where the National University of Singapore recently announced a new liberal arts programme in partnership with Yale University. Also in the Middle East, such initiatives are being undertaken.

But what is driving this trend, how can it be explained in more detail, what exactly are the main aims and rationales driving it, how does it relate to developing excellence for undergraduate education in the 21st century, and to what extent is it truly global indeed?

The general underpinnings of liberal arts education are that it should provide students breadth and depth in their academic programmes, ensuring broad knowledge of culture, science and society, as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. More specifically it should help students to develop a sense of social responsibility as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving ability, and a demonstrated competency to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings. Arguments to foster this type of approach to undergraduate education in the 21st century can be described in three broad categories.

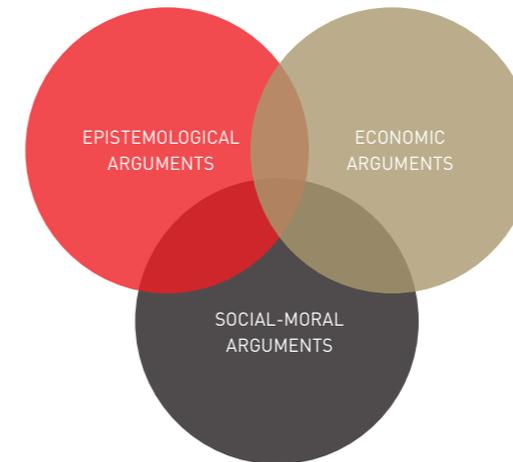
- The first type of argument is of an epistemological character and relates to the development of knowledge and the fact that the most exciting science is happening at the interface of the traditional disciplines. The realisation that some of the 'big challenges' that we face both in science and society are just not solvable by single-discipline approaches, but that interdisciplinary work is needed to provide the big breakthroughs. This has led to a substantial focus on cross- or inter-disciplinary research into themes such as climate change, energy, health and well-being and needs to be reflected in the curriculum
- The second type of argument is of an economic and utilitarian nature and relates to the employability of graduates. A society characterised by a knowledge economy, innovation, and global competition requires the so-called '21st century skills' which enable graduates to be creative,

critical thinkers, and problem-solvers who can cooperate in teams and communicate across the boundaries of languages, cultures and disciplines.

- The third category of argument relates to the moral/social dimension and to the humanistic tradition of liberal arts, underlining the importance of educating the whole person, including personal and intellectual development with a view to social responsibility and democratic citizenship.

As depicted below, these arguments seem to be to some extent interrelated. Although it should be noted that the first two categories of argument are strongly driven by the global knowledge economy into a converging agenda for undergraduate education in the 21st century. Whereas the third category, the social-moral dimension, may in fact be the most complex one to (re-)define in this 'new global century', as it does not seem to be characterised by convergence in the political and ideological sense. Moreover, tensions may arise between the economic and social-moral arguments, as argued by for instance Martha Nussbaum.

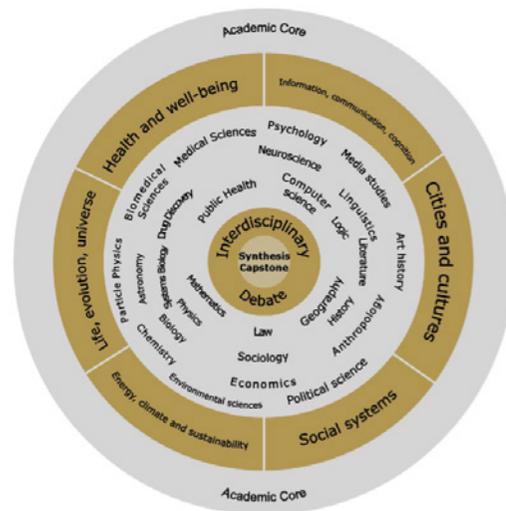
Below the three sets of arguments will be discussed and illustrated by Amsterdam University College.



Drivers for Liberal Arts in the 21st Century

INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND THE ROLE OF DISCIPLINES: COMBINING BREATH AND DEPTH

The focus on interdisciplinarity is recognised as a key component for excellence in undergraduate education. The introduction of real-life situations, broad themes and 'big questions' from the first year allows students to develop a broad intellectual horizon and motivates them to learn, or rather to avoid the usual boredom and hence drop out.



AUC's Curriculum Circle

Learning is enhanced when students are engaged in the process through the study of challenging problems related to their backgrounds, history and goals. Moreover it enables them to motivate their subsequent choice for disciplinary courses better (e.g. in physics and chemistry for better understanding of sustainability problems).

At the same time it is very clear that the interdisciplinary approach cannot replace rigorous teaching of the disciplines, since genuine disciplinary work presupposes, next to broad interdisciplinary thinking, the ability to collaborate intelligently with disciplinary experts and thus in-depth training in at least one (and ideally two) disciplines. A substantial depth of knowledge is required for successful interdisciplinary debate.

The AUC curriculum combines breadth of experience with depth of knowledge. In the first semester of their studies students are expected to think about the 'Big Questions' in science and society, engaging them in far-reaching themes and broad real-world questions. Their choice for Big Questions in Science, Big Questions in Society, Big Questions in History or Big Books is independent from their (intended) major. Discipline-based knowledge is mostly acquired through the major courses in the second and third year. At the end of the first semester, students choose a theme course to orient themselves on their choice for a major. AUC offers six introductory theme courses: Energy, Climate and Sustainability; Life, Evolution and the Universe; Health and Well-being; Information, Communication, Cognition; Social Systems; and Cities and Cultures. All themes have a broad interdisciplinary character and introduce students to relevant issues and research questions and explain how different disciplines contribute to it. They offer an orientation and background to the choice of courses for the major, which provides students with the necessary depth of knowledge to engage in the interdisciplinary debate at a more advanced level in their third year and to complete a capstone project.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND THE TWO CULTURES OF MODERN SOCIETY

The importance of generic skills is presented above as an economic or utilitarian argument related to employability. Employment in the 21st century is expected to be influenced by more volatile labour markets and careers and a changing demand for skills, i.e. an increasing demand for non-routine interactive and analytical skills as compared to a



"Many of our students will later be in a position to make important decisions, whether in business, government, policy, or academia. The scientific way of thinking and approaching life could be valuable if not crucial for their success."

*Prof. Dr. Robbert Dijkgraaf,
President Royal Netherlands
Academy of Arts and Sciences*

decreasing demand for routine cognitive and manual skills. As recognised by multinational companies and international organisations, typical '21st century skills' would therefore include creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, information, IT, and media literacy, social and cross-cultural skills, leadership and responsibility.

In the spirit of C.P. Snow who stated in 1959 that the breakdown of communication between the 'two cultures' of modern society – the sciences and the humanities – was a major hindrance to solving the world's problems, a 21st century liberal arts approach should be able to bridge and integrate these views. It can build directly on its origins when the seven liberal arts were defined as the Trivium (the literary arts) and the Quadrivium (the mathematical arts).

At AUC, the Academic Core ensures that students develop strong skills in mathematics, logic and argumentation, research methods, academic English, a (second) foreign language, and interdisciplinary and intercultural skills. In their first year students take a set of academic and intercultural skills courses, some of which are generally compulsory (e.g. Academic English; Logic, Information Flow and Argumentation; and The Global Identity Experience), or compulsory for specific groups depending on the intended major (e.g. calculus, statistics or another type of maths or research methods course). A profiling choice made by AUC was to emphasise the sciences and the training of quantitative skills for all students. As stated by Robbert Dijkgraaf in his lecture at

AUC's Grand Opening in 2009: "Many students will later be in a position to make important decisions, whether in business, government, policy, or academia, the scientific way of thinking and approaching life should be valuable if not crucial for their success.". Consequently, scientific reasoning, quantitative literacy ('numeracy') is part of the academic skills training of all AUC students. A high level of skills in maths is a key requirement for admission.

