

European Cultures and Identities

SYLLABUS 2026

(Draft version June)

summerschool
UTRECHT



Universiteit Utrecht

Materials

Reader, provided by the Utrecht Summer School

Period

6 July – 17 July 2026

Credits

4.0 ECTS + Certificate of Attendance

Faculty

Course Coordinator and Lecturer

Dr. Julie Deschepper -
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Teaching Assistant

Liza Mironova, BA
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Guest lecturer

Dr. Rachel Gillett, Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University

Utrecht Summer School

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Location of course (seminars and lectures)

Utrecht University
Room: TBC
(for directions and information, see [link](#))

Contents

Introduction and overview	4
Overview of Reading	6
Academic Programme	7
Assessments, Attendance and Grading	14
Online Education and statement on GenAI	15
Current Political Map of Europe	16

Introduction and overview

Welcome to the Utrecht Summer School and welcome to European Cultures & Identities! The aim of this course is to introduce you to Europe. This is a continent with many different countries that all maintain their own political systems, cultural traditions, and national identities. At the same time, since the second half of the twentieth century, most of the European countries have been engaged in a joint project aimed at economic and political integration. We will explore how this mix of particularism and unity has developed historically.

Summer Course Format

Lecturers from Utrecht University will introduce various European topics, key conceptual frameworks, and case-studies in different educational formats: lectures, seminars, and excursions.

The course is divided into three general themes:

- 1) Europe: Ideas, Imaginations, and Representations
- 2) Constructing of Europe: Nationalism, Colonialism, and Imperialism
- 3) Cultural Heritage and Memories of and in Europe

The summer course has an interactive and intensive character. Active participation is expected from all students, particularly during seminars, where students are encouraged to engage in discussions, ask questions, and collaborate in group work. During lectures, students are expected to attend attentively and take notes. Materials covered in the seminars and lectures will be assessed in the written exam. In addition, thorough individual preparation through the assigned readings and the timely completion of portfolio assignments are essential for successfully passing the course.

Please note that the course schedule and course materials are subject to change. A finalized schedule will be provided shortly before the course begins.

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives of the course are:

1. To obtain a grounding in European Cultures and Identities on a conceptual level, and to think critically about these topics.
2. To learn to apply conceptual knowledge about European Cultures and Identities to understand cultural expressions and learn to think about the creation of cultures and identities on a deeper level.
3. To learn to apply this knowledge to case studies by practicing with writing assignments, a presentation, and an exam.

Assessment forms

The course will conclude with three assessments, covering all the lectures, seminars and reading materials:

1. Portfolio (Individual grade, 10%).

For the first assessment, you will hand in a portfolio consisting of the class assignments you have made during the summer school
Deadline: Wednesday 16 July, via email to: j.deschepper@uu.nl

2. Group presentation (Group grade, 40%).

For the second assessment, you will prepare a group presentation about one particular European state or nation, European organization or event, and discuss its relationship with the European Union and/or the concept of Europe at large. We will form groups in week 1 – presentations will be in week 2. You will be asked to relate your case study to the lectures, seminars, and reading materials, and you will be challenged to formulate your own argument accordingly

3. Exam (Individual grade, 50%).

The third assessment will take the form of a written exam on the core themes of the course (readings, seminars, lectures) during which your knowledge acquisition of the material will be tested.

Overview of Reading Material (additional literature TBA)

Main literature (List to be confirmed by the 16 June – please check again at this moment – all reading will be available on Teams)

1. Buettner, Elizabeth. "Europe and Its Entangled Colonial Pasts: Europeanizing the 'Imperial Turn'." In *Decolonizing Colonial Heritage: New Agendas, Actors and Practices in and beyond Europe*, edited by Britta Schilling and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, 25–43. London: Routledge, 2022. [University Utrecht Library Link](#)
2. McCormick, John. *Europeanism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. (Introduction 1-16 and sections from Chapter 1: The Idea of Europe 25-40) [University Utrecht Library Link](#)
3. Pagden, Anthony. "Europe: Conceptualizing a Continent." In *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, edited by Anthony Pagden, 33–54. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. [University Utrecht Library Link](#)
4. Wintle, Michael, *Europa and the Bull, Europe, and European Studies: Visual Images as Historical Source Material*. Amsterdam: Vossiuspers UvA, 2004. [University Utrecht Library Link](#)
5. Sharon Macdonald, 'The European Memory Complex' (*Memorylands. Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*, Chapter 1, pages 1-26) (2013)

Academic Programme

6 July – 17 July 2026

Week 1

Monday 6 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
10:00-10:45	<i>Opening remarks</i>	Welcome and introduction to the course
11:00-13:00	LECTURE 1 Julie Deschepper	<i>European Cultures and Identities: The Idea of Europe</i> <i>Readings:</i> Anthony Pagden, "Europe. Conceptualizing a Continent", <i>The Idea of Europe</i> (2013), chapter 1, pp. 33-54.

