THE EUTOPIA EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Factsheet

EUTOPIA WP2 EDUCATION & STUDENTS

**EUTOPIA: European Universities Transforming to an Open and Inclusive Academy for 2050**

EUTOPIA is