

**Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab  
Amsterdam**

Course guide 2026-2027

Semester	Fall and Spring (semester 1 and 2)
Inholland location(s)	Amsterdam
Inholland faculty	Creative Business
Language of instruction	English
Cycle	Bachelor level
Number of ECTS	30



## Subjects

Subject title	ECTS	Course code
ULT Lab Amsterdam Group Project	30	38458
ULT Lab Amsterdam Individual Portfolio		

### Content subjects

Would you like to connect with a local community and make a meaningful contribution to tourism and leisure activities in Amsterdam?

It takes only minutes to travel from Amsterdam Central Station to **Amsterdam Noord** and the Inholland Urban Leisure & Tourism Living Lab (The Lab). Your research and learning take place in and around the Buikslotermeerplein area. Since 2015, The Lab has been part of this dynamic and diverse neighbourhood. Noord is changing quickly: new residents, housing, shops, hotels, green spaces, museums, offices and sports facilities are reshaping the area. These developments have a big impact on daily life and can sometimes cause tension among long-term residents and local organisations.

Some people feel the changes are happening too fast; others are excited for new opportunities. In The Lab, you will engage with locals, tourism and leisure experts, and get to know this emerging tourism hub and its surroundings. You will collaborate with professionals from local government, commercial businesses, tourism companies, cultural organisations, residents, researchers, and educators. Together, you will co-design ideas, develop prototypes, and test and deliver your concepts directly in the real world.

More and more visitors from the Netherlands and abroad are discovering Noord as an alternative destination. With **Regenerative Tourism** practices, you will learn to connect tourism and leisure to the deeper stories of place and community. Instead of simply encouraging visitors to shop or walk around Noord, you will help them engage with the nearby nature, join local events, and explore local food and culture. You'll co-design ways to ensure that visitors give back to the community in a positive and lasting way.

### What you will do

In the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Amsterdam you will use your creativity and professional skills to design concepts and approaches that show how tourism and leisure can contribute to a better, more sustainable city. You will receive ideas and inspiration in many ways. You will meet organisations, experts, entrepreneurs, and residents who will share their experiences and challenge your thinking. We will also explore the area together, so you learn to observe, listen and sense from different perspectives—because what one person finds inspiring, another may find unsafe or unsuitable for the neighbourhood.

Together we ask questions such as: How do we make sure everyone is, and stays, involved in Amsterdam Noord and its surroundings? Residents, entrepreneurs and visitors tell us that some places in and around Noord feel unsafe or lack vibrancy. What are the police, municipality, entrepreneurs, and residents already doing to address this? How might innovative tourism and leisure activities help? How can we use methods such as design thinking, storytelling, and regenerative design? And what can we learn from how other cities deal with similar challenges?

## Location of classes

In Amsterdam Noord, at the Lab community location in the **Boven 't Y shopping** area (near the metro station Noord). Depending on your project, you may also work at other locations in Noord, such as the Modestraat Cultural Community Center or the Dance and Theatre School.

In addition, some sessions will be held in the **Inholland Amsterdam building** (Pina Bauschplein 4, 1095 PN Amsterdam).

## Examples of project themes

You and your group will work on a project theme—a real ‘challenge’—that is relevant for the local community. You will then develop your concept further through a co-design process with locals. Throughout the project, you will have plenty of opportunities to talk to different stakeholders and explore their needs, ideas, and concerns. By testing your concepts and prototypes within the community of Amsterdam Noord, it will become clearer step by step which final concept you want to create. If your concept is assessed by coaches and industry partners as valuable for the community, you may receive funding to take your design to the next level.

Recent projects that have been realised in the area include:

- ❖ **Evening Market:** Creating a lively night market that brings locals together through food, music, atmosphere and cultural exchange.
- ❖ **Night Projections:** Designing light installations by projecting images and videos—including work from local artists—to brighten up the neighbourhood and create evening experiences
- ❖ **Story Bench:** Recording personal stories from long-time Noord residents who reflect on the past, share memories and look ahead. These stories are available through a Spotify channel linked to a QR code on a physical bench painted by a local artist—inviting passers-by to sit, listen and talk.
- ❖ **The Wishing Wall:** A centrally located “blank canvas” wall inviting people to write down their wishes. Instead of graffiti, the wall filled with positive and hopeful messages.

As a member of the Lab, you are expected to contribute to the neighbourhood as part of a regenerative approach—not only taking from the community but also adding something of value.

Here are some recent examples of how students have contributed:

- ❖ Volunteering at the Modestraat community center, serving coffee, helping in the kitchen, supporting the monthly World Restaurant, and getting to know locals from different cultural backgrounds.
- ❖ Helping at the DAT Dance and Theatre School by supporting children preparing for their performances.
- ❖ Contributing at the Wisselboetiek (Exchange Boutique), where people exchange clothing for credits, helping to run the system and promote sustainable fashion.
- ❖ Volunteering at a local elderly home, spending time with residents, and organising activities such as karaoke and games.
- ❖ Walking the catwalk in the annual recycled-fashion show at the Modestraat.
- ❖ Creating a community cookbook that brings together recipes from local residents and the diverse national backgrounds of incoming students.

Through these personal and meaningful interactions with locals, you will get to know the community, understand it more deeply, and find real purpose in your learning process. This is learning beyond the classroom—learning through real-world experiences that prepare you for your future journey in life.