CITIZENSHIP AND THE NEED FOR A TRULY GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The third category of argument in favour of the liberal arts relates to the moral/social dimension and in particular to social responsibility and democratic citizenship. Clearly this notion has a strong moral dimension. In democratic societies it will be taken for granted that this implies democratic citizenship. This may be less obvious in certain other countries. Questions about the scope of citizenship are of importance as well; should it for instance be national ('citizenship for nation building'), regional (e.g. European or Asian), global, or all at the same time? As argued by Nussbaum, shaping citizens through higher education means that students must be prepared for a culturally diverse and international world, which requires understanding the perspectives of a wide variety of cultures. It should be clear that this type of learning can only succeed in a truly intercultural context, which requires a strongly diverse student body and faculty profile.

The student population of AUC (at present almost 700 in total, growing to 900 in 2015) includes 50% international students from over 35 countries.

One-third of the students study abroad for a semester. Over two-thirds of the AUC faculty have an international background and over a third of them hold a PhD from a top-100 university (Shanghai ranking).

EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY IN A GLOBAL CITY

The global city of Amsterdam with its multicultural character (hosting some 180 nationalities) and the strong presence of international businesses and cultural institutions is a perfect context where excellence and diversity can naturally meet. Global issues play a central role in the curriculum and the global city of Amsterdam is actively used as a learning environment. Courses such as Cities and Cultures, Literary Cities and Cinematic Cities, Urban Life and Society, and Urban Economics enable students to understand cities in the broadest sense. Engagement with the city takes also place in internships or community projects that students may undertake in their second or third year and in the popular lecture series 'Who's in Town' (see pages 64–68).

Community outreach is an explicit element of AUC's external strategy and of faculty engagement. Although AUC was immediately able to generate diversity in terms of a high proportion of international students, attracting minority students locally proved to be more complicated. AUC is aware that liberal arts education traditionally attracts a white middle-class student population, but feels that this would be an inadequate and in fact inappropriate student profile for itself, since first- and second-generation immigrants make up half of the city's population. Globalisation generates cosmopolitanism and migration with

less prosperous perspectives and global cities such as Amsterdam reflect both in their populations. AUC values diversity therefore as an inclusive and rooted concept, thus not limited to the 'new cosmopolitans' as an elite that increasingly chooses for international and bilingual education.

AUC's outreach programme is guided by the awareness of the role that cultural and social capital may play in admission processes, in the choice of students for a study programme, and that a residential obligation may be an obstacle for certain groups. The fact that AUC actually transcends the usual minority/majority categories and ethnic divides as found in Dutch universities encourages minority students to join. AUC students – some from minority backgrounds, some not – who voluntarily joined the diversity outreach project advocate these advantages as being part of a diverse blend meeting in a global context, allowing them to meet fellow students with probably the same convictions and religious beliefs but from very different cultural or economic backgrounds and vice versa.

Corporate sponsors of the AUC Scholarship Fund, which supports at present 10–15% of AUC's students with a scholarship, are in particular motivated to contribute with these targets in mind. For them the importance of nurturing a diverse workforce should be reflected in a university's mission to educate a diverse student body. See also pages 60–61.

Data recently gathered in the context of the Survey on the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU, administered by the Center for Higher Education Studies at UC Berkeley) reflect that students greatly appreciate the international

AUC STUDENT BODY

- Almost 700 students at present
- 900 in 2015
- 50% international
- From > 35 countries
- 1/3 study abroad for a semester

AUC FACULTY

- > 2/3 international background
- 1/3 a PhD from a top-100 university (Shanghai ranking)

DATA FROM SERU SURVEY

- 94% students find general climate at AUC tolerant of diversity
- 85% say that diversity is important for AUC and for themselves
- 85–90% of the students report positive feeling of belonging
- 80% of the students master between two to four languages to at least conversational level
- 62% master at least two languages to a level that they could study in that language
- 34% master three or more languages to a level that they could study in that language

OUTREACH

AUC PARTNER SCHOOLS

In order to ensure a smooth transition for students from secondary education to the AUC programme, AUC works in close collaboration with a select number of partner schools. These partner schools provide AUC with very useful, experience-based information, specifically related to outreach and diversity.

- Cygnus Gymnasium
- Scholengemeenschap Reigersbos, (Excellius programme)
- Open Scholengemeenschap Bijlmer
- Bredero College

Within the framework of *bèta partners* (www.betapartners.nl) AUC has been granted a subsidy to foster and promote excellence in science education. *Betapartners* is a joint project between UvA, VU and 32 secondary schools in the region of Amsterdam and aims to promote excellence in science education.

AUC PARTNER SCHOOLS WITHIN THE BÈTAPARTNERS FRAMEWORK.

- Vossius Gymnasium
- Barlaeus Gymnasium
- Scholen Gemeenschap Reigersbos
- Amstelveen College
- Da Vinci College
- Calandyceum

opportunities at AUC, find that the general climate at AUC is tolerant of diversity (94%), and that diversity is important at AUC and for themselves (85%). Social integration, the overall social experience and feeling of belonging is reported positively by 85–90% of the students. AUC students' abilities in intercultural communication are no doubt supported by their strong language skills: 80% master between two to four languages at conversational level (14% three or more) and 62% at least two language at the level needed to study in that language (34% three or more). Multilingualism is a genuine notion at AUC. As the curriculum is taught in English, native speakers of English study another language for two or three years. Next to French, German, Spanish and Dutch, the Academic Core also offers courses in Chinese and Arabic.

MISSION COMPLETED?

AUC students are carefully selected and perform for 81% at honours level (GPA ≥ 3.0), retention is above 90% and the annual full credit load (60 ecp) is earned by 95% of these students. Over 70% of the first cohort completed their degree on time, while one-third of them studied abroad for a semester.

Faculty is recruited mainly from the two founding universities, also on a strongly selective basis. They achieve in evaluations an average teacher/course quality rating of 4,1 (on a 5-point scale), with 54% of the teachers being rated above 4.25.

The criteria for faculty recruitment and student admission, the principles of excellence and according evaluation models have proven to be useful in developing excellence.

AUC's excellence criteria that are most strongly recognised by the students are: 'demanding academic standards' and 'teachers as an inspiring source of information'. Data gathered for the Dutch National Student Survey (NSE) provide further insight into AUC's excellence profile as experienced by the students. Most highly appreciated (≥ 4) are:

- The study programme in general, its challenging content and academic level, the academic expertise of teachers
- The development of academic skills, argumentation and logic, analytical thinking, academic writing, constructing scientific conclusions.
- The development of general skills: critical attitude, problem-solving capacity, communication skills and cooperation in teams .
- The general atmosphere and the engagement of teachers with students.
- The study environment: facilities on campus and in the city of Amsterdam.

Key conditions for excellence are recognised at AUC as a constant feedback of results integrated into faculty discussions. Also a culture of discipline and of high expectations and standards for student performance, as student success is promoted by setting and holding students to standards that stretch them to perform at higher levels, inside and outside the classroom.

REFLECTION AND OUTLOOK

As a young institution, AUC's mission is, of course, far from being completed. It still has a way to go in sustaining its level of excellence beyond its swinging start-up phase and by

further strengthening its diversity profile. Great opportunities lie ahead in the strengthening of its science focus. The new cohort (class of 2015) includes 40% science majors and this percentage is expected to grow quickly to the envisaged 50%. With the Amsterdam Science Park as its new environment AUC will enjoy a wealth of opportunities and inspiration in the natural and life sciences. No doubt this will lead to new cooperation, inspiration, entrepreneurship and friendships.

More work also needs to be done in the Dutch and European context in explaining the liberal arts concept to secondary education and to graduate schools. At both ends it is still too often seen as an option for delayed choice for disciplinary study and too little understood in terms of its inherent goals and characteristics and its relevance for the 21st century. Also employers, themselves mostly educated in disciplinary tracks, may be insufficiently aware of the generic and specific talents of liberal arts graduates. Potential students could be better made aware and admission procedures refined in order to detect the true motivations for liberal arts education more effectively.

