

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Bachelor Digital Society

Year 1

Period 1-5

2023/2024

DSO1500

Course Book

Mentor Programme Year 1



Maastricht University

Block Planning Group

Karin van Leeuwen, Levin Stein, Raf Widdershoven & Bart Zwegers

Coordination

Levin Stein

c.stein@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Part I: General information

1. Introduction



Click on the picture to watch a virtual tour of FASoS

Welcome to Maastricht and to FASoS! We are happy that you have chosen to take part in our programme, and look forward to working with you in the coming years. We hope you will feel at home soon and that you will enjoy your studies here.

In the coming years, you will learn to approach and disentangle contemporary issues from various disciplinary perspectives. You will read ground-breaking texts, learn how to write, debate, present, chair meetings, take notes, and solve problems. You may even go abroad or do an internship in your final year. You will make new friends and perhaps join the study organization SoFasos ([SoFasos](#)) or one of the many student clubs in Maastricht. Maybe you will even become a Student Representative ([Student Representatives](#)) and represent your fellow students in various decision-making bodies of the faculty and the university. In any case, you are at the start of what promises to be an exciting time for you!

Although exciting, starting your studies at university is also challenging. Studying at university is about taking responsibility. It is about becoming an independent individual. For example, for most of you it will be the first time you live on your own. Studying at university is also about such things as time-management, attending tutor meetings and lectures, actively participating, acquiring the necessary information about courses, exams, et cetera. Transition from secondary school to university is not always easy. Many students will at some moment experience a period during which their study does not work out the way they expected. Some consult friends or relatives, fellow students or the student advisers, others find a solution on their own.

The Mentor Programme has been set up to help you to thrive during your studies. In order to do so, we organize several online and on campus activities. We urge you to attend these, as they will help you to feel part of our academic community and to meet other students and staff. Community building is a key part of becoming a successful student too. Furthermore, the Mentor Programme focuses on developing the skills needed for self-reflection, and on identifying potential problems and opportunities at an early stage, enabling us to offer you the necessary advice and support.

2. Objectives of the Mentor Programme

The goal of the Mentor Programme is to help you become a successful student – whereby we define ‘success’ not just in terms grades, but also in terms of well-being and personal growth. More specifically, the objective of the Mentor Programme in the first year is twofold:

- 1) First, it aims to help you to become engaged in your own academic development: to become what is often termed a ‘self-regulated learner’. Particularly in a setting where Problem Based Learning is used, it is crucial to develop a self-reflective attitude and effective study skills. Hence, paying due attention to developing this sort of attitude is at the core of the Mentor Programme.
- 2) Second, the programme offers you a social and academic community of peers with whom you can socialize, exchange experiences, reflect on successes, challenges, opportunities and problems, and learn from each other.

3. Educational format

Hopefully, the Mentor Programme will ease your transition to university by making you familiar with studying at university, and helping you navigate through the Bachelor, the faculty and the university. To realize these goals you will be assigned a *mentor* and a *mentor group*.

Your **mentor** will be one of the staff members involved in the BA DS programme. During meetings, your mentor will share relevant information on all sorts of matters with you. If you have particular concerns or worries, you may also contact your mentor in between meetings. When relevant, your mentor can refer to the study adviser, the Front Office, coordinators and so on.

In order to benefit from guidance from your mentor – whether in terms of academic problems or plans – it is advisable to take an active stance. Sometimes you may be unsure if things are going OK, or just hope problems will go away. Do not wait until the situation goes sour: if you are at all worried, do contact your mentor. Additional benefits for you of having a mentor include, for instance, that you will get a clearer idea of who to ask for letters recommendation, internship supervision, et cetera.

Your **mentor group** will have the same composition as the tutor group of your other period 1 courses. Throughout the year, you will meet your mentor group during on-campus group meetings. These meetings centre on your expectations and experiences.

Throughout the year we will be asking you to keep a **portfolio**. The portfolio will form the input for meetings with your mentor. It will offer you a template in which you can reflect on your studies; for example, by highlighting challenges and accomplishments, by emphasising things you particularly enjoyed or by writing about your career plans. This will allow your mentor to stay informed about your study progress and offer you the necessary advice and guidance. More detailed information about the portfolio can be found in a separate document on Canvas.

