

Promising practice

University: Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)

Academic Discipline: Literature & Philosophy

Course title: Redelijk Eigenzinnig

Course description:

Redelijk Eigenzinnig is an interdisciplinary course and series of lectures. The VUB vision is based on the fundamental values of freedom of speech, societal engagement, critical education, responsibility and freedom of research. Founded on these values, the course will stimulate reflection on major societal issues, without prejudices or dogmas.

Starting in 2015-2016, the course is made up of four modules of four weeks, each spotlighting an actual societal issue from different disciplines, including an introductory lecture and a debate between experts. The overall theme this first year is sustainability, with the following subtopics: sustainable science, climate & sustainability, sustainable working, life long & sustainable moving. At the start of the course, a general introduction explained all subtopics.

Week 1: introductory lecture by an expert

Week 1-3: home study - based on lecture and proposed study matter, students prepare debate and decide on a critical question in interdisciplinary teams of 4

Week 3: participatory debate

Week 4: students submit a progress report (3ECTS) and write 3 individual opinion papers (6ECTS)

Learning outcomes:

By attending the lectures, participating in the debates and reflecting with fellow students from various disciplines, students learn how to recognize and respect different positions and arguments in scientific discussions. Furthermore, they get the opportunity to choose and express a critical position.

They get in touch with fellow students from other faculties, get to know the VUB vision, professors and well known guest speakers from different domains, and are stimulated to choose an own position and to disseminate this .

How students' learning is assessed:

There is no exam, students are evaluated through the pass/fail principle.

How students learn with civil society organisations through this course:

- Guest lecturers from civil society organisations
- The course activities are take place in four different locations in Brussels, each one linked with a socio-cultural organisation that is organizing events around the lecturers so the students get to know the range of Brussels socio-cultural activities (FabLab visit, Climate Night in a concert hall etc.)

How students learn about dimensions of RRI through this course:

- Sustainability is this year's focus topic
- Open access and ethics are included in the 'open science' module
- The RRI process requirements are involved in the debate, group work and papers (arguments, discussion, interdisciplinarity etc.)
- Interdisciplinary groups: collaborating, reflecting about topics and course of group process, learning how to deal with different opinions and perspectives
- Students learn how to express their own opinion, to debate, become able to substantiate their opinion and reflect on how they can apply the acquired knowledge in their own environment

RRI keys integrated in the course:

Public engagement/ societal engagement; Open access; Gender and diversity Ethics; Science education and outreach from higher education; Governance; Sustainability; Social justice

RRI process requirements integrated in the course:

Anticipation ; Reflexivity; Inclusion; Responsiveness

Contact information:

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Weblinks

<http://www.redelijkeigenzinnig.be/>
<http://blog.redelijkeigenzinnig.be/>