



FACULTY-LED  
STUDY ABROAD

## KIIS Netherlands, Summer 2026

---

### **Course Title: EDU 400 / HON 300 Topics: Education and Democratic Citizenship in a Global Context.**

**Instructor:** Dr. David J. Roof

**Email:** [djroof@bsu.edu](mailto:djroof@bsu.edu)

**Instructor's office hours:** on site and by appointment

*Syllabus subject to change*

#### **1. Course Description:**

This interdisciplinary study abroad course invites you to explore the powerful connections between education and democratic citizenship within an international framework. Set in the Netherlands -a country renowned for its high-performing and pluralistic education system, this course offers a unique opportunity to examine comparative models of civic learning and democratic engagement between the Dutch and U.S. context.

You will critically examine how schools shape civic identity, democratic participation, and social cohesion through policies, curriculum, and pedagogy. Through on-site visits to schools, NGOs, museums, and civic institutions in Amsterdam, The Hague, and other Dutch cities, students will encounter firsthand how education in the Netherlands fosters democratic values, accommodates cultural diversity, and promotes student agency. Drawing on the frameworks of democratic citizenship (Veugelers & De Groot, 2019), you will explore questions such as:

- What does it mean to be a “good citizen” in a globalized world?
- How do education systems reflect and shape the political and cultural values of a society?
- In what ways can education promote civic responsibility, equity, and democratic resilience in the 21st century?

The course incorporates site-based learning, collaborative projects, and cross-cultural dialogue, encouraging students to reflect on their own educational experiences and national identity. You will also consider how current reforms, school choice policies, and education play out differently in the U.S. and Dutch systems (Karsten, 1999; Owings, Kaplan & Volman, 2015). By the end of the course, you will have:

- Gained a comparative understanding of educational structures and philosophies in the Netherlands and the United States.
- Engaged critically with theories of citizenship, democracy, and civic education.
- Developed cultural competency and global awareness through immersive field study.
- Designed a civic education activity informed by international best practices.

This course is ideal for students in education, political science, sociology, international studies, and anyone interested in the intersections of culture, governance, and human development.

## 2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

### KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

### Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

**3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:** This interdisciplinary study abroad course is designed to deepen students' understanding of democratic citizenship, education systems, and civic identity formation through comparative, immersive learning in the Netherlands. The course integrates critical pedagogy, international perspectives on civic education, and place-based learning to promote democratic reflection, cultural awareness, and civic agency.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will:

- Critically examine how education systems in the U.S. and the Netherlands promote (or fail to promote) democratic citizenship, equity, and social cohesion.
- Analyze and apply key theories of citizenship education, including critical-democratic, adaptive, and individualized models (Veugelers & De Groot, 2019).
- Develop intercultural competence through direct engagement with Dutch educators, civic institutions, and communities.
- Compare educational structures, governance models, and civic curricula across both national contexts, with attention to school choice, decentralization, and contemporary education reforms (Karsten, 1999; Owings, Kaplan & Volman, 2015).

## Specific Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- **SLO 1:** Identify and explain major differences and similarities between Dutch and U.S. educational systems in terms of equity, governance, curriculum, and civic purpose.
- **SLO 2:** Apply conceptual frameworks such as “teaching about, through, and for democracy” (De Groot & Veugelers, 2015) to analyze case studies and real-world educational environments.
- **SLO 3:** Evaluate the impact of educational policy on civic identity formation, particularly the role of Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution (Freedom of Education) in shaping school autonomy and pluralism.
- **SLO 4:** Demonstrate growth in intercultural understanding and ethical reasoning through written reflections, group dialogue, and collaborative learning experiences.
- **SLO 5:** Create and present a civic education project or curriculum proposal that addresses real-world civic challenges in a comparative global context.
- **SLO 6:** Engage in structured reflection on one's own national identity, assumptions about democracy, and role as a civic actor in a global society.

**4. Major Topics covered in the Course:** This course explores democratic citizenship and education in comparative global context, with a focus on the Netherlands and the United States. Major topics are organized thematically and geographically to reflect immersive place-based learning in Rotterdam, The Hague, and Amsterdam.