During year 1 there will also be a number of **plenary sessions** for you to take part in. During these interactive sessions we will focus on the broader perspective related to academic challenges such as learning strategies, feedback and diversity. These sessions will be joined by various staff members (e.g. the programme directors, the student adviser, etc.) who will share their study experiences with you. More information will be distributed in due time.

Finally, some learning activities will be organized as **online (recorded or live) sessions**.

4. Course schedule

| | Meetings |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Course period 1</i> | |
| Introduction week | -Plenary session 0: Introduction to the programme and to PBL -Two group meetings: 1) PBL simulation pre-discussion 2) PBL simulation post-discussion |
| Week 2 | -Online session 1: Welcome to the mentor programme |
| Week 3/4/5 | -Group meeting with your mentor 3 |
| <i>Course period 2</i> | |
| Preparation week | Plenary session 1: Learning strategies and student well-being |
| Week 2 | -Online session 2: Grades and dealing with feedback |
| Week 3 | -Group meeting with your mentor 4 |
| Week 4/5 | -Individual mentor meeting 1 |
| <i>Course period 3</i> | |
| Week 2 | -Online session 3: Planning your activities and time management |
| <i>Course period 4</i> | |
| Preparation week | Plenary session 2: Diversity in the Classroom |
| Week 4/5 | -Individual mentor meeting 2 |
| <i>Course period 5</i> | |
| Preparation week | Plenary session 3: You and your future: possibilities and opportunities |
| Week 4/5 | -Plenary session 4: Towards year 2 |
| Week 4/5 | -Group meeting with your mentor 5 |

5. Literature suggestions, library service and student portal

Literature suggestions

One of the aims of the mentor program is to help you become a 'self-regulated learner'. If you browse through the university library online catalogue, you will see that there are many books and journal articles about study skills. You are encouraged to take the initiative to search for literature based on your individual needs. However, we recommend three books to you:

- Moust, J.H.C., Bouhuijs, P.A.J. & Schmidt, H.G. (2021). Introduction to Problem-based Learning. A Guide for Students. Groningen/Houten: Noordhoff.

- Burns, T. & Sinfield, S. (2012). Essential study skills. The complete guide to success at university (3rd ed.). London: SAGE.
- Cottrell, S. (2019). The study skills handbook (5th ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

All books are available in the faculty Learning Resource Centre in the University Library. They contain many useful observations and suggestions regarding transition from secondary school to university, including exercises that can help you find your strengths and weaknesses. There is no need to read these books from cover to cover, but we recommend that you browse through them at the start of the year.

Library services

It is worthwhile to check out the UM library website ([UM library](#)). In case you need help, for example with finding literature, feel free to contact one of the librarians ([ask your librarian](#)). The UM library also offers several online tutorials and workshops that we highly recommend. The workshops cover topics such as finding literature for your courses, digital information skills, how to find relevant and trustworthy information for your studies, and on how to avoid plagiarism. You can access the tutorials and workshops on ([UM library workshops and tutorials](#)).

Canvas and Student Portal

Like all courses, the Mentor Programme will use Canvas. This is where you will find the course manual and other relevant course information (<https://canvas.maastrichtuniversity.nl/>). We will also use Canvas for important announcements, and for invitations for questionnaires that help us to improve the quality of our Mentor Programme. Please check Canvas and your student mail regularly, for example by using the [UM Student Portal](#).

Student intranet

The [Student Intranet](#) answers many other questions and offers many helpful links, for example to the Education and Examination Regulations but also to the faculty's socials and news updates.

6. The Mentor Programme in the BA curriculum

Courses in the BA are designed to build upon each other and there are implicit and explicit links between them. These are often mentioned in the course books. The Mentor Programme is not specifically linked to certain courses, but there are connections and ample room for you to discuss your learning experiences. At the same time and related to this, we will discuss more general matters related to the course that you will be taking, ranging from Problem-Based Learning to choices to be made in the second and third year. In addition, the Mentor Programme offers opportunities to discuss study-related challenges, such as time management and procrastination.

