

# PREMASTER LEISURE and TOURISM STUDIES



## Introduction

The Premaster Leisure and Tourism Studies is intended for students with a BBA (HBO bachelor's degree), who want to attend the MSc in Leisure and Tourism Studies of Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUas). They will need to complete this 'bridge year' with courses on key concepts and theories in leisure studies, as well as research methods. It features courses from the BSc Leisure Studies totaling 60 ECTS credits (1 year).

For more information about the programme, or to book an orientation day: [leisurestudies@buas.nl](mailto:leisurestudies@buas.nl)

## What we educate for

- We educate our students to become future-proof, responsible and impactful leisure professionals and academics;
- We educate our students to operate at the crossroads of fundamental research and applied research;
- We enable students to take control of their personal, professional, and academic development;
- We educate students to be able to navigate and solve complex (leisure) problems in today's (digital) network society;
- We educate our students according to the theory of significant learning experiences.

## Curriculum Set-Up (2024-2025):

Qualitative Field Research Project 6 ECTS credits		Statistics 6 ECTS credits	
Advanced Qualitative Research Methods 6 ECTS credits	Sociology 6 ECTS credits	Leisure Networks 6 ECTS credits	Survey Research Project 6 ECTS credits
		Leisure and Placemaking 6 ECTS credits	
Leisure Ethics: Theories, Cases and Tools 6 ECTS credits	Storytelling and Cultural Narratives 6 ECTS credits		Experience Measurement and Design 6 ECTS credits
Academic Skills and Coaching			

## **Your Future**

### **Researcher**

By the time they graduate, students will have gained experience in a range of research methods and techniques. They will be able to operate as independent (junior) researchers in academia, but also in knowledge institutes or in consultancy.

### **Policy developer**

The bachelor's programme specifically emphasises the need for relevant leisure research insights to find their way into people's daily lives. This involves policymaking in the arts and for cultural activities, but also for processes regarding (mental) health through sports and recreation, (over)tourism, and urban planning.

### **Strategic planner / business strategist**

Students who pursue their ambitions in business often become business strategists or strategic planners within commercial or non-commercial (leisure) organisations. They will be trained in building and analysing (stakeholder) networks, marketing and consumer behaviour and guiding innovation and change processes in leisure and related fields.

### **Designer**

Students learn to collaborate in designing leisure interventions that facilitate social innovation. Graduates are trained to use the potential of leisure to tackle the wicked problems of our network society.

# Course Descriptions:

## **\*ACADEMIC SKILLS (Semesters 1 and 2)**

In addition to the knowledge and skills that you develop in the content courses (e.g., sociology, the role of leisure in making places, qualitative and quantitative research), one of the most important skill sets that you will acquire in the study programme involves academic skills: being able to analyse complex information from scientific journals and books, organising and refining your own ideas, and combining everything to produce high-quality research papers, advisory reports and presentations. This course will contain a series of training sessions in which we will practise various elements of the academic 'toolbox'. We will also include several coaching sessions, covering tips and tricks that will help you become a more effective student in our scientific programme.

## **Semester 1, Terms A and B:**

### **\*LEISURE ETHICS: THEORIES, CASES AND TOOLS (6 ECTS credits, 2-BLS & Premaster LTS, Term A)**

As a leisure (and/or tourism) expert, you need to be able to analyse the decisions and behaviour of people (consumers and producers, hobbyists and professionals) in complex stakeholder networks. This is important because leisure behaviour has a serious impact: people choose leisure activities and engage in leisure networks in order to have experiences that are fun, contribute to their well-being, and/or are personally meaningful. This means that different people will have different motivations for their choices, and that it matters whether the outcomes of those choices align with their wants and needs. Because of this, it is essential to explore the *ethics of leisure*: how do people decide what they want, and whether that is actually *good* (for themselves or for others)? How can we establish normative frameworks for decisions that vary so wildly, and can be so personal?

In this course, we will discuss ethical behaviour in the four key roles the Leisure Studies programme educates for (i.e., researcher, policy developer, strategic planner, designer). We will address sustainability and the sustainable development goals as a collaborative framework for corporate social responsibility (i.e., ethics at the level of companies and networks). We will explore different ethical dilemmas in leisure, for example in sports, online leisure, dark leisure, and idealistic leisure and events. Throughout all of this, we will practise in class using a variety of ethical analysis and decision-making tools.

**COURSE CHARACTERISTICS:** A mixture of lectures and workshops, in which we will address theory, practical cases, and analysis tools.

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

- (a) *group assignment*: dialogical, interactive exercise during the course (40% of final mark)
- (b) *individual paper*: analysis of a leisure ethics case (60% of final mark)

### **\*ADVANCED QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS (6 ECTS credits, 2-BLS & Premaster LTS, Term A)**

In order to understand what leisure means to people, what motivates them to engage in certain leisure pursuits and to use these results for product or policy development, qualitative research approaches can be very helpful. In a series of lectures and seminars, students will master knowledge and skills in more

advanced qualitative research. Students will learn about different purposes of using qualitative research, such as using qualitative research for developing knowledge, for design purposes, and for social purposes. Methods that will be taught include narrative inquiry, ethnography, participatory action research methods, design research methods, discourse analysis, and visual research methods.