AUC's challenges are those faced by liberal arts colleges in general. They offer no panacea for undergraduate education in general and important remaining issues are how the principles of liberal arts can be implemented at larger scales, and how its understanding can be developed into a truly global concept indeed.

AUC STUDENTS

- 84% honours level (GPA \geq 3.0)
- Retention 93%
- Full annual credit load (60 ecp) earned by 94%
- 70 % of the first cohort completed their degree in time
- 1/3 studied abroad

AUC FACULTY

- Average teacher/course quality \geq 4.1 (on 5-point scale)
- 54% of the teachers evaluated $>$ 4.25



Science courses: lab work and excursions

2008

Moments in Time



28 May Press conference with Alderman Lodewijk Asscher and UvA President Karel van der Toorn and VU President Rene Smit



Founding students Kirsten Meulenbroek and Nienke Schutte



11 November AUC receives Sirius subsidy from education minister Plasterk



Project office Sarphatistraat 104

2009

Moments in Time



24 April 2009 Signing of joint agreement AUC by Deans of VU and UvA



January 2009 Setting up for the first admissions interviews in the Artis Library



25 March 2009 First AUC Board Meeting



13 May 2009 First Faculty Meeting with Prof. Dr. Robbert Dijkgraaf



22 September 2009 Prof. Dr. Alexander Rinnooy Kan at Sponsor meeting



14 May 2009 Launch of the AUC Scholarship Fund at Rabobank Amsterdam



November 2009 AUC meets AMC



22 September 2009 Grand Opening



22 September 2009 Grand Opening



December 2009 First Christmas dinner

2010

Moments in Time



September 2010 Establishing the AUC Student Association (AUCSA)



April 2010 Boston, visiting liberal arts colleges in the USA



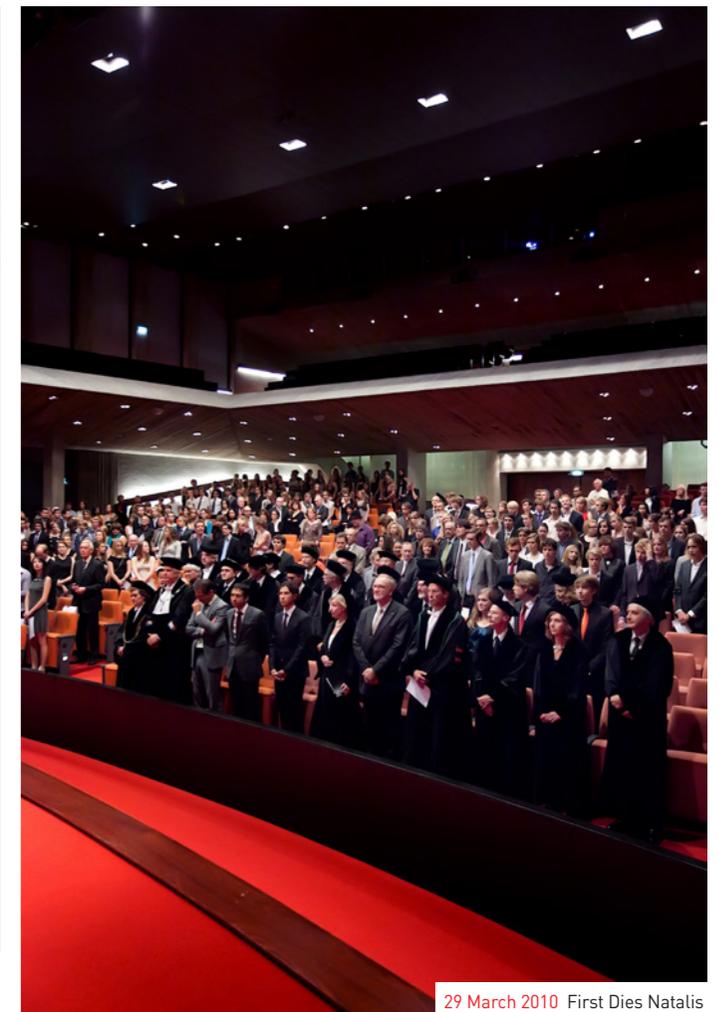
29 March 2010 Princess Máxima visits AUC



29 March 2010 Princess Máxima with Prof. Dr. Dijkgraaf and Prof. Dr. Halleh Gharashi



22 September 2010 Prof. Dr. Jan Hindrik Ravestloot is keynote speaker at the first AUC Dies Natalis



29 March 2010 First Dies Natalis



18 May 2010 Faculty Meeting



22 June 2010 Summer barbecue

2011

Moments in Time



10 February 2011 Students put out country flag poles for Groundbreaking Ceremony for the new building



17 May 2011 AUC Scholarship Fund (ASF) fundraising dinner



22 September 2011 Dr. Alexander Rinnooy Kan, Second Dies Natalis



22 September 2011 Second Dies Natalis



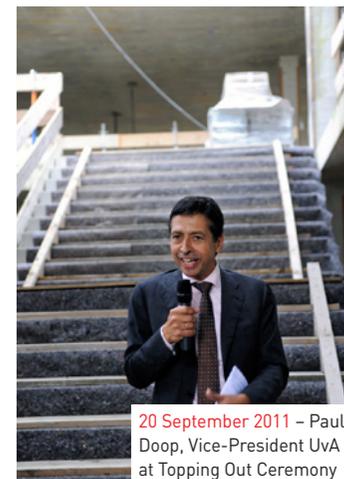
10 February 2011 Groundbreaking Ceremony for the new building



12 May 2011 Faculty Meeting



20 September 2011 Topping-out Ceremony for new building



20 September 2011 - Paul Doop, Vice-President UvA at Topping Out Ceremony

2012

Moments in Time



10 May 2012 Establishment of the AUC Beer Brewing Club



16 May 2012 Last Faculty Meeting in the Artis Library



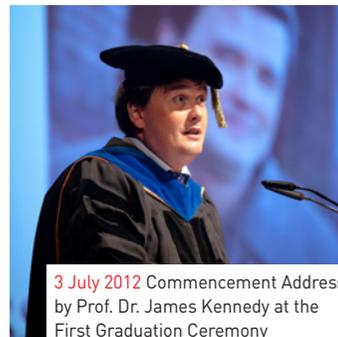
16 June 2012 Dorm Fest



4 June 2012 AUC Core Faculty and staff (still) alive and kicking!



3 July 2012 Students presenting their capstone projects to sponsors at ASF Graduation Research Seminar



3 July 2012 Commencement Address by Prof. Dr. James Kennedy at the First Graduation Ceremony



3 July 2012 First Graduation Ceremony



July 2012 Launch of the AUC Alumni Association (AUC AA)



3 July 2012 First Graduation Ceremony



Removal to the new building



Amsterdam University College

The Teaching Experience

“The close personal contact enables me to see students of various backgrounds grow and enjoy the materials. I can spot the talent.”

[Prof. Dr. Jan Hindrik Ravesloot](#)

I organise the Introduction to Health and Well-being theme course. The thread in the course is 'obesity'. Over the course of one semester this topic is viewed from various perspectives, including physiological, medical, epidemio-logical, societal and personal standpoints. My conviction

is that the secret of a liberal arts and sciences education lies firmly embedded in the educational principles. These include small group learning, challenging course content, high expectations of the students' performance, motivated staff, and meaningful student-student and student-teacher interactions. I try to adhere to these principles, which at times is, I have to admit, cumbersome. Driving up to the AUC building with freshly prepared course materials twice a week takes a special kind of breed of teachers. Persuading the students to study the journal articles in class, motivating them to answer the questions to the best of their abilities takes quite an effort. However, the return on these investments is immensely satisfying. The close personal contact enables me to see

students of various backgrounds grow and enjoy the materials. I can spot the talent. Students that are not very comfortable with the content can excel in the paper-writing assignment or the oral presentations or both. It is a true delight to watch and listen to their talks. I hope that my course produces a broad and deep learning, allowing students to acquire a rich fund of meaningful knowledge. Just as Aristotle meant liberal arts and sciences to be over 2300 years ago.