7. Course assessment

Participation

For the Mentor Programme to work for you and your fellow students, it is important that you attend and participate in the meetings. You are expected to come to all tutorials, plenary meetings and individual meetings, and be in touch with your mentor when needed. If you cannot attend a meeting, because of illness or another valid reason, please make sure to inform your mentor beforehand.

Assessment

In order to pass the course:

- You should have completed all written assignments that you are to submit for the portfolio throughout the year, via Canvas.
- You should have attended both individual meetings with your mentor.
- You should have finished the English language test

| | Teaching and Examination Regulations | Application in the Mentor Programme |
|------|---|---|
| Fail | Insufficient performance | You did not complete and submit all written assignments via Canvas. |
| Pass | Sufficient performance | You completed and submitted all written assignments via Canvas. |

Resit

As stated above, you will benefit most from the Mentor Programme if you participate consistently throughout the year. However, if you fail the course, perhaps due to unforeseen personal circumstances such as illness or otherwise, you can take a resit at the end of the year. Details of the resit assignment will be announced by the end of the year.

| RESIT | Teaching and Examination Regulation | Application in the Mentor Programme |
|--------------|--|--|
| Fail | Insufficient performance | You did not submit a complete resit assignment |
| Pass | Sufficient performance | You submitted a complete resit assignment |

8. Important persons and services

Front office

The front office is your first point of contact for questions about your studies. The front office staff can help you with course registration, exam registration, admissions. The front office is located near the main entrance of Grote Gracht 90-92. Opening hours are on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 10.00 – 12.30 and 13.30 – 16.00.

The Front Office

E: study-fasos@maastrichtuniversity.nl

T: +31(0)43 3883946

The student adviser

The student adviser, Raf Widdershoven, will be available for questions from you and from your mentor. In case of serious illness or other (personal) matters that may interfere with your studies, the student adviser should always be consulted. He may advise you to sign up for additional training or get in touch with other important university bodies (see below). Please note that everything that is discussed with the student adviser will be treated confidentially. Meetings with the student adviser can be scheduled via this link: [appointment student advisers](#)



Raf Widdershoven

Student Adviser Digital Society

E: raf.widdershoven@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Academic Writing Consultants

Learning to write academically and effectively is a key aspect of our Bachelor programme. You will learn how to write academically in the academic writing courses. In addition, you can turn to our academic writing consultants John Harbord (for English) and Inge Melchior (for Dutch) for individual guidance and support. The support is free of charge. You can contact them via email to make an appointment.



John Harbord

Academic Writing Consultant English

E: jr.harbord@maastrichtuniversity.nl



Dr. Inge Melchior

Academic Writing Consultant Dutch

E: inge.melchior@maastrichtuniversity.nl

The Student Service Centre

The student adviser or your mentor may recommend you to sign up for additional trainings or to get in touch with other important UM bodies. The Student Service Centre houses many such bodies. The centre houses, for example, the student psychologists who offer individual consultation, as well as workshops concerning issues such as stress management, loss and mourning, fear of failure, study efficacy and assertiveness in PBL. The Student Service Centre also houses the student deans who can offer advice on legal and financial issues. You can also get in touch with the Student Service Centre if you need career advice. The centre offers individual career consultations, as well as networking and job interview training. It also hosts career events and offers an online overview of potentially interesting job offers and internship opportunities ([UM vacancy board](#)).

The Student Service Centre
W: [UM Student Services Centre](#)
T: +31(0)43 388 5388
A: Bonnefantenstraat 2

The Disability Support Office

If you need help to make studying with you disability easier (think for instance of filing a request for extra exam time in case you have dyslexia or ADD), make sure to tell your mentor and your study adviser, but also contact the Disability Support Office as soon as possible.

