



## Activerende Werkvormen en Blended Learning FGw

Call for Proposals

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### Persoonlijke details

Aanvrager:

Marc Tuters

Afdeling:

Media Studies - MA New Media and Digital Culture - Vak: Platform Capitalism

### Projectdetails

Projectnaam:

In-class engagement with abstract ideas via collaborative mind-mapping techniques

Aanleiding:

In highly conceptual courses focussed on “theory” both students and teachers alike may find it difficult to communicate nuanced and complex knowledge, especially in ever-growing seminar groups. One way of addressing this problem is through collaborative note-taking techniques. Even though developing skills of grounding theoretical information in a visual form would be beneficial for many students, programs of study in the Humanities tend to be based on more traditional ways of teaching.

Whilst they can work well when it comes to smaller students numbers these more traditional pedagogies often appear less effective in the case of larger seminar groups. Furthermore, it may also be the case that students who have grown-up and learned to think in era of visually-oriented communication may find visual methods of learning to me more engaging -- this may apply especially in case of media studies.

Our proposed blended-learning class format will help students negotiate the conceptual information offered in the course by moving between tacit and explicit knowledge through different exercises. Most importantly, we propose to do so by involving them in collaborative “mind-mapping” exercises over the course’ two study blocks. Through this approach, students will work together outside of class in order to map the state of the art of contemporary debate on the course’s topic (‘platform capitalism’). These mind-maps will then serve as the starting-point and conceptual “anchor” for more abstract in-class discussions.

Furthermore, we envision a public-facing aspect of the class, which will offer students a platform to showcase their work in relation to class discussion, in which they author a blog post offering a short explanation of a revised mind-map for the wider public interested in the important issues discussed in class.

## Beoogde uitkomsten:

The ultimate goal of the Platform Capitalism course is to provide students with a knowledge base of both historical and practical case-study approach to the study of what has been termed ‘platform capitalism’: an emerging form of capitalist accumulation and profit-seeking that operates through the engineering, management, and control of digital platforms. The proposed class format is centered around the ideas of Karl Marx (1st block) and Michel Foucault (2nd block). In order to achieve its goals the course will use visualisation tools as the basis for weekly in-class discussions as well as for group homework assignments.

Utilising a “flipped classroom” approach, the students of the course will be divided into groups that will be charged with moderating in-class discussions amongst their peers. They will do so by composing a visualisation, which stems from both the homework assignment of that week as well as the discussion that takes place in the classroom. The composed mind-map will then be presented in a short blogpost.

Throughout the course students will work in the same workgroups. The weekly student work will be organised as follows:

- Weekly homework assignments, based on the weekly literature, encourage active (and creative) engagement with that week’s texts. The outcome of the assignments will be in a form of draft digital mind-maps for various themes, topics and questions in relation to weekly literature, for example, *Rentism* or *Neoliberal Subjectivity*.
- The draft visualisations will be presented in the classroom, during the discussion of the literature, that is organised by the weekly moderating group. The outcome (and assessment criteria) of the discussion will be a clear and mutual understanding of the main ideas of the literature as well as decisions to be taken in order to compose a final overarching weekly visualisation -- the latter which represents the key concepts from the week’s readings as well as important in-class discussion points.
- Stemming from the in-class moderated discussion and all students’ weekly assignments, the responsible group will compose a final mindmap visualisation after the class. They will then write a short explanatory blogpost and post it on a blog.

The intended outcomes of this method will be:

- 1) a development of a methodological aid for the students to use when discussing conceptual topics (on the topic of this class or in other classes);
- 2) a clearer understanding and agreement of various theoretical concepts from the literature and how they relate to one another;
- 3) a grounding of these concepts in mutually understandable and accessible visualisations and their accompanying explanatory blogposts; as well
- 3) a *digital archive* of the main topics in the area of the “platform capitalism” topic, which can be used to revise the class material, prepare for examinations or writing final essays, but also as a public-facing outlet in order to engage a wider public with theoretical aspects of a specific topic in a digestible manner

#### Plan van aanpak:

- Testing, documenting and presenting the available (free) visualisation software, which can be accessible to all students
- Prepare clear and achievable weekly assignments in relation to that week's literature and answerable with a mind-map visualisation
- Setting up, documenting and moderating the required digital infrastructure in the form of Google Drive folders. They will be used to upload weekly assignments in visual form and provide an organised structure of storing all individual visual resources that are combined in the visualisations.
- Preparing examples of mindmap visualisations
- Preparing 'inspiration boards' for the specific aesthetic styles to be used for the visualisations during the course
- Presenting the course design to students
- Documenting and presenting to the students "good practices" in moderating an in-class discussion around a visual outcome
- Writing a manual for teachers about how to work with mind-maps in a theory-based course. Publishing the manual on ICTO FGw website.