“Here at AUC the imagination could work again in a course that takes the students and myself on a journey in search for the contributions that various European cities have made to western civilisation.”

[Prof. Dr. Arjo Klamer](#)

Small groups, bright students, big questions, core texts: my teaching experience at AUC reminded me of my years at Duke University and Wellesley College. Regular programmes at Dutch universities are restrictive in order to fit a streamlined trajectory. Here at AUC the imagination could work again in a course that takes the students and myself on a journey in search for the contributions that various European cities have made to western civilisation. The set-up inspired me to try out things, to stimulate students

to write creatively, to conduct Socratic dialogues, to scout the cities in small groups. If only the students could ease up a little in their anxiety about making the best grade.





At the BeTA lab students operate at the crossroad of the brain sciences and information technology with the goal of understanding and advancing human information processing in real life situations.

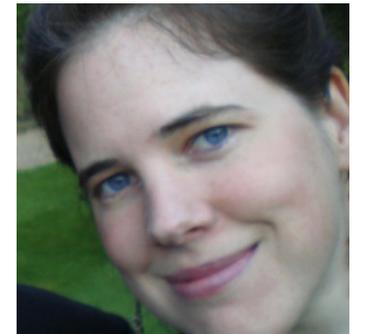
“You can imagine the classroom discussions when, for example, we discuss poverty and there are students in the room who have spent time in the slums of Nairobi.”...

“The willingness and ability of the students to cross disciplines and embrace multidisciplinary perspectives is what I found to be the most enlightening teaching experience at the AUC.”

Dr. Kathryn Zandbergen

As a faculty member at Amsterdam University College, I'm fortunate to wear a number of different hats. I'm a tutor, I'm on the admissions team, I have a role in the AUC Alumni Association and, of course, I'm a teacher, my two courses being Big Questions in Society and Comparative Public Policy. Teaching at AUC is a joy – not only do I have great colleagues from around the world, but the students themselves are highly motivated and come from a wide variety of backgrounds. You can imagine the classroom discussions when, for example, we discuss poverty and there are students in the room who have spent time in the slums of Nairobi, have volunteered at orphanages in developing

countries, or have worked at NGOs seeking to improve conditions for those who are suffering. At AUC, I've also enjoyed the opportunity to design the courses that I teach, to teach on my own, and to both co-teach and to teach in parallel with others. In short, through meaningful interactions with both students and colleagues, teaching at AUC has been a hugely rewarding experience.



Dr. Sennay Ghebream

For three years now, students of the AUC theme course Introduction to Information, Communication and Cognition have been combining theories and methods from science, social sciences and humanities to explore what information is, how it materialises in man and machine, and to what extent it underlies rationality, emotions and actions in everyday situations. Typically, they develop a hypothesis, for example about what makes a painting appealing, and experimentally test this hypothesis in the Beta-lab using neural or computational instruments. In this 16-week process, students invariably, and under-

standably, start from a disciplinary perspective. Surprisingly quickly, however, they realise that most real-world phenomena require more than the sum of disciplinary explanations. The willingness and ability of the students to cross disciplines and embrace multidisciplinary perspectives is what I found to be the most enlightening teaching experience at AUC.



AUC recipe for a great teaching experience

Ingredients

-
- 50 fantastic students
- 1 teacher who enjoys what she does
- 1 popular foreign language: Spanish
- 1 well-equipped classroom
- 1/4 cup of fresh ideas
- A dash of humour

Directions

- 1 –
Divide the ‘fantastic students’ in small groups (max. 25 per group)
- 2 –
Add the foreign language (Spanish: the choice of the students)
- 3 –
In a well- equipped classroom, mix the students, foreign language and teacher
- 4 –
Let the dough rest for a couple of days
- 5 –
Add ¼ cup of fresh ideas and wait a few weeks
- 6 –
Bake the mix until the edges have puffed and the top is golden
- 7 –
Sprinkle the result with a dash of good humour

The result is a great teaching experience!

Recipe by Belén Arias Garcia

“Here, students are brimming with energy, eager to discuss, and unafraid to voice different opinions.”

“The AUC [Spanish] classes are laboratories of creation in which the prime matter is language.”

[Dr. Emma Cohen de Lara](#)

From day one, when I arrived at the AUC classroom in September 2009, it was clear: AUC is not an ordinary place. Here, students are brimming with energy, eager to discuss, and unafraid to voice different opinions. As a political theorist, a field in which there are no single answers or dogmas, I am extremely grateful to be involved with students ready to take on this challenge. As we prepare our students to become active citizens and leaders across the world, the skill of respectful

and critical inquiry remains an essential one. The AUC community promotes this endeavour both inside and outside the classroom, and thus provides the environment for a unique teaching experience.



[Belén Arias Garcia, MA](#)

AUC ES CREAR Y EXPLICAR EN ESPAÑOL

Students in AUC’s Spanish classes transform into Spanish-speaking creators, inventors and artists. They present, defend, vend; they act, plan and build in a language that was nothing but “Vamos a la playa” a few days earlier. The AUC classes are laboratories of creation in which the prime matter is language. In three years, I was flabbergasted as I assisted premieres of movies worthy of an Oscar (or at least a Goya), plays even at the altitude of Shakespeare (or at least García Lorca’s). I have seen fingerlicking good cooking programmes and students tried to sell me everything from xylophonic printers and illuminated ponchos to machines to build my

own latino and the iAgua (bath caps that allow one to listen to music while swimming), as well as camouflage covers for laptops, so that I would not notice that no-one is paying attention when I explain the subjuntivo again. All this in Spanish, quality Spanish that is.





Dr. Forest Bradbury launching AUC's first rocket

“The small class sizes allow everyone to get to know each other. And like everyone else, my own background is unique and appreciated within AUC’s diverse programme.”

“I simply could not think of a better environment in which to engage students in a vigorous conversation about questions of history, culture, identity, and representation.”

Dr. Forrest Bradbury

While teaching at AUC may be challenging, it is definitely rewarding. The AUC student body is populated by motivated and interesting people. The small class sizes allow everyone to get to know each other. And like everyone else, my own background is unique and appreciated within AUC’s diverse programme. One peculiar project has been the AUC beer brewing. Thanks to the equipment of Director of Education Ramon Puras and the connections of Housemaster Jaap Boertje, the AUC brewery was established in 2010. Three different beers (a red ale, a hefeweizen,

and a big hoppy dark ale) have already been produced with the help of many keen students. While the future of the AUC beer project is tenuous at best, it goes to show how a bit of creativity, cooperation, and help from mother nature can result in something complex, artistic, yummy, and alive!

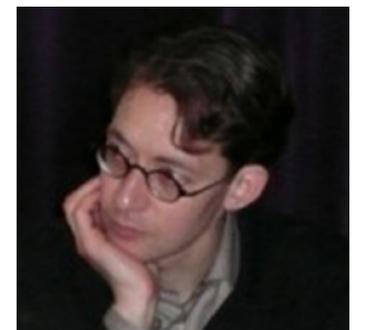


Dr. Marco de Waard

AUC TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2010

AUC is a truly exciting place for anyone who cares about teaching. From a Humanities perspective, its commitment to excellence in diversity and to the promotion of global citizenship and civic values affords special opportunities that have often challenged me to rethink – and re-apply – established practices and insights from my field. I simply could not think of a better environment in which to engage students in a vigorous conversation about questions of history, culture, identity, and representation. Nor could I feel more at home in a place where

such a conversation is not a bland academic exercise but where it forms part of the texture of everyday life, within a close-knit community that is united by its dedication to learning.