The Disability Support Centre
W: [UM Disability Support Centre](#)
T: +31(0)43 3885272
E: disability@maastrichtuniversity.nl

The Confidential Advisor for Students

UM students who experience undesirable behavior can get help from a confidential adviser. Undesirable behavior can take many forms, such as sexual intimidation or aggression and violence, bullying and discrimination and unequal treatment. The confidant provides a listening ear. She can help you find a solution yourself or mediate in finding a solution. Naturally, everything you discuss will remain confidential. If an informal solution or mediation is not sufficient, you can consider submitting a formal complaint to the Executive Board of Maastricht University. The confidant can help you with this process. The [website](#) of the Confidential advisers contains information about how you can best reach out to them.

SoFASoS

Founded in 2018, Student Organization FASoS (SoFASoS) is the faculty's student association. SoFASoS is equipped to enrich and support both academically and socially all students enrolled in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

SoFASoS student association

W: [SoFASoS](#)

FB: [SoSASoS Facebook](#)

InnBetween Student Chaplaincy

The InnBetween Student Chaplaincy provides spiritual and personal guidance and organises social, cultural and religious activities, events and workshops. InnBetween works together with the Student Services Centre and is available for all students of any faith or background. The chaplaincy is there to help students find their place, whether that involves looking for a place of worship, sitting down for discussions, attending an activity, or just finding a listening ear.

InnBetween Student Chaplaincy

W: [InBetween](#)

T: +31(0)43 3885310

A: Grote Gracht 74

Part II: Meetings

Introduction week

PLENARY SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME AND TO PBL

The introduction week kicks off with a plenary session during which you are introduced to the programme, to PBL and to some key persons, including the programme director, the mentor coordinator and the student adviser.

GROUP MEETING WITH YOUR MENTOR 1: PBL SIMULATION

This is the first of two tutorial meetings, which last 1½ hours each. Both take place during the introduction week of the programme. The aim of this first meeting is to get to know each other and to practice with Problem Based Learning. During the second half of the meeting, you will be introduced to Problem Based Learning by putting it into practice. At the end of the meeting your student ambassador will help you with signing up for classes and answer questions you may have.

- PBL simulation

Pre-discuss the assignment text below and formulate a Problem Statement and Learning Goals. These will serve as guidelines for preparing for the next meeting in which the post-discussion will take place and you will try to provide answers to the questions that you formulate today. Your mentor will take up the role of tutor and the senior student will act as note taker.

Assignment Not for profit?



Mistakes were made



“If I’m going to take money from a citizen to put into education then I’m going to take that money to create jobs. So I want that money to go to degrees where people can get jobs in this state. Is it a vital interest of the state to have more anthropologists? I don’t think so” (Scott, 2011)

“Thirsty for national profit, nations, and their systems of education, are heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive. If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person’s sufferings and achievements. The future of the world’s democracies hangs in the balance” (Nussbaum, 2016)

“University graduates are expected to serve our communities as ethical leaders, innovative researchers, or empathic professionals who help to create conditions that mitigate some of the many wicked problems our world faces, like inequality, poverty, migration and the climate crisis” <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/global-citizenship-education/global-citizenship-education>

In 2011, Florida’s governor Rick Scott presented his view on higher education. According to Scott, the main aim of education is to create jobs. Hence, only degrees that prepare people directly for a job are worthwhile. The state should subsequently not fund the social sciences and the humanities (such as anthropology). This raises a fundamental question: what is the purpose of education? Is it, as Scott suggests, to prepare people for the job market? To stimulate the economy?

In her 2010 essay *Not for profit*, philosopher Martha Nussbaum criticized the shortsighted focus on profitable skills. Education should not be aimed at producing “useful machines”, but to raise critically thinking, democratic citizens. Nussbaum argued that we must resist efforts to reduce education to a tool of the gross national product. Now that you are starting your studies at university, you probably have been confronted with questions about the ‘use’ or the aim of your Bachelor. Maybe you even already have an answer?

Resources

- Nussbaum, M. (2016 [2010]). The Silent Crisis. In: M. Nussbaum, *Not for Profit* (pp. 1-12) (available via CANVAS)
- <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/um-world>
- The ‘[Why this programme?](#)’ page of your Ba Digital Society

Additional material:

- Rens Bod on the use of the humanities:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3Yg2583H_E
-

GROUP MEETING WITH YOUR MENTOR 2: PBL POST-DISCUSSION

- Post-discussion Problem 1

You have gathered and looked into materials that can help you to answer the questions (learning goals) that you have formulated. Now, try to answer them together as a group.