Tuesday 7 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00	LECTURE 2 Julie Deschepper	<i>Art and Visual Representations of Europe from Antiquity to today</i> <i>Readings:</i>

		Wintle, Michael. Europa and the Bull, Europe, and European Studies : Visual Images as Historical Source Material (2004), pages 5-36.
14:00-16:00	SEMINAR 1 Group 1 Group 2	Readings: TBC + Portfolio assignment

Wednesday 8 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00	LECTURE 3 Julie Deschepper	<i>European Nationalism and the Birth of Museums</i>
14:00-16:00	SEMINAR 2 Group 1 Group 2	Readings: TBC Portfolio assignment
17:00	Grand Opening Utrecht University Summer School	Festive opening of the UU Summer School Period for lecturers and students (optional, not mandatory)

Thursday 9 July 2026

Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
<p>9:00-17:00</p> <p>Gather at Janskerkhof square for Bus 09:00</p> <p>Gather at XXX for bus return 17:00</p>	<p>EXCURSION 1</p> <p>The Hague</p>	<p>PROGRAMME</p> <p>9:00: Bus Departure from Utrecht</p> <p>11:45-13:15: Critical visit to the Mauritshuis</p> <p>13:14-14:15: Free lunch time in the Hague</p> <p>15:00-16:00: Guided visit of the House of Europe (TBC)</p> <p>17:00 return to Utrecht by bus</p>

Friday 10 July 2026

Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00	<p>LECTURE 4</p> <p>Julie Deschepper</p>	<p><i>A Transcultural History of Monuments in Europe</i></p>
14:00-16:00	<p>SEMINAR 3</p> <p>Group 1 Group 2</p>	<p>Readings: TBC</p> <p>Portfolio assignment</p>

Weekend (11-12 July)
Free time and self-study

Week 2

Monday 13 July 2026		
Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00	<p>LECTURE 5</p> <p>Rachel Gillett</p>	<p><i>A European History of Colonialism</i></p> <p>Readings: Buettner, Elizabeth. "Europe and Its Entangled Colonial Pasts: Europeanizing the 'Imperial Turn'." In <i>Decolonizing Colonial Heritage: New Agendas, Actors and Practices in and beyond Europe</i>, edited by Britta Schilling and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, 25–43. London: Routledge, 2022. University Utrecht Library Link</p>
14:00-16:00	<p>EXCURSION 2</p> <p>City Walk in Utrecht</p> <p>Traces of Slavery Utrecht</p>	

Tuesday 14 July 2026

Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
Janskerkhof square Bus 9:00-17:00	EXCURSION 3 AMSTERDAM	Programme: 9:00 bus departure from Janskerkhof 11:00. Critical Visit of the Wereldmuseum 14:00. Canal Tour! + free time 17:00 return to Utrecht

Wednesday 15 July 2026

Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:00-13:00	LECTURE 6 Julie Deschepper	<i>Contested Heritage and Difficult Memories in Eastern and Central Europe</i>
14:30-17:00	SEMINAR 5 Julie Deschepper	Assessment 1: Group presentations (40%)

Thursday 16 July 2026

Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
13:00-15:00	Final Written Exam	Assessment 2: Exam (60%)

Friday 17 July 2026

Time and location	Activity	Description and readings
11:30 UU Summer School Office Janskerkhof 30	Handing in accommodation keys to Julie Deschepper	Students that make use of the Utrecht Summer School accommodation option hand in their keys to the course coordinator. The course coordinator will hand in their keys to the USS desk.
16:00-18:00 Hofman: Janskerkhof 17A, 3512BM Utrecht	Closing remark + drinks!	Closing and concluding remarks on the summer school, presentation of certificates, and farewell drinks at café Hofman

Assessments, Attendance and Grading

Assessments

There will be two assessments that both test your knowledge and challenge you to formulate your own argument based on the course matter:

1. Portfolio Class assignments: 10%
2. Group presentation: 40%
3. Final exam: 50%

Both assessments will take place at the end of week 2 and you need an average grade of at least 5,5 to pass the course and earn credits. Please note there is no possibility for resits or repair assignments

Attendance and Grading

Note that full attendance is expected in all lectures, seminar sessions, and excursions. Students that fail the attendance requirements will be dropped from this course. In case of unforeseen circumstances contact the course coordinator Frank Birkenholz via email as soon as possible.

Your grades will be numerical grades according to the Dutch grading system. Dutch grades range from 0 (very bad) to 10 (excellent). At Utrecht University, a 5,5 is the lowest passing grade, though note that this might be different at other (Dutch) institutions. Also note that grade inflation has not affected the Dutch grading system as much as it has some American institutions. Grades of 9 and higher are rarely given, the most common grades are between 6 and 8. The Utrecht University student registration system (Osiris) that will produce your transcript will round off all grades to whole numerals for 5 and lower, and half numbers for 5.5 and higher. On course work and examinations, however, it is customary to receive a grade that has not been rounded off. Pluses and minuses are sometimes used, and count for one-fourth of a point, for instance: 8- = 7,75. Meaning of numerical grades:

9.00-10.00	Excellent
8.00-8.99	Very good
7.50-7.99	Good
7.00-7.49	Very satisfactory
6.50-6.99	Satisfactory
6.00-6.49	Sufficient
5.50-5.99	Acceptable; minimum pass

5.00-5.49	Insufficient; fail
4.00-4.99	Unsatisfactory
3.00-3.99	Very unsatisfactory
2.00-2.99	Bad
0.00-1.99	Very bad

Note that conversion of grades that you have received in the Netherlands to grades at your home institution is the responsibility of your home institution, not Utrecht University. This chart should be used as an indication; no rights can be drawn from it.

* Any case of plagiarism will be reported to the home institution and results in a course failure, meaning 1.00 as final grade for this course.

Online Education

You have received your Utrecht University login code (SOLIS-ID) from the Summer School administration. If this is not the case, send them an e-mail at summerschool@uu.nl or contact them by phone: +31 (0)302534400. You can use this login code to gain access to the digital teaching environment on Microsoft Teams and to the digital environment of the university library.

Statement on use of Generative AI / ChatGPT

The use of GenAI tools such as ChatGPT affects the achievement of the learning objectives you work on during the course. Based on this, the staff make choices about the use of such tools.

In view of the learning objectives of this course, the use of GenAI as a tool is not allowed.

If staff suspect that you have used GenAI for an assignment, other than as permitted by this course manual, they may invite you to explain your work, and its genesis, orally. The staff then will evaluate further participation in the course.

Map of Europe