Class History of biological illustrations

“The absolute highlight? Those moments of recognition when the student’s eyes light up, when s/he has finally ‘seen it’.”

[Dora Achourioti, MA](#)

TEACHING LOGIC AT AUC

Understanding is a personal affair. And yet, as a logic teacher, I’ve had the privilege of seeing the process of understanding unfolding before my eyes. The absolute highlight? Those moments of recognition when the student’s eyes light up, when s/he has finally ‘seen it’. In the course of a semester of logic classes, first-year students have grown into abstract, systematic thinkers who can speak a language of symbols and can reason according to well-defined rules. And they all do it so well! It’s been fun doing logic together. It’s also been great to share this



teaching experience with supportive colleagues in a stimulating environment. Logic has come a long way at AUC and we are now ready for our first Advanced Logic course. To be continued.



Practicals Energy, Climate, Sustainabilitynks

“It is arguably every academic’s dream to work in a tolerant environment where everyone is free to stand up and be counted regardless of his/her cultural, social, racial or political background.”

[Dr. Bruce Mutsvairo](#)

Working at AUC has been a truly enthralling experience. Very few institutions of higher education will match our teaching standards. Better still, it is arguably every academic’s dream to work in a tolerant environment where everyone is free to stand up and be counted regardless of his/her cultural, social, racial or political background. AUC offers all of that and more.



The Student Experience

“AUC has allowed me to achieve a thorough understanding of many fields, the ability to understand connections between different disciplines, and well-developed overall skills for a scientific education.”

Steven de Grauw

When I first stepped into AUC's building I was excited about everything I would learn, but perhaps also slightly worried about the fact that I was not specialising in one restricted field. Would AUC be able to provide me with the skills I would need further in my

career? I took courses ranging from mathematics to art history, chemistry to economics, and life sciences to environmental policy. As a number of courses in agricultural and environmental sciences were not offered at AUC I decided to take the opportunity of going abroad for completing my major. All in all, I would say that AUC has,

indeed, not provided me with a deep understanding of only one discipline. It has allowed me to achieve a thorough understanding of many fields, the ability to understand connections between different disciplines, and well-developed overall skills for a scientific education.



“Then at the dorm fest last week, looking at the teachers, new students, and old students playing laser tag, chatting around, and listening to the music, I thought: ‘WOW, it happened. We are AUC’.”

Saskia Hendriks

I remember that in the first week we all entered the building alone or in small, just-formed groups, feeling excited yet slightly insecure. In that week the movie ‘We are AUC’ was made by some students. Though catchy, it felt slightly uncomfortable: AUC was the university we went to, “we”

were the students. A lot has happened since that week. We have – very actively – criticised AUC, worked late hours on deadlines, and stressed about our capstones. Also, we have chilled on the balconies at night, made new friends, laughed at AUC’s ‘wisdom’, fallen in love, designed our own memes, dressed-up for Solace, made some soup for a

friend who was ill, fiercely debated the meaning of life, grown up a little bit more, and dreaded graduation as it meant that everyone would leave. Then at the dorm fest last week, looking at the teachers, new students, and old students playing laser tag, chatting around, and listening to the music, I thought: ‘Wow, it happened. We are AUC.’



“Three years of living in the AUC community and Amsterdam have brought me more than I came for. Both more ready and hungry, it’s now time to move on.”

Michiel Smit

Some two hundred students were drawn to a promise of commitment. We got to know each other in the elevator and on balconies. My foot went through my room’s wall during Academic English. Classes were wasted on Facebook or skimming some news. Luckily I found myself more often inspired

by fellow students and professors. I have had the typical save-the-world-syndrome affecting my papers many times. We’ve danced in every common room, were sent to bed by the police. Some evenings, amongst dozens of friends and neighbours, I’ve sat alone in my room feeling down. The ski/hike/city/weird trips with fellow students

were unforgettable. Three years were not enough to get to know everyone, nor myself, as much as I would have liked. Three years of living in the AUC community and Amsterdam have brought me more than I came for. Both more ready and hungry, it’s now time to move on.



“AUC was unlike anything I had ever done before, and was operating on academic levels I had not engaged previously.”

Florian Verbeek

Going to AUC was a leap of faith. Even AUC was not sure what to make of me: I was accepted on the condition that I regularly report my progress. As with many of life’s greatest events, my venture was shrouded in mystery and uncertainty. AUC was unlike anything

I had ever done before, and was operating on academic levels I had not engaged previously. There were those who supported me and those who doubted me, myself included. Some of the first lessons were overwhelming, as I was confronted with students more confident and prepared for academia. Luckily I had praise-

worthy friends who got me through it, it is hard to express how important they were; doing the right thing can be surprisingly easy. I came to AUC to find my calling and my passion. True answers are hard to find, especially in the humanities, but the fruits of this leap have given me faith for the next one.



Science courses: lab work and excursions



Excursion to the synchrotron and nuclear reactor facilities ESRF/ILL in Grenoble. The trip was part of the 300-level course "Symmetries and the Quantum Universe" and was partially sponsored by Nikhef (Nationaal instituut voor subatomaire fysica)



Climate for Science seminars under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Ir. Louise Fresco and Prof. Dr. Robbert Dijkgraaf.



Excursion System Earth

“It has been a true experience. Studying at AUC meant studying in an international environment, where students were challenged to keep up and do the best they can.”

Martijn Hagooort

If someone would have described to me all the things that I would be learning during the course of my Bachelor education at Amsterdam University College, I would probably not have believed the answer; what I have

learned over the past three years is more than just sheer knowledge, facts and theories. It has been a true experience. Studying at AUC meant studying in an international environment, where students were challenged to keep up and do the best they can. For me, Amsterdam University College

has been a place to study, live, and work in a welcoming and open atmosphere, where you perhaps learn at least as much outside of classes from the experience of studying at AUC as from attending classes.



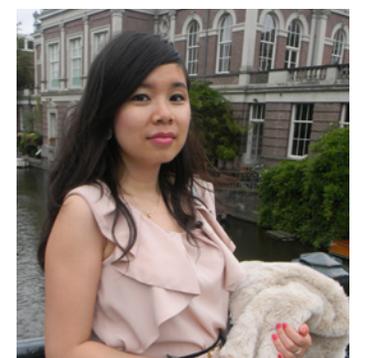
“Living far away from home, I have become more independent, mature, responsible, and understanding. For me, AUC is not only about learning; it is about living.”

Hahn Nguyen

As a student at Amsterdam University College, I have received an excellent education in the liberal arts and sciences. I have had the opportunity to enrich my knowledge in many fields, particularly international relations – my principal interest. Yet, three years at AUC has not only instilled

in me the passion for knowledge, cultivated my talent, but has also given me invaluable life lessons. I see more of the world and I realise more about myself. While excelling academically, I believe that I have also developed much more personally. I have had the chance to work with and learn from other young, dynamic and ambitious students of different

nationalities and cultures. I have accumulated diverse life experiences during my stay in Amsterdam, at a summer course in Italy and as an exchange student in Boston College. Living far away from home, I have become more independent, mature, responsible, and understanding. For me, AUC is not only about learning; it is about living.





Spanish class on the lawn in front of the old AUC building

“There are many ascents ahead, many real-life challenges to grow with – and I am fit and prepared to encounter them.”

Tobias Schuster

Studying at AUC – an intellectual challenge in my various fields of interest whilst living in an international and lively surrounding. I flourished personally and satisfied my fascination for medicine, physics and renewable energies all at the same time. Savouring

every step towards this peak, I climbed towards graduation, just to realise that it is merely like reaching the plateau at the base of a mountain range: there are many ascents ahead, many real-life challenges to grow with – and I am fit and prepared to encounter them. My next projects: more climbing experience and becoming a doctor!