### I. Democratic Citizenship and Comparative Education

- Definitions and models of citizenship: adaptive, individual, and critical-democratic (Veugelers & De Groot, 2019; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).
- The role of education in shaping democratic identity, civic participation, and social cohesion.
- “Teaching about, through, and for democracy” (De Groot & Veugelers, 2015; ICCS 2022 framework).

### II. Educational Systems and Governance

- Key structural differences between Dutch and U.S. education systems (Owings, Kaplan & Volman, 2015).
- Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution and the principle of “freedom of education.”
- School choice, decentralization, and the role of public vs. private institutions.
- The use of “tracking” in the Netherlands vs. in U.S. schooling.

### III. Equity, Inclusion, and Neoliberal Reform

- Educational equity and its implications for democratic resilience.
- Neoliberalism and education: school autonomy, market models, and segregation (Karsten, 1999; Lubienski et al., 2022).
- Child poverty, cultural pluralism, and systemic disparities in U.S. and Dutch contexts.

### IV. The Practice of Citizenship Education

- Curricular approaches and classroom practices in civic learning.
- Case studies of Dutch schools and civic education NGOs (De Groot, Daas & Nieuwelink, 2022).

### V. Cultural Identity, Memory, and Global Citizenship

- Historical memory and education: The Anne Frank House, education, and civic responsibility.
- Intercultural citizenship, cosmopolitanism, and global democratic learning (Veugelers & De Groot, 2019; Banks, 2004).
- Reflection on students' national identity and roles as civic actors in a globalized world.

**Rotterdam: Innovation and Urban Citizenship (May 21 – May 31)** We will begin our journey in the dynamic port city of Rotterdam - Europe's gateway to the world. Known for its bold architecture, resilience, and innovation, Rotterdam provides a rich setting to explore urban citizenship, educational equity, and democracy. Through local school visits, neighborhood and interactive workshops, you will examine how this diverse city tackles social inclusion, youth engagement, and educational reform. As one of the Netherlands' most forward-thinking urban centers, Rotterdam offers a compelling lens on democracy in action at the local level.

**The Hague: Democracy, Law, and Civic Education (May 31 – June 9):** In The Hague - home to the Dutch parliament, the International Court of Justice, and dozens of civic and human rights organizations - you will immerse yourself in the institutional heart of Dutch democracy. Visits to ProDemos, The Hague Academy for Local Governance, and The Hague University of Applied Sciences offer direct engagement with leaders in civic education and local governance. Here, students explore how the Netherlands teaches and practices democracy, rule of law, and civic responsibility, with a special focus on youth participation and democratic institutions.

**Amsterdam: History, Identity, and Global Citizenship (June 9 – June 17)** Conclude your program in Amsterdam, the cultural capital of the Netherlands and a global hub of art, history, and civic dialogue. From walking tours of historic neighborhoods to reflections at the Anne Frank House and visits to civic-minded organizations, Amsterdam invites students to consider how memory, identity, and multiculturalism shape citizenship in a global age. The city's vibrant civic spaces and layered past provide a living classroom to critically examine the role of education in fostering inclusion, justice, and global democratic engagement.

### **5. Fulfillment of General Education Requirement:**

This KILS course, Education and Democratic Citizenship in a Global Context, may be used to fulfill certain general education or program-specific requirements at Ball State University, depending on your major and advising plan.

**6. Required Readings and Materials:** To prepare for our comparative exploration of democratic citizenship and education in a global context, you will engage with a diverse set of scholarly readings and case studies. These readings will introduce key theories of citizenship, international perspectives on education policy, and real-world examples from the United States and the Netherlands. All readings will be provided digitally or distributed in class, there is **no required textbook** purchase.

Readings include (subject to adjustment):

- Veugelers, W., & de Groot, I. (2019). Theory and Practice of Citizenship Education. In W. Veugelers (Ed.), Education for Democratic Intercultural Citizenship. Brill.
- Roof, D. J. (2025). Foundations of Education in a Global Context. (Ball State University working draft).

- Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41 (2), 237–269.