#### Uitvoering:

##### **1 course designer:**

- Assistance in developing the course structure, weekly assignments
- Setting up a digital infrastructure, testing and documenting visualisation software, preparing and organising needed examples
- Introducing the students to the course design, required software, aesthetic points
- Writing a manual for teachers about how to work with mind-maps in a theory-based course

##### **1 teaching assistant:**

- Participating in classroom activities, providing in-class feedback on the weekly assignments
- Moderating the digital infrastructure, providing out-of-class (technical) support

#### Benodigheden:

Hours for the course designer (as described above)  
Hours for the teaching assistant (as described above)

#### Disseminatie:

Overall, the unique approach, the documentation and the infrastructure of this method will be reusable for similarly organised theory-driven courses.

The Google Drive folder structure will help organise the visual and textual class materials. It will host both the literature of the course, but also, and most importantly, all visual elements used in the mind-maps: the draft versions of mindmaps weekly as well as the final visualisations. This helps in keeping track of the students' progress and aids the moderating team of the week by providing them with an organised repository of elements that are ready to be incorporated in the final mind-map (made after the discussion in-class). This structure can be easily copied and used for subsequent iterations of the same course or other courses with similar assignment-organisation. The Google Drive files can also link to previous years' content in order to provide examples. Google Drive is freely accessible to

everyone with a Google account, a link to our folder-structure and an explanation will be provided in the manual for teachers.

The outcomes of this teaching method will be openly accessible on the blog and will serve as not only a representation of successful student assignments, but also as a repository of most important topics, authors and concepts in relation to “platform capitalism”.

The teaching method will be documented in a manual for teachers (1-2 pages) on how to work with visual outcomes in a theory-driven course for students that are not familiar with graphic design. The manual will be published on the ICTO FGw website and freely accessible.

#### Tijdpad:

The course Platform Capitalism is planned for the first and second blocks of the second semester of the academic year 2018/19.

- Start of designing the teaching method of the course: November 25th, 2018
- Course manual is presented to the students: January 31st, 2019
- First seminar of the first block: February 7th, 2019
- First student-moderated seminar with a visual outcome: February 14th, 2019
- Second student-moderated seminar with a visual outcome: February 21st, 2019
- Third student-moderated seminar with a visual outcome: February 28th, 2019
- Fourth student-moderated seminar with a visual outcome: March 7th, 2019
  
- First seminar of the second block: April 4th, 2019
- Fifth student-moderated seminar with a visual outcome: April 11th, 2019
- Sixth student-moderated seminar with a visual outcome: April 18th, 2019
- Seventh student-moderated seminar with a visual outcome: April 25th, 2019
- Eighth student-moderated seminar with a visual outcome: May 2nd, 2019
- Evaluation of the course: May 15th, 2019

#### Begroting:

Assistance in developing the course structure (OBP):	10 hours	€ 500
Assistance in developing weekly assignments (OBP):	5 hours	€ 250
Setting up and documenting digital infrastructure (OBP):	2 hours	€ 100
Testing and documenting visualisation software (OBP):	2 hours	€ 100
Preparing mind-map examples to be presented to the students (OBP):	4 hours	€ 200
Introducing the students to the course design, required software, aesthetic points by contacting them online to provide information as well as during the first class (OBP):	2 hours	€ 100
Writing a manual for teachers about how to work with mind-maps in a theory-based course (OBP):	8 hours	€ 400
Participating in classroom activities, providing in-class feedback on the weekly assignments (OBP):	24 hours	€ 1200
Moderating the digital infrastructure, providing out-of-class (technical) support for the use of visualisation software and Google Drive (OBP):	6 hours	€ 300
<b>Total:</b>	<b>63 hours</b>	<b>€ 3150</b>