Physics Lab Course



Visit to CERN

Awards



2010 Second annual AUC Essay Contest winner: Mathijs Mul



2010 Winning team of AUC students, proposals for UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun: Kyra Kieskamp, Karlijn Hoyer and Roos Berbers



On 29 February 2012, 20 AUC students presented a project they had been working on together with McKinsey consultants. The winning team consisted of Lisa Brouwer, Djuna Croon, Martijn Hagoort, Jesse Hetteema and Roelant Stegmann



2009 First annual AUC Essay Contest winner: Randy van Duuren



2011 Third annual AUC Essay Contest winner: Dico van Dissel



2010 AUC excellent teacher award: Dr. Marco de Waard



2011 AUC excellent teacher award: Dr. Bart van Heerikhuizen

Graduation 2012



Graduation Class of 2012



3 July 2012 This Forum gathered the group of graduating scholarship holders of the class of 2012. It offered their sponsors the opportunity to view their bachelor research and capstone thesis work. A selection of projects was discussed more in depth with an expert panel consisting of sponsors representatives.



3 July 2012 US Consul General Julie Ruterbories opening ASF Graduation Research Forum



3 July 2012 ASF Student Angela Arsova



Valedictory Speech by Imre Schene



Interlude by Matangi Marthi



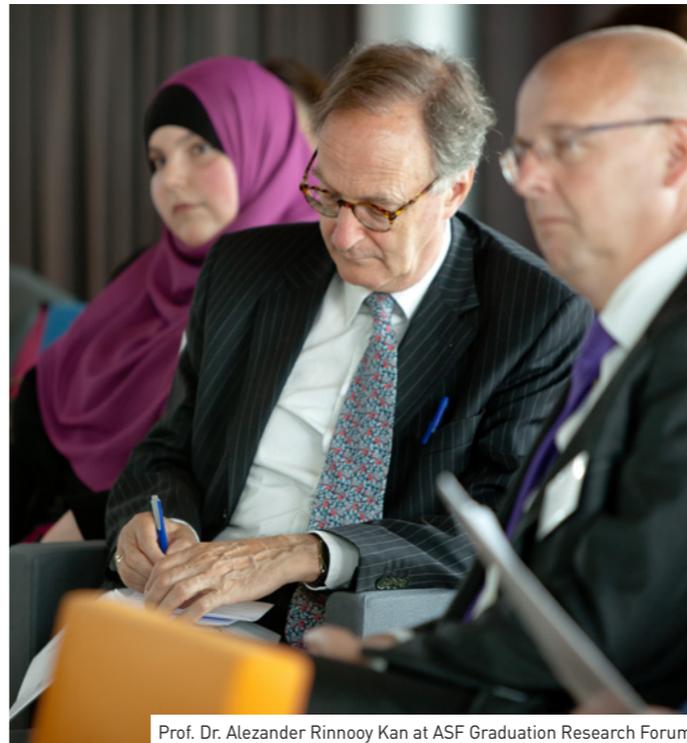
Conferring of degrees



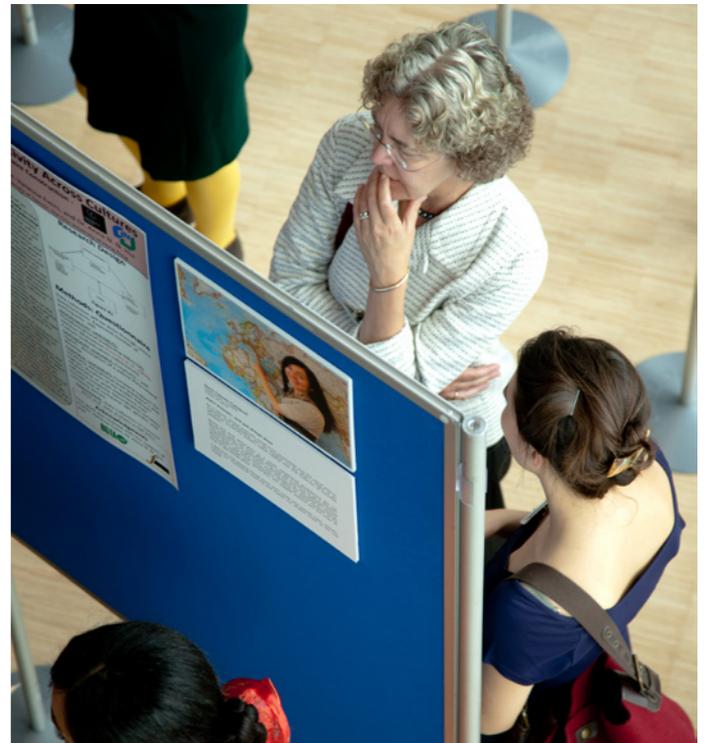
Commencement Address by Prof. Dr. James Kennedy at the First Graduation Ceremony



Chair of ASF selection committee Beer Schröder and ASF student Alon Gilboa



Prof. Dr. Alezander Rinnooy Kan at ASF Graduation Research Forum



New Building



AUC Scholarship Fund 2009-2012



AIM

The aim of the AUC Scholarship Fund is to further diversity and excellence in AUC's student body. The ASF awards scholarships to talented students who require financial support to study at Amsterdam University College (AUC). The AUC Scholarship Fund is administered as an independent foundation under Dutch law.



SPONSORS

The AUC Scholarship Fund is sponsored by the corporate sector, VU University Amsterdam, the University of Amsterdam, the AUC Student Association (AUCSA). Six companies have committed themselves to making a financial contribution to the Amsterdam University College Scholarship Fund (ASF) for three years: Shell, Rabobank Amsterdam and Schiphol Group since 2009, and KLM, PwC and AkzoNobel since 2012. This was announced by the Mayor of Amsterdam, Eberhard van der Laan, during the ASF Fundraising Dinner on Tuesday 17 May 2011.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The AUC Scholarship Fund is limited and highly selective, and only candidates who have excellent school results and a strong motivation are eligible. The AUC Scholarship Selection Committee includes representatives of all main sponsors and is chaired by Mr. R.E.V.M. Schröder (Nuffic, The Hague).



2009-2010

200 students studying at AUC
13 students with a scholarship (6.5%)

Total amount of scholarships given was €95,000

2010-2011

400 students studying at AUC
38 students with a scholarship (9.5%)

Total amount of scholarships given was €240,000

2011-2012

600 students studying at AUC
75 students with a scholarship (12.5%)

Total amount of scholarships given was €485,000



International Advisory Board

The International Advisory Board (IAB) advises the Dean and Management of AUC regarding the pursuit of its mission “Excellence and Diversity in a Global City” as a higher education institution. It meets once a year in Amsterdam.



Mr. Berry Marttin
Executive Board member
Rabobank Nederland (chair)

Mr. Marttin is the Executive Board member responsible for the International Rural and Retail division of Rabobank International. He joined Rabobank as an international management trainee in 1990, after completing a degree in business administration in Brazil. His career at Rabobank International has given him extensive experience as an international banker, in both the wholesale and retail banking business.



Prof. Helga Nowotny
President of the European Research
Council, Brussel

Professor Nowotny is Professor Emerita of Social Studies of Science, ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) and holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Columbia University, NY, and a doctorate in jurisprudence from the University of Vienna.



Prof. William Kirby
Professor of Chinese Studies and former
Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at Harvard University, US

Professor Kirby holds degrees from Dartmouth College, Harvard University, and (Dr. Phil. Honoris Causa) the Free University of Berlin. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



Ms. Eva Egron Polak
Secretary General, International Association
of Universities (IAU), Paris

Prior to joining IAU, Ms. Egron Polak was Vice President (international) of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. She was educated in the Czech Republic, Canada and France.