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS: A combination of lectures and seminars.

ASSESSMENT:

- (a) *written exam* (60% of final mark)
- (b) *assignments* (40% of final mark)

### **\*QUALITATIVE FIELD RESEARCH PROJECT (6 ECTS credits, 2-BLS & Premaster LTS, Terms A+B)**

Having learned about various qualitative research approaches, students will set out to conduct a qualitative field research project together. Field research can be defined as a qualitative method of data collection that aims to learn about people in their natural environment. Field research is a good method to gain insight into groups of people, for example communities and communities of interest. This type of research is characterised by observations and interactions. In addition to carrying out research, an important learning goal of the project is to develop sensitivity to the (cultural) background of research participants and that of the researcher. Also, the ability to work in a (international) team is important and requires intercultural skills.

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS: In weeks 1 to 4, students attend lectures on field research and read and discuss literature. From week 5 onwards, students will start the fieldwork in groups. Groups will be formed on the basis of involvement and participation in meetings in the first few weeks.

ASSESSMENT:

- (a) *research paper* (80% of final mark)
- (b) *oral exam* (20% of final mark)

### **\*STORYTELLING AND CULTURAL NARRATIVES (6 ECTS credits, 2-BLS & Premaster LTS, Term B)**

Why do stories matter? Stories and cultural narratives play an important role in how we construct our own identity, how we look at others, and how we make sense of the world. Stories and cultural narratives are therefore constructed and performed, but are also biased, influenced by our perceptions, attributions, stereotypes, prejudices, cultural orientations, and our understanding of diversity. Moreover, what are dominant and single stories we have about others and the world? And how does that influence what we know, expect, or communicate about ourselves and others? In what way do dominant narratives and single stories play a role in leisure and tourism contexts? And how are leisure and tourism contexts designed through storytelling?

Hence, stories and cultural narratives are fundamental to understand who we are, how we make sense of the world, and in communication with each other. This is also reflected in the complex social dynamics of leisure and tourism contexts. In this course, through a series of lectures and seminars, we will explore this by diving deeper into the subject matter on the one hand, and by challenging you to explore the stories you have about yourself, others and in leisure or tourism contexts on the other hand.

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS: Learning activities will include lectures and seminars with a variety of activities, such as discussions and exercises.

ASSESSMENT:

(a) *written take-home exam* (60% of final mark)

(b) *individual portfolio* (40% of final mark)

### **\*SOCIOLOGY (6 ECTS credits, 1-BLS & Premaster LTS, Term B)**

This course tries to help you answer a few questions you might have about yourself and the world you live in. Sociology is the study of society and behaviour of people in groups. As well as introducing the core concepts that sociologists use and which you will encounter abundantly throughout your studies, this course attempts to unravel the complexities of social reality. It helps you understand what institutions are, the role they play in our societies, and how they can shape our behaviour. We will discuss topics such as identity from a social perspective. How much of you is really you? As sociology is the study of societies and groups, connections will also be built to economics and social psychology. It is also important to note that this is not a course that discusses the history of sociology, but rather focuses on a modern so-called *biosocial* approach. Any social interaction is an interaction between individuals and groups and their predisposed ability to learn through interaction.

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS: A combination of lectures and seminars. The former is meant to be interactive learning experiences coordinated by the lecturer. The latter are applied approaches to important themes in the context of Leisure Studies and are coordinated by different groups of students.

ASSESSMENT:

(a) *group assignment*: preparation and organisation of a seminar (25% of final mark)

(b) *written exam* (75% of final mark)

## **Semester 2, Terms C and D:**

### **\*LEISURE AND PLACEMAKING (6 ECTS credits, 2-BLS & Premaster LTS, Terms C and D)**

What we do in our leisure time affects the appearance of places. Leisure, tourism and events both consume space and produce place, acting as carriers of spatial quality. Increasingly, the role of leisure, tourism and events is acknowledged in placemaking processes.

In this course we will discuss how placemaking is perceived by various academic disciplines. We zoom in on the role that leisure, events, and tourism play in the making and shaping of places and destinations. In the first part of the course the focus will be on theoretical perspectives on placemaking, in the second part students will visit placemaking initiatives and learn how these initiatives are designed to bring theory to life.

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS: there will be course meetings twice a week to discuss literature, cases, and in doing so generate insight into the various perspectives on placemaking and the role of leisure therein. A field trip is part of the course. In term D, students will work on an assignment that entails visiting and analysing a placemaking initiative of their choice. Peer reflection sessions or seminars will accompany this assignment.