## Learning outcomes

We work with learning outcomes or competences. These are:

1. Experimenting  
Based on analysis and via a process of successive iterations and development loops, the student designs and realizes creative solutions for complex problems from the urban area. This is done in collaboration with partners from the professional field and other disciplines from the creative sector.
2. Interdisciplinary collaboration  
You bring in your own (professional) expertise and appreciate and enrich this perspective. Your active role in teamwork and constructive work ethic connects to a collaborative solution-oriented result.
3. Qualification  
You develop knowledge and skills essential for professional and societal engagement. You strive to become a proficient and innovative practitioner in your discipline by developing research methodologies, expanding your knowledge base, and effectively utilizing relevant tools and technologies. Apply and relate lab specific knowledge and perspectives to your own discipline and professional practice.
4. Socialisation  
Integrating into and collaborating with diverse groups and communities. Engaging in teamwork with peers, partners, and the broader community for interdisciplinary learning and collective problem solving.
5. Authentic Leadership  
Cultivating authentic leadership skills by gaining deeper self-awareness, exploring personal ambitions and talents, and using feedback and reflection to enhance professional growth and performance

The learning objectives are:

- Perform research on a chosen topic.
- Critically analyse and integrate scholarly and professional literature to support your research.
- Develop, test, and refine different approaches through development processes.
- Contribute knowledge and skills to the lab community, enhancing collective transdisciplinary learning and problem-solving.
- Actively engage others in your learning journey, reflecting on and valuing the collaborative process.
- Provide and receive constructive feedback from peers, coaches and experts. Actively collaborate with network partners and community members to achieve shared goals.
- Independently initiating and achieving innovative cooperation with external partners that result in a prototype of an economic and/or societally relevant product or service.
- Developing innovative and relevant concepts for your collaborating partners' complex and wicked problem, in a multi- disciplinary environment, based on creative analysis.
- Critically reflecting on underlying conceptual perspectives and professional practice, using relevant theoretical concepts. Formulating possible alternative approaches and establishing the consequences for society and/or professional practice.

## Mode of delivery, planned activities and teaching methods

The lab and its partnerships are the context in which you learn. Both individually and in the team context. The educational approach focuses on authentic leadership, design thinking, co-design, research and self-directed learning.

You will use the design thinking method to examine the complex problems. Your semester will follow the phases of design thinking: Empathise, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test. This provides a clear structure and method along with other tools so you can focus on your learning journey.

Your lab working method uses the metaphor of climbing. You will work with four 'Climbs' as part of the diverging and converging phase. At each 'climb' you will share and get feedback on your project process and concept.

### **Prerequisites and co-requisites**

- You are at least a third-year Bachelor student, or an associate degree student in the final phase of study.
- You are enthusiastic, creative, innovative and can work independently.
- You see uncertainty as a chance to learn.
- You are passionate about tackling complex, real-world challenges, together with industry experts, stakeholders and peers.
- Your development is self-directed supported by setting your own educational goals
- Your educational path is determined by your interests and supported by coaching
- You are open to new forms of education and assessments and learning in a context that connects to society, and in which you reflect on your learning process.

### **Recommended or required reading and/or other learning recourses/tools**

Van den Hee, Desomviele, Woolfitt & Vandevyvere (2024). *Learning in a Living Lab; Knowing what to do when you don't know what to do*. Owl Press, Ghent. Approximate costs: € 50.

### **Assessment methods and criteria**

#### **Group Project**

You will join a team of 4-5 other students, from different courses and backgrounds. Over 20 weeks, you will work on your team's 'challenge'. You will come into direct contact with experts and local stakeholders and co-design approaches to the challenges with them.

Your Group Project has two documents and a final presentation:

- **Design Rationale**  
This is a group document that can be shared with the collaborating partners. It explains the finished concept in detail, including the design process, explaining decisions made along the way, and which feedback received contributed to the final concept. It outlines costs for implementation of your concept and guidelines for the partners to implement your concept.
- **Process Biography**  
This is a group document for internal use, for your project group and coach and assessor. It is a reflective document that details the stages of the team's development, your group evaluation and feedback processes. It gives insight into the group process, the team effort and the individual contribution of each project member.
- **Final presentation**  
You and your group will present the final concept to peers, the lab community and collaborating partners.

## Personal Road Map - Individual document

Your **Personal Road Map** is a detailed overview of your learning journey throughout the semester. You have freedom to choose what you include and how you present it. You will have coaching and feedback sessions, with your coach and peers. You will also have several moments for formative feedback where you give feedback to your peers and receive feedback from them and your coach.

Your Personal Road Map has one document and a final presentation.

You will be assessed on the following aspects:

- **Qualification**  
You develop knowledge and skills essential for professional and societal engagement. You strive to become a proficient and innovative practitioner in your discipline by developing research methodologies, expanding your knowledge base, and effectively utilizing relevant tools and technologies. Apply and relate lab specific knowledge and perspectives to your own discipline and professional practice.
- **Socialisation**  
Integrating into and collaborating with diverse groups and communities. Engaging in teamwork with peers, partners, and the broader community for interdisciplinary learning and collective problem solving.
- **Authentic Leadership**  
Cultivating authentic leadership skills by gaining deeper self-awareness, exploring personal ambitions and talents, and using feedback and reflection to enhance professional growth and performance

## Additional costs

During the lab track you are likely to travel to an inspiring city in the Netherlands or abroad to learn from good practices relating to your project research theme. Paid excursions may also be part of the program. The costs for the trip and excursions are approximately:

City in the Netherlands (€50-100)

If you visit an international European city (€300-500) depending on destination and exact itinerary.

## Lecturer(s)

Roos Gerritsma, Associate Professor of Urban Sociology & Regenerative Tourism.

Esther Bouw, lab coach and expert on place making

Mireille Middelhof, lab coach and lecturer

Jeroen Jager, Lab community builder and coordinator of partnerships

Mirthe van den Hee, PhD candidate and lab coach

Zac Woolfitt, Learning Director, lab coach and lecturer

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Visit: [Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Amsterdam](#)