Dr. John Douglass
Center for Studies in Higher Education
University of California at Berkeley, US

Mr. Douglass is a Senior Research Fellow whose current research interests are focused on the student experience in research universities, the role of universities in economic development, science policy as a component of national and multinational economic policy, the evolving role of mass higher education in society, and the influence of globalisation.



Dr. Marja Zonnevylle
Manager Gas Processing Design,
Shell Nederland

Dr. Zonnevylle currently holds several non-executive positions, including member of Amsterdam Economic Board, for which she leads the project to develop scenarios for the Amsterdam Metropolitan region to 2025. She completed her MS and cum laude PhD in theoretical and physical chemistry at Cornell University (New York State) under the auspices of Nobel Laureate Prof. Dr. Roald Hoffmann.

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Thursday 12 January: Is it art yet? Street Art in Amsterdam

Street art is an art form developed in "the streets", where artists challenge the traditional art context. Through the esthetic value of this type of art, street artists communicate with everyday people about socially relevant themes and invite them to question their existing environment.

The Amsterdam Street Art Foundation (ASA) provides street art with a boost to better the image of street artists in Amsterdam and to raise awareness among a wider audience. Nicole Blommers and Jarno Gniirrep, members of ASA, will discuss the various types, past and present, of Street Art in Amsterdam and will share her passion for a type of art that is often neglected in a University setting.

Speakers: Nicole Blommers & Jarno Gniirrep (ASA)

Date & Time: Thursday 12 January 2012, 18.00 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convenors: Drs. Janna Schoenberger & Tina Spitzley

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Tuesday 24 November: Same-sex relationships in Europe: trends toward tolerance?

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the legalisation of gay marriage in the Netherlands. However, the legal recognition of same-sex relationships continues to be a complex legislative knot across Europe.

We are proud to invite Dr. Ian Curry-Sumner, Senior Lecturer at the University of Utrecht and an acclaimed and captivating speaker, elected Lecturer of the Year in 2008. He will speak on the recognition of same-sex relationships in Europe from a legal perspective, cunningly illustrating the absurd web of loopholes where divorce, marriage, civil union, surrogacy and adoption intersect.

Speaker: Dr. Ian Curry-Sumner, Senior University Lecturer at Utrecht University in Comparative Law, Private International Law, and Family Law

Date & Time: Thursday, 24 November 2011, 18.00 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convenors: Laura Loonstein and Shanna Hanbury

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Wednesday 26 October: The role of Artis Zoo in contemporary society

Artis, the Amsterdam Royal Zoo, represents a complex history of both material and immaterial culture. Founded in 1838 as Natura Artis Magistra, Nature is the Teacher of Art and Science, its founders formulated broad objectives: bringing together a living collection of animals in a park, creating museums and collections and founding a library for study and research. Zoology, botany, nature, natural history, art, geography and ethnography all became the focus of interest. What is the significance of this venture for contemporary society? How may we revive its coherent goals in a period that demands new liaisons between nature and culture?

Speaker: Erik A. de Jong, Artis-hoogeraar UvA

Date & Time: Wednesday 26 October 2011, 18.00 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convenor: Dr. Cor Zonneveld

natura
ARTIS
magistra

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Monday 11 April: clash over a currency: the euro debate

The recent euro crisis has evoked another debate on the common European currency. Two economists, both teachers at AUC, will discuss the benefits and characteristics of the euro. Prof. Klamer, critic of the euro, does not predict a long-lasting future partly because of political instability. By evaluating the sovereign debt crisis, both professors will present their views and assess the implications for the euro and its future.

Speakers: Prof. Dr. Arjo Klamer (Erasmus University Rotterdam and Amsterdam University College)
Prof. Dr. Eric Bartelsman (VU University Amsterdam and Amsterdam University College)

Date & Time: Monday 11 April 2011, 18.30 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library, Darwin Room (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convenor: AUC Debating

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Thursday 20 January: Feeding the world: the im- portance of sustainability

Sustainability is about reducing damage to mother Earth, developing an economy where everybody can participate now and in the future. We have to feed nine billion people in a sustainable manner by 2050. How can we accomplish this challenging task?

In this lecture, Berry Marttin will give some insights into this challenge we all face. Why is a sustainable supply chain important? What role can a bank play in the Food & Agri value chain in order to match demand and supply of food in a sustainable manner?



Rabobank

Speaker: Berry Marttin, Member of the Executive Board, Rabobank Nederland

Date & Time: Thursday 20 January 2011, 18.00 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Sander Tordoir and Timo Gerritsen

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Wednesday 16 February: Dutch Citizenship and Politics

In countries like France and the United States citizenship means being active in politics, even to the point of starting a revolution. That is not the case in the Netherlands. What has citizenship meant here, and how has it changed over time? And how do current populist currents affect the way Dutch citizens think and act on politics?

Speaker: Prof. Dr. James C. Kennedy, Faculty of History, University of Amsterdam
Respondent: Dr. Bart Jan Spruyt, Columnist Elsevier

Date & Time: Wednesday 16 February 2011, 18.30 - 20.00
Venue: Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Dr. Emma Cohen de Lara

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Tuesday 8 February: Corporate Governance in a Globalised Context

Shareholders in listed companies seem to be the most trustful people in the world. They have no contractual relationship with the companies whose shares they hold. To recoup their money they have to find another investor willing to buy the shares. Nonetheless zillions of savings are invested in listed equities all over the world. But how do shareholders get managers to return some of the profits to them? How do they make sure that managers do not steal the capital or invest in bad projects? How do shareholders control managers? That is what corporate governance is about.

Speaker: Dr. Paul Frentrup, author of 'A History of Corporate Governance', a book that describes the international development of corporate governance since the Dutch East India Company issues shares to the public in 1602.

Date & Time: Tuesday 8 February 2011, 18.30 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Bastiaan Gielink

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Tuesday 9 November: Captured Death: The Boundaries of Photojournalism

Programme

Introduction by Willem Dispraam, recipient of the BNO Piet Zwart Prize, the Dutch Design Awards lifetime achievement award, on the history, mission, and principles of war reporting.

Panel Debate

Jan Banning is an award-winning photojournalist who has covered, among others, the legacy of Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Prof. Dr. Johannes Houwink ten Cate, Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

Zorah Miller is an award-winning photojournalist who "specializes in documenting human crises in developing countries."

Jeroen Oerlemans is a photojournalist who has covered numerous conflicts from Sudan to Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Palestine to Iran and Iraq.

Dr. Mariette Willemsen teaches courses in philosophy and aesthetics at the VU University Amsterdam, with a focus on emotion, fiction, and action.

Q&A with the audience

Date & Time: Tuesday 9 November 2010, 18.00 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Maximilia Lane and Zuzanna Fiminska

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Monday 18 October: Philosophical Prophecy and the Origins of Liberalism: Hobbes and Spinoza on Salvation

Philosophic prophecy is a genre of philosophic writing which aims to provide an account, often historical or mythical, that is intended to promote a desirable and possible future. While philosophic prophecy is not always self-fulfilling, its existence is presupposed for a possible future. That is to say, our present, once unforeseen, actions can be the intended outcome of past design. Presupposing that Spinoza and Hobbes were practitioners of this genre, how do their political theories re-interpret the nature of salvation?

Speaker: Prof. Dr. Eric Schliesser
Faculty of Philosophy and Moral Sciences, University of Ghent

Date & Time: Monday 18 October 2010, 18.30 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Dr. Emma Cohen de Lara

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Tuesday 18 May: DEVELOPMENT AID: The effects and consequences of the economic crisis

Does development aid hurt or help the countries that receive it? What effects has the economic crisis had on development aid? Drs. Bert Koenders, former Minister for Development Cooperation in the Netherlands, will discuss the positive and negative effects of development aid as well as the repercussions of the economic crisis on development aid.