- Reflecting

At the end of the post-discussion, take some time to reflect on what you have done and what you have found:

- How did PBL work out in practice?
- What about the quality of the pre-discussion and your learning goals? Did they help you to deal with the study materials? Would you change them in hindsight? Why?
- What about the quality of the work of the chair, the note-taker and the tutor? What did they do well and what could be improved?
- Are all your questions answered or are there still unresolved questions? How could you resolve them?
- Do you now know where to find relevant information that you need to make your study a success, or do you still have questions? What are they and how could you answer them?

- Discuss the 'homework' assignment below with your mentor group

Assignment: Photo log

You just started a new bachelor programme, in these first few weeks you will receive a lot of information and discover much about who you are as a student. We think that it is important to reflect on your experiences during this time, therefore you are asked to keep a photo log of your **academic** experiences from the first 5 weeks of period 1. This photo-log will be the start of the portfolio that you will have to create throughout this year. More instructions about this portfolio and the deadlines for other assignments can be found in the *Instructions Portfolio* document on Canvas.

By capturing your experiences in pictures, you will create a log of your academic development during the first weeks, which will be helpful to look back and reflect on that development. It will offer you a standardized format through which you can reflect on your studies, for example by highlighting challenges, things you particularly enjoyed (learning), or aspects of university life or interactions that surprised you. The photo logs are accessible to first-year mentors in the Bachelor. Please note that you are free to decide on what information and images you want to share with us. So, if you for example do not want to be visible in the pictures, that is perfectly fine.

Guidelines photo log

- Take a weekly picture in the first 5 weeks of period 1 (04/09/2023-08/10/2023).
- Your very first picture in the photo log has to be a picture of you or something related to your identity with a short description of why you decided to come to FASoS and what you want to achieve by studying or what your hopes and expectations for your studies are.
- All consequent pictures should reflect an academic experience, challenge or success that you had in relation to how you have been studying. Write a short explanation (approximately 100 words) to go along with each picture in which you reflect on your academic experience.
- Upload your complete photo log (5 pictures with description) on Canvas before the deadline on the 13th of October.

Example of a photo log entry:



September 8, 2022: I felt completely overwhelmed by the large amount of readings that we were asked to handle and having just two days to read them. It is really a lot and they are all in English as well. I am not used to digest large amounts of texts at once and I do not know yet how to approach academic texts. How do I know what is important and what not?

I asked our tutor for tips and they suggested to read the title, subtitle, abstract, introduction and conclusion first and to skim the texts to get an idea of how a text is structured, rather than just plunging in. That proved to be really helpful.

Course period 1

ONLINE SESSION 1: WELCOME TO THE MENTOR PROGRAMME

During your introduction week you received a lot of information. In this video we will go over some of that information again. Next to that, we will go through the expectations for the mentor programme in more detail and we will give you tips on how to get the most out of the programme and how to best approach the portfolio assignments.

GROUP MEETING WITH YOUR MENTOR 3: GOOD STUDENT BEHAVIOR

This is a two-hour group meeting aimed at reflecting on your experience with studying in a PBL environment so far. In this meeting, you will also address respectful, professional, academic behavior.

Course period 2

PLENARY SESSION 2: LEARNING STRATEGIES AND STUDENT WELL-BEING

In this session with the student advisers, you will gain more insight in your current study methods. You will reflect and analyse your own study strategies and become aware of how to implement alternatives. You will get the chance to learn about several learning strategies that are proven most effective. Also, there will be room to discuss issues such as exam anxiety and well-being.

ONLINE SESSION 2: GRADES AND DEALING WITH FEEDBACK

By now, you will have received your first grades and feedback. At FASoS we use the 10-point grading scale that is commonly used in the Dutch educational system. This grading system may well be very different from what you were used to in secondary school. Therefore, this session will focus on how you should interpret the your grades. What do they signal? Moreover, the session will discuss how you should handle feedback and constructive criticism.

