



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Netherlands Program, Summer 2027

PH 456-1 Topics: Healthy Lifestyles in the Netherlands

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Instructor's office hours: on site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description:

Students in Healthy Lifestyles in the Netherlands will explore physical activity, nutrition, and stress management, health behaviors that strongly resonate with college students and beyond. Using the Netherlands as an experiential classroom, students will examine connections among these behaviors, mental health, social connectedness, health outcomes, and health disparities. Students monitor their own health behaviors, develop SMART goals, and explore or implement behavior change strategies while reflecting on the process in a culture that supports healthy living through active transportation, accessible green space, healthy food environments, and work-life balance. Comparing Dutch and U.S. norms around eating, physical activity, and stress provides meaningful insight into how social and environmental factors shape personal health behaviors.

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 course uses the Netherlands as an experiential classroom to explore physical activity, nutrition, and stress management. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the interconnections among physical activity, nutrition, and stress management and how they influence mental health, social connectedness, and overall health.
2. Explain how health is shaped not only by individual behavior but also by social, organizational, community, and policy factors (the socioecological model).
3. Self-monitor personal health behaviors (movement, eating, sleep/stress), interpret the patterns, and set SMART goals with evidence-informed behavior-change strategies.
4. Distinguish lifestyle (incidental) activity from structured exercise and recognize both in daily Dutch life.
5. Analyze healthy food environments (groceries, markets, menus, food access) and how they shape eating behavior.
6. Explain how nature, culture, social connectedness, and work-life balance support stress management and mental health.
7. Evaluate the quality and credibility of online health and fitness information.
8. Compare Dutch and U.S. norms around physical activity, eating, and stress, and discuss implications for health disparities.
9. Reflect on a personal behavior-change process and frame it within broader public health using the socioecological model in a research-based Photovoice project.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

1. Healthy lifestyles and the interconnection of physical activity, nutrition, and stress
2. Health behaviors, mental health, and social connectedness
3. Social determinants of health and health disparities
4. The socioecological model: individual, social, organizational, community, and policy influences on health
5. Self-monitoring, SMART goals, and behavior-change strategies
6. Lifestyle (incidental) activity versus structured exercise; active transportation
7. Parks, green space, and access to recreation across the lifespan
8. Children, schools, recess, and sport culture
9. Healthy food environments: groceries, markets, menus, and eating-out culture
10. Food access, food deserts, and equity
11. Dutch dietary norms (e.g., the Wheel of Five) versus U.S. eating norms
12. Stress, the mind-body connection, and restorative environments (nature)
13. Social connectedness and 'gezelligheid'
14. Work-life balance, slow leisure, and 'niksen' (rest)
15. Everyday cues and norms (pace of life, clothing/comfort) and stress
16. Photovoice as a research-based method for examining community health
17. Comparative analysis: the Netherlands and the United States

5. Fulfillment of General Education Requirement:

This course is designed for students from any discipline.

For University of Louisville students, this interdisciplinary course may count under a variety of disciplines, including, but not limited to:

HSS 184: Healthy Lifestyles 1
HSS 310: Healthy Lifestyles 2
HSS 293: Social and Psychological Dimensions of Physical Activity
HSS 598: Independent Study
PHPB 300: Social and Behavioral Health
PHPB 301 Health Equity
PHPB 431: Contemporary Issues in Public Health 1
PHPB 491: Senior Capstone 1
PHPB 491: Senior Capstone 2

6. Required Readings and Materials:

There is no required textbook. Readings are short and posted to the course site; our goal is to discuss two to four readings or short videos per week so that class time and free time are spent exploring the cities as from the context of the day's topics. Selected foundational sources may include (but not limited to):