Speaker:
Drs. Bert Koenders, former Minister for Development Cooperation and member of the PvdA (Dutch Labour Party)

Date & Time: Tuesday 18 May 2010, 17.00 - 18.30
Venue: AUC Academic Building Room 1.31
Convened by: Martijn Hagoort

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Thursday 22 April: NO ELEGIES FOR GUTENBERG: The Culture of Print and Our Digital Future

Does the advent of the Internet spell demise for the print media? Professor David Thorburn, an expert in the area of film and media and cultural studies, suggests that this view is premature. He discusses why print media will survive the creation of the Internet, just as radio survived the dawn of television.

Speaker:
Prof. David Thorburn, Professor of Literature and Director of the MIT Communications Forum

Date & Time: Thursday 22 April 2010, 19.00 - 21.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Mr. Tienko Rasker (Ivy League Circle, MIT alumnus)

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Thursday 8 April: AFTERSHOCKS: reflections on the economic crisis

In the midst of the deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression, Casper Thomas was involved in a project asking leading politicians and business people from around the world to reflect on the aftershocks that may be expected in the political, economic and social spheres. He will present the outcomes of the project.

Speaker:
Casper Thomas, MA graduate of University College Maastricht and University College London. Staff member at the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR)

Date & Time: Thursday 8 April 2010, 18.30 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Prof. Dr. Marijk van der Wende

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Tuesday 8 November: Covering Discoveries: Traps of Science Journalism

Why is science in the media so often pointless, simplistic, boring, or just plain wrong?... In their choice of stories, and the way they cover them, the media create a parody of science... (Ben Goldacre, *Bad Science*, *The Guardian*, September 8, 2005).

A panel of scientists and (science) journalists will explore ways to write about science in a colorful yet comprehensive way that makes the discoveries accessible and attractive to the public while keeping them trustworthy and accurate.

Confirmed speakers: Sander Bais (Physicist, author and UvA Lecturer of the Year 2010), Martijn van Calmthout (Volkskrant), Margriet van der Heijden (NRC), Lennard Bonapart (Medical journalist), Govert Schilling (Astronomy correspondent), Jaap Seidell (Nutrition and Health expert), Jeroen van Dongen (Philosophy of Science lecturer) and Stefan Vandoren (Superstring Theory expert).

Date & Time: Tuesday 8 November 2011, 18.00 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Moderator: Prof. Sander Bais | Convenors: Zuzanna Fimińska and Karlijn Hoyer

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Friday 1 April: Identity Equipment: Technology, Memory, Narrative

John Eakin examines the dynamics of the stories we tell about our lives in bits and pieces every day. He argues that we do so not just because we take pleasure in talking about ourselves, but because we have been trained from an early age to participate in a systematic, rule-governed exchange of identity stories. Even though autonomy may seem to be built into the very act of self-representation—"I say who I am, I say what I've done"—others police our performance, and it is also true that we do this policing ourselves.

In his talk, Eakin focuses on the resources we use to perform this identity work: technology, memory, and narrative. Our identities, he concludes, are not given to us but made by us, using physical and social equipment that both enables and limits the persons we claim to be.

Speaker: Prof. Dr. John Eakin, Ruth N. Halls Professor Emeritus of English, Indiana University, Bloomington

Respondents: Dr. Jaap Bos, Tanry Dobbelaar, and Dr. Rudolph Giltz
Date & Time: Friday 1 April 2011, 18.30 - 20.00
Venue: Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convenors: Dr. Marco de Waard and Dr. Monica Soeting

IABA Europe

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Monday 31 January: Energy, Climate Change and the Limits of Planet Earth

In the first decade of this century, we are confronted with the limits of planet Earth with an intensity reminiscent of the 1970s. Now as then the question is: will exponential growth hit the wall, or will new technology once again save the day? This broad topic will be explored starting from the Shell Energy Scenarios, and adding analysis by the author on the pace of technological change.

Speaker: Prof. Dr. Gert Jan Kramer
Leiden University, Shell Global Solutions

Date & Time: Monday 31 January 2011, 18.30 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Dr. Paul F. Hudson



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Wednesday 27 October: Jazz improvisation approach to entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the process of discovering, evaluating and exploiting opportunities for innovative products, services or technologies. Entrepreneurship is driven by ideas, which are in infinite supply; no scarcity theory applies to ideas. There is no generally accepted theory of entrepreneurship and the speaker will use jazz improvisation, the creative process of composing on the spot and coming up with melodies off the top of one's head, as a metaphor for understanding the 'DNA' of entrepreneurship. Questions that will be discussed throughout the session will include: Why and how some ventures are successful while many fail? Why and how Google, Apple and the like grew to become leading global players? Should entrepreneurship be part of academic curriculum?

Speaker: Dr. Tsvi Vinig, University of Amsterdam Business School, runs the Specialisation in Entrepreneurship at the Masters in Business Studies and the Amsterdam Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE) @ Science Park

Date & Time: Wednesday 27 October 2010, 18.00 - 19.30
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Marius Kirschke

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Who's in Town

Monday 4 April: Signals & Signposts - 'Zone of Uncertainty' Ahead

Shell has recently updated its Energy Scenarios 2050. 'Signals & Signposts' offers a deeper understanding of global developments and the world's energy supply, use and needs. We believe that the world is entering an era of volatile transitions and intensified economic cycles. The scenarios help us to make crucial choices in uncertain times as we grapple with tough energy and environmental issues. In a seminar-style meeting (with a short presentation of 15-20 minutes) Prof. Dr. Ewald Breunese would like to discuss the scenarios with students. A summary of 'Signals and Signposts' is available at www.auc.nl and the entire document at www.shell.com/scenarios.



Speaker: Prof. Dr. Ewald Breunese (Coordinator Grants & Incentives, Shell Netherlands)
Date & Time: Monday 4 April, 18.30 - 20.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library, Merian Room (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convenor: Dr. Paul F. Hudson
Format: Seminar-style with a short presentation (15-20 minutes)

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Who's in Town

Wednesday 29 September: Probability and statistics in court: the roles of the expert and the judge

Should the judge become a statistician? In recent years we have witnessed several legal cases where it became clear that judges and other legal representatives had difficulties understanding probabilistic reasoning, which led to serious mistakes. In this lecture, Prof. Dr. Meester first explains why legal representatives should have some knowledge of statics and probability and then discusses what the role of the statistical expert should be.

Speaker: Prof. Dr. Ronald Meester, Department of Mathematics, VU University Amsterdam

Date & Time: Wednesday 29 September 2010, 10.00 - 12.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Dr. Cor Zonneveld

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Wednesday 14 April: COMPARING DEMOCRACIES

Boris Dittrich, a resident of the United States and Advocacy Director for Human Rights Watch, will compare the transparency of Dutch democracy with that of the USA. Which system gives more power to the people? And is that a wise thing to do?

Speaker: Boris Dittrich
Former D66 party leader and Advocacy Director, Human Rights Watch

Date & Time: Wednesday 14 April 2010, 17.00 - 18.30
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Convened by: Dr. Ramon Puras

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CLIMATE FOR SCIENCE

The seminar series "Climate for Science" aims to focus on a series of subjects that are at the interface between Science and Society. A typical Liberal Arts and Sciences approach is chosen in order to tackle relevant "real world problems." This may require an interdisciplinary approach, bridging the borders between academic disciplines. Five different perspectives will be addressed: Science, Media, IPCC, Policy makers and Civil society.

Prof. Dr. Robbert Dijkgraaf, University Professor of Mathematical Physics at the UvA and President of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)

Prof. Dr. Ir. Louise Fresco, University Professor of Sustainable Development in an International Perspective at the UvA and Member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)

Date & Time: Wednesday 9 June 2010, 14.00 - 17.00
Friday 25 June 2010, 14.00 - 17.00
Venue: AUC Artis Library (Plantage Middenlaan 45)
Student Assistants: Sanne Hettinga and Tobias Schuster

* Seminars open to selected students only.

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