GROUP MEETING WITH YOUR MENTOR: GROUP DYNAMICS

During this group meeting we will briefly discuss study skills. Next to that we will look at group dynamics and how to give feedback.

INDIVIDUAL MENTOR MEETING 1

This mandatory one-to-one meeting takes place halfway period 2 and concentrates on your study progress and your academic experiences so far. Exact date and time of will be agreed upon with your mentor in due time. The first two assignments for your Portfolio (see instructions on CANVAS) and study results serve as input for this meeting.

Before the meeting, make sure to do the following:

- Make sure to upload your portfolio on canvas (including assignments 1 and 2) before the deadline
- Make sure to bring a print of your latest grade sheet to the meeting.
- Make sure to have a close look at your portfolio before coming to this meeting and single out things you would like to discuss with your mentor.

Course period 3

ONLINE SESSION 3: PLANNING YOUR ACTIVITIES AND TIME MANAGEMENT

This session comes at a moment when most of you are mainly working on individual assignments, that require even more independent planning than the regular courses. How can you manage this independent planning of your work, and what are good strategies for time management. This can also be a moment when motivation is a bit lower, so we will also discuss how to stay motivated at stressful times and when experiencing setbacks; on what you can do and on how friends and fellow students can help. Keep in mind that the student advisers are also always happy to help you further if you struggle with time-management. Feel free to [book a meeting](#) with them.

Course period 4

PLENARY SESSION 3: DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

“We believe it is important that our students are able to prepare themselves optimally for an international future. The best way to do this is through intensive interactions with foreign students.” Prof. dr. Martin Paul, President of the Executive Board of Maastricht University (Maastricht University, *Press Release Advertorial on Internationalisation*, July 11, 2019).

Our faculty houses more than 40 different nationalities and more than half of our students come from outside of The Netherlands. Such an international classroom offers unique opportunities and has a positive impact on learning. Many of our students have come to Maastricht because of this international and diverse atmosphere, and employers particularly appreciate that our students have studied in such an international, diverse environment. Working and studying in such an international and diverse environment comes with challenges as well, sometimes it may be difficult to bridge cultural and other type of intersecting differences such as gender, sexuality, religion and social class in tutorial groups. Differences can lead to misunderstandings and feelings of exclusion, especially online. So, how can you make the most of the (international) diversity in the tutorial group and indeed prepare yourself optimally for an international future?

INDIVIDUAL MENTOR MEETING 2

This second mandatory individual meeting takes place at the start of the second semester. You will have had quite a bit of experience within the BA and you will be able to reflect on your progress. We will again focus on academic challenges, competence development and other accomplishments.

Before the meeting, make sure to do the following:

- Finish the 3rd portfolio assignment and upload your portfolio before the deadline.

Course period 5

PLENARY SESSION 3: YOU AND YOUR FUTURE

So far, we have mostly focused on the here and now: your studies at FASoS, and how to make it work for you. But this may be a good moment to take a step back and think about why you are here in the first place, and where you actually want to go and apply all that you've learnt in the future. It doesn't matter whether you already have a clear idea where you want to go after your studies or don't want to think about jobs yet – in this session we will focus on broader questions such as qualities and values and on how to get a better of idea what you want to do and can do.

PLENARY SESSION 4: TOWARDS YEAR 2

This final plenary session will be organised for each Ba programme separately. It focuses on what you can expect from year 2 of the BA, including important choices to be made regarding elective courses *and* the fifth semester. This session will also offer an additional opportunity to provide us with feedback about the programme.

GROUP SESSION WITH YOUR MENTOR: YEAR 2 AND BEYOND

Before the summer holidays there will be a last group meeting with your mentor. This meeting is aimed at broader reflection on your first-year experience, as well as expectations regarding the rest of your studies. You will discuss remaining challenges, but also things that you have achieved during your first year in the BA. There will also be room to discuss your future after the Bachelor.

Before the meeting, make sure to do the following:

- Finish the 4th portfolio assignment and upload your portfolio max. 48 hours before the group meeting.