**ASSESSMENT:**

- (a) *written exam with essay questions* (60% of final mark)
- (b) *group assignment* (40% of final mark)

**\*LEISURE NETWORKS (6 ECTS credits, 2-BLS & Premaster LTS, Term C)**

This course familiarises students with various types of leisure providers and their way of working. Within the context of our network society, we explore how and why leisure providers intervene in leisure practices. We will see that leisure providers - whether public, commercial, or voluntary - are increasingly collaborating in networks to tackle societal challenges they are confronted with. Students will choose a leisure-related aspect of a societal challenge (e.g., one of the Sustainable Development Goals) and analyse the stakeholder network of this case. Special attention will be paid to the dynamics of the stakeholder network and the way how public, commercial, and voluntary leisure providers collaborate. Furthermore, students are asked to take on the role of strategist and develop a strategic recommendation for the network that addresses one of the four core themes of Leisure Studies.

**COURSE CHARACTERISTICS:** A mixture of meetings, discussions and presentations practical cases and analysis tools.

**ASSESSMENT:**

- (a) *group assignment: network analysis* (40% of final mark)
- (b) *Individual written paper: advisory report* (60% of final mark)

**\*EXPERIENCE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT (6 ECTS credits, 2-BLS & Premaster LTS, Term D)**

Experiences are the stuff that leisure and tourism is made of. In recent years, a theoretical and methodological framework is emerging that posits that emotions play a crucial role in leisure and tourism experiences. In this course, state-of-the-art theoretical insights on the building blocks of experiences are discussed on the basis of recent scientific literature. Methodological tools for designing experiences, such as Storytelling, VR/AR, and Digital Twins are discussed.

In addition, advanced methodological tools for measuring experiences are discussed, which are based on state-of-the-art psychological and cognitive neuroscience methods. The research group around BUas' Experience Lab plays an active and internationally leading role in these developments. Being strongly linked to the Experience Lab, the course has a substantial hands-on component in which students are familiarised with the lab's research methodologies for experience design (VR, Storytelling) and research (e.g., physiological and brain activity recordings).

**COURSE CHARACTERISTICS:** the course will be offered through both theoretical lectures (50%) and hands-on training sessions in the Experience Lab Days (50%), in which you learn how to study experience and to extract implications for experience design.

**ASSESSMENT:**

- (a) *one-page report: interview with an experience designer* (20% of final grade)
- (b) *four-page report: results from a lab study and reflection on these results* (30% of final mark)
- (c) *written exam with essay questions* (50% of final mark)

### **\*STATISTICS (6 ECTS credits, 1-BLS & Premaster LTS, Term C and D)**

This course is about academic research methods and techniques. In particular, statistics and mathematics aim to prepare students to analyse quantitative data (i.e., data that can be counted or measured in numerical values). Students will be introduced to basic probability theory. In addition, knowledge of basic calculus will be refreshed, to the extent that it supports the understanding of basic statistical principles used in common statistical analysis.

Furthermore, students are introduced to statistical analysis tools, such as the mean, the standard deviation, the confidence interval, the *t*-test, the  $\chi^2$ -test, correlation, simple and multiple linear regression, and moderation and mediation. Students will not only learn about the theoretical background of these analysis tools, but also how to apply them in SPSS.

**COURSE CHARACTERISTICS:** the course will be offered through both theoretical lectures (50%) and hands-on seminars (50%), in which you apply your theoretical knowledge to actual examples in the form of SPSS assignments. The course also comes with a trial exam, so as to get a taste of the actual exam questions.

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

- (a) *multiple choice exam* (50% of final mark)
- (b) *two written exams with SPSS assignments* (2x 25% of final mark)

### **\*SURVEY RESEARCH PROJECT (6 ECTS credits, 1-BLS & Premaster LTS, Term D)**

This course is designed to provide you with the knowledge and tools to conduct full scientific research within a leisure setting, in groups. You will have a great opportunity to apply and combine what you learn within your statistics and academic skills courses, including using theory, formulating testable questions and hypotheses, professional writing, and using quantitative data analysis techniques such as regression analyses to test these hypotheses. You will put it all into practice in a real-life project with an actual commissioner, such as a national museum. While survey and research findings will be primarily of scientific interest (i.e., contributing to the existing body of knowledge), it will also be of practical use for the marketing department of the venue that we study.

By conducting this real-life research, you will learn more about the researcher role of a graduate in leisure studies in the job market. Examples of this role are ‘strategist’ by gaining insight into key company indicators; ‘policymaker’ by collecting information on the use of public space; and ‘designer’ by collecting data on experience design and outcomes to improve a product, service or experience.

**COURSE CHARACTERISTICS:** after four lectures on different parts and steps of a scientific research project, students – in groups – will visit a venue, hear about their problem, formulate a research question and hypothesis, search for a conceptual framework, design a research study, analyse real data, and present the findings.

#### **ASSESSMENT:**

- (a) *group assignment:* writing a full academic paper in groups of three to five students (60% of final mark + 20% self-evaluation and peer feedback)
- (b) *final presentation:* presenting the final report to the class and the commissioner (20% of final mark)