1. King, K. M. & Gonzalez, G. (2018). Increasing physical activity using an ecological model. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*, 22(4), 29–32.
2. King, K. M. & Barnes, B. (2022). Walking prescription: understanding social determinants of health. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*, 26(4), 47–52.
3. King, K. M., Gerbine, S. K., Hall, A. R., Simpson, L., & Cavan, S. A. (2025). Community-based strategies to increase children's active transportation to school: Safe Routes to School. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*, 29(4), 57–63.
4. King, K. M., Pierce, G., Folsom, L., et al. (2020). Championing whole-food and plant-based diets: the role of the health and fitness professional. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*, 24(4), 50–54.
5. King, K. M., Gonzalez, G. B., & Mitchell, A. M. (2021). Strategies for implementing mindfulness and mindful eating into health and fitness professionals' practice. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*, 25(2), 43–47.
6. Shareef, C., Withorn, T., & King, K. M. (2025). Don't take my word for it: SIFTing through online health and fitness information. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*, 29(6), 58–62.
7. Lanzi, R. G., Behrens, T. K., Black, J. S., et al. (2025). Holistic health: bridging disability and mental well-being promotion through community engagement. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*, 29(2), 48–55.
8. Netherlands Nutrition Centre (Voedingscentrum) — the 'Wheel of Five' (Schijf van Vijf) dietary guidelines. voedingscentrum.nl
9. Short readings/videos on Dutch food culture, food environments, and food access (provided).
10. Short readings/videos on nature and mental health, 'gezelligheid,' work–life balance, and 'niksen' (provided).
11. Short reading on health behavior change, habits, and SMART goals (provided).
12. Short comparative reading or op-ed on Dutch vs. U.S. lifestyle norms (provided).
13. Wang, C. & Burris, M. (1997). Photovoice: a brief, plain-language summary of the method (provided handout).
14. Additional readings, short videos and handouts.

Materials to bring:

1. Smartphone or simple tracker for self-monitoring (steps/movement, food, sleep/stress), photos, and notes.
2. Notebook/field journal and pen.
3. Comfortable walking shoes and weather-appropriate, layered clothing.
4. Reusable water bottle and a small daypack for daily field trips.

7. Graded Assignments:

100 points total.

1. Participation and Engagement (15 points)
 - a. active involvement in field trips, group rides, walks, and discussions
2. Reflective Journal (20 points)
 - a. guided weekly reflections plus a final synthesis reflection
3. Personal Health Behavior-Change Project (15 points)
 - a. assess, plan, implement, and reflect on one behavior you choose (physical activity, nutrition, or stress)
4. Observation and Data Collection Assignments (20 points)
 - a. Field observations capturing personal, social, and environmental data across the three behaviors
5. Personal and Public Health Photovoice Final Project (30 points)
 - a. photo-and-caption project with presentation of your own behavior change framed within broader public health

Personal Health Behavior-Change Project (15 points)

Choose ONE health behavior (physical activity, nutrition, or stress management) to consider during your time in the Netherlands. You will be graded by completing the assignment, not if you meet your goals. It is not expected for us to achieve a health, these assignments are simply meant to support our considerations and conversations while in the Netherlands and to compare our experiences to our lives in the United States.

1. Assess (3 points)
 - a. Gather baseline data for two days
 - i. Physical activity: physical activity (e.g., steps, distance)
 - ii. Nutrition: food and drink intake and behaviors
 - iii. Stress: stress, sleep, mood, and triggers
2. Plan (3 points)
 - a. Identify specific areas to improve and write SMART goals with concrete strategies
3. Implement and Monitor (5 points)
 - a. Consider, or if you wish, implement, your plan for a few days during your trip, logging progress and barriers.
4. Reflect (4 points)
 - a. Write a short reflection on the process: what worked, what got in the way, and how the Dutch environment and culture helped or hindered you.

Personal and Public Health Photovoice Final Project (30 points)

Your personal health journey connects your own health to the bigger picture. Using photographs you take across all three cities, tell the story of your personal behavior change and frame it within broader public health, the social, organizational, community, and policy factors (the socioecological model) that shape that behavior in the Netherlands and at home. Your Photovoice must:

1. Pair selected photographs with researched short paragraph that link your own behavior to wider determinants of health. (5 points)
2. Apply at least three socioecological levels (individual, social/interpersonal, organizational, community/environment, policy). (5 points)
3. Use evidence from course readings to support your captions (this is what makes it 'research-based'). (5 points)
4. Consider equity and health disparities, who the environment serves well, and who it leaves out. (5 points)
5. Compare what you see in the Netherlands to U.S. norms. (5 points)
6. Present and share (personal story in public-health framing) presentation (15 minutes) with guided peer discussion (15 minutes).

Work will be graded on this scale:

90 – 100 A

80 – 89 B

70 – 79 C

60 – 69 D

Below 60 E (F)

This course will be graded on this basis, without regard to other scales (i.e., plus-and-minus) which may apply at your college or university. Note KIS/WKU does not award +/- grades, only full letter grades.

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 KIIS/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.]."

9. Attendance Policy:

KIIS 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.

10. 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, 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, 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.

11. 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) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / 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/>.

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.