**Additional contextual readings (excerpts or summaries may be assigned):**

- Banks, J. A. (2017). Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives.
- Biesta, G. (2011). Good Education in an Age of Measurement: Ethics, Politics, Democracy.
- Parker, W. C. (2003). Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life.

A finalized weekly reading schedule will be distributed at orientation and updated in class. You are encouraged to download, annotate, and engage with these materials as preparation for group discussions and site-based learning.

**7. Graded Assignments:** This course is designed to immerse you in the comparative study of education and democratic citizenship through active, site-based learning and critical reflection. Your grade will be based on participation, reflection, and synthesis of course concepts through writing and project-based learning. The breakdown is as follows:

Assignment	Description	Weight
<b>Participation in Discussions and Activities</b>	Includes active involvement in all program excursions, lectures, group discussions, and cultural activities. Your engagement, collaboration, and curiosity are central to the learning process.	<b>40%</b>
<b>Reflective Journals (4 total)</b>	Short, guided reflections (~500–750 words each) that connect site visits and course concepts. Journals are due throughout the program and should demonstrate critical thinking and personal growth.	<b>25%</b>
<b>Pre-Departure Reading Reflection</b>	A 2–3 page written reflection based on assigned readings completed before travel, introducing key ideas and personal goals for international civic learning.	<b>10%</b>
<b>Final Integrative Project</b>	A culminating assignment that combines a 4–5 page essay with the design of a civic education lesson or activity informed by your field experiences. This project demonstrates your understanding of comparative civic education and your ability to apply course insights to real-world settings.	<b>25%</b>

Work will be grade on this scale:

- 90 – 100 A
- 80 – 89 B
- 70 – 79 C
- 60 – 69 D
- Below 60 E (F)

## 8. Generative AI Policy:

**Generative AI is permitted/encouraged in some ways, with proper attribution, but prohibited in other ways.**

Students are allowed, encouraged, and even required to use Generative AI in some ways but are prohibited from using it in other ways. Keep in mind that any content produced by generative AI can “hallucinate” (produce false information), so students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of any AI-generated content. Examples of citing AI are available at: <https://libguides.wku.edu/stylewrite/ai>.

**Students are permitted and encouraged to use generative AI in the following ways:**

- Brainstorming: You may use generative AI to stimulate creativity, generate ideas, or brainstorm topics for papers, presentations, and discussions. The generated content must serve as a steppingstone, not a final product.
- Citation Assistance: AI tools can be used to manage, format, and organize citations and references, promoting adherence to academic writing standards and specific style guides required for individual assignments.
- Grammar and Style Checking: AI-powered writing enhancement tools may be used to help with spelling, grammar, syntax, and stylistic errors.
- Concept Understanding: Generative AI can be used to explain or simulate concepts taught in class, aiding in a deeper understanding.
- Research Assistance: AI can be used to conduct initial research, compile data, and summarize articles, books, or papers. It should not replace traditional research methods but rather enhance them.

**You may not use generative AI in coursework in the following ways:**

- Plagiarism: Using AI-generated content as your original work without attribution. This includes essays, papers, presentations, and exam answers.
- Data Manipulation: Using AI tools to alter data or create misleading information.
- Misrepresentation of Skills: Using generative AI to complete tasks that are meant to assess your knowledge and skills.
- Confidentiality Breach: Using AI tools that might violate KHS/university policies or laws related to data privacy and confidentiality.

**Metacognitive Reflection.** In addition to a proper citation, the student should include the following statement with any assignment where generative AI is used for assistance.

“I used generative AI [INSERT NAME OF PLATFORM] for assistance in the following ways on this assignment: [INSERT WAYS USED, such as brainstorming, citation assistance, grammar and style checking, concept understanding, and research assistance, etc.]”

## 8. Attendance Policy:

KHS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

## **9. Disability Accommodation:**

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, [maria.canning@wku.edu](mailto:maria.canning@wku.edu), to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, [haley.mctaggart@wku.edu](mailto:haley.mctaggart@wku.edu), if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

## **10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:**

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / [ena.demir@wku.edu](mailto:ena.demir@wku.edu)) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / [michael.crowe@wku.edu](mailto:michael.crowe@wku.edu)). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to

WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/titleix/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.