VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF HONOURS

Perspectives from the Dutch higher education sector

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Honours as inspiration: The Descartes College at Utrecht University

Frits van Oostrom
Honours teaching should be

• Much more than an add-on to the curriculum
• And/or a silver lining to the diploma
• But truly a special and memorable academic experience, both in content and form
Utrecht/Dutch University system

- Highly accessible; non-selective admission
- No liberal arts system
- Highly disciplinary-oriented (already at freshman level)
- Even electives and minors usually close to main field
Descartes Program

• Honours Bachelor
• **Covering the whole university** (Sciences, Medicine, Veterinary science, Law/Economics/Government, Humanities, Social sciences, Geosciences)
• Selective admission (grades, motivation letter, interview)
• 100 students/year (2 groups of 50, from all disciplines)
Four courses over two years

I. “Spectrum of science” (approaches to knowledge)

II. Science and society

III. Humanity: from genetics to robotics, and Mozart in the middle

IV. .... [designed and organised by the students; last year “Challenges and opportunities for the 21st century”]
Formats

- Guest lectures (from Utrecht and elsewhere)
- Papers and essays (individual and group)
- Personal feedback and mentoring by program leader (teaching as conversation)
- Excursions (Science museum, concert, Gent exchange, 1 trip abroad)
- Community building (after classes & on Facebook)
If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things.

(Rene Descartes)
Onderstaande link kreeg ik toegestuurd van Yannick. Ditmaal vermeldde professor Van Oostrom er naar verluid expliciet bij dat hij deze site van harte aanbeveelt voor een geregelde blik.

Neuroscience and Free Will Are Rethinking Their Divorce
A new finding casts an old one in a very different, more free-will-friendly light.
NYMAG.COM | DOOR CHRISTIAN JARRETT
Hallo mensen,
Ik heb de afgelopen twee bijeenkomsten moeten missen wegens plotselinge ziekte en overlijden van een familieled. Is er iemand zo lief om zijn/haar aantekeningen met mij te willen delen? Ik was van beide sprekers erg benieuwd wat ze te vertellen hadden.
Dankje!

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Dag schatten van mede-Descartes gangers!
Onder de rubriek 'van uw docent' heeft professor van Oostrom twee interessante links voor ons aanbevolen. Te weten:
- Een interview met Daniel Kahneman geplaatst op the Guardian.com:
  http://www.theguardian.com/.../daniel-kahneman-books-interview...
Meer weergeven
“Think – play - think again”
Mojito ergo sum

Twee nieuwe links in de rubriek 'van uw docent', enjoy!
“Spirit of the Descartes Program”

• Crossing disciplinary boundaries
• Inspirational
• Simple formats
• Atmosphere of trust
• Sense of community
Honours teaching as inspiration and laboratory for the university at large
Gratias agimus vobis

Merçi à vous

Thank you