

Leadership for Innovation and Performance Happiness (B29)

Credit weighting:	2.0 ECTS credits
Teaching period(s):	3 August 2026 – 7 August 2026 (1 week)
Level:	Bachelor level
Teaching methods:	55 hr(s) lectures/field excursions + assignments (including self Study)
Course leader:	Sandra Hendricks, MSc
Lecturer(s):	Sandra Hendricks, MSc

Description

In this course, you will discover the key variables of leadership, their relation to innovation and how they stimulate workplace happiness and increased performance.

Supported by a mix of lectures, working on a group assignment and a company visit, students will work together and analyze relevant factors for an innovation supportive working environment. During the course, students will apply these insights outside the classroom and will work together with real-life companies in the Utrecht area.

Students will be coached in small teams. The teams will be as varied as possible to provide a rich experience for the participants.

The business world is changing. Not only the impact of the recent pandemic all over the world but also new regulations, competitive markets and globalization are just a few of the examples of the always and fast-paced evolution within business. Experts agree that nowadays innovation is a key driver for growth. Recent research by McKinsey has found that no less than 94% of senior executives feel that people and corporate culture are the most important drivers of innovation.

The focus of the course will be on the vital and key role of leadership in that equation. Topics such as 'how do leaders enable others to innovate?', 'how do companies benefit from happy and motivated staff members?' and 'how do leaders incorporate and benefit from the disruptive qualities of technology?' will be discussed in order to give students new and valuable insights into the role of leadership in long-term organizational success.

This course will start with topics on personal leadership, helping you to get familiar with some of the individual characteristics of leadership supporting innovation and performance happiness.

The assignment will connect each team to a real-life company in the Utrecht region and will take students outside the classroom to translate what their insights could mean for this specific organization. During this assignment, teams will receive intensive coaching from our lecturers. At the end of the course each team will present its results.

This highly interactive approach requires academic English language skills at a minimum intermediate level.

NB: This course is also part of the combined 5 weeks track [Innovation in European Business](#) and the 6 weeks track [Innovation in European Business XXL](#)

What previous students (summer 2025 say about this course)

"I loved the international part of the course, i loved meeting new nations, working together with people from different backgrounds and i thought this course gave me a lot of time to reflect on myself and reflect on being a leader!"

"It was a great course which really showed the students a reflection of themselves. Also, the assignment for the company Rijkswaterstaat was really insightful and was a hard but interesting task."

Target audience

This course is an interesting challenge for students enrolled in Business and Management programs, and is also open to Bachelor and Master students from other fields, as long as you have some background OR a strong interest in leadership and/or (business) innovation.

A good command of English is necessary! Given the interactive nature of teaching, students *must* have the capabilities to communicate (understand and speak) in English well!

Aim of the course

This course aims to provide you with the opportunity to learn about leadership characteristics and their relation to innovation, performance happiness and long-term organizational success.

Study load

55 hours of lectures/field excursions + assignments (including self-study and assessment).

Please note: You must attend all learning activities (e.g. workshops, fieldwork) to be able to receive the Certificate of Participation and/or the credits for this course, unless absence is officially approved by the teachers and the coordinator of the Utrecht Summer School. You will be expected to be present until the final day of the course has ended. Please keep this in mind when booking your return flight. You can find your schedule in the Day to Day overview of your course on the course page.

Course programme

The day to day program is subject to changes depending on the availability of the guest lecturers

Saturday and Sunday, 1 and 2 August 2026		
Time	Activity	Description
12:00-18:00	Key pick up	<i>You will find the exact key pick up location in the pre-departure information, which becomes available after you have paid the course fee.</i>

Monday, 03-08-2026		
Time	Activity	Description
9:00-9:30	Welcome and Campus tour	
9:30-12:30	Welcome session	Meet & Greet and course introduction
11:45-12.30	Cultural differences (interactive*)	Definition what's Culture? Differences based on Hofstede & Trompenaars and Cultural Dilemma's.
12:30-13:30	Lunch**	
13:30-14:30	Innovation developments (interactive*)	What innovative development are there nowadays, interesting for organizations? A variety of innovations will be discussed.
14:30-17:00	Personal Leadership (interactive; Maxwell, Covey)	Hand out assignment (1)

Tuesday, 04-08-2026		
Time	Activity	Description

9:30-11:00	<i>Personal Leadership (interactive*; Maxwell, Covey)</i>	<i>Value creation leadership and what about you? Who are you and what can be an asset for your personal leadership and the organization in general?</i>
11:15-12:30	<i>Leadership styles (interactive) And briefing company visit</i>	<i>Several leadership styles are to be discussed.</i>
12:30-13:30	<i>Lunch**</i>	
13:30-17:00	<i>Company visit in Utrecht (interactive*)</i>	<i>Visiting a company in the surrounding of Utrecht. The company is sharing a theme or dilemma and is interested in the suggestions/advice per team is given to them after working for 3 day as a team. Presenting end of the module at location or at the University of Applied Sciences Utrecht via Teams. Fact is that the organisation is keen to hear your perspectives!</i>

Wednesday, 05-08-2026

Time	Activity	Description
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9:00-10:30	Strategic HRM (interactive)	Definition Strategic HRM (Guest speaker)
10:45-12:30	AI and organizational behavior and culture (interactive*)	How to manage people and organizations as its whole to work as a team! What do employees and organizations need today? And what influence has AI?
12:30-13:30	Lunch**	
13:30-16:30	Working on the assignment	Group work and coaching

Thursday, 06-08-2026

Time	Activity	Description
9.00-10:30	Change Management (interactive*)	Why is change necessary? What models and steps you can use to make a change possible within an organization?
10:45-12:30	The hidden influence of culture: Leadership	Leadership the organizational motor?
12:30-13:30	Lunch**	
13:30-16:30	Working on the assignment	Group work and coaching

Friday, 07-08-2026

Time	Activity	Description
9.00-10:30	Personal Leadership	What can you offer to organizations

<i>10:45-12:30</i>	<i>Presentations to Company</i>	<i>Advisory reports</i>
<i>12:30-13:30</i>	<i>Lunch**</i>	
<i>13:30-14:30</i>	<i>Feedback per team</i>	<i>Presentations</i>
<i>14:30-17:00</i>	<i>Saying goodbye</i>	<i>Drinks at The Basket</i>

* Interactive means: discussing and sharing knowledge and experience, several team-, and personal assignments.

**Please note: Students must bring/cover their own lunch

The lunch times in the program can vary, these times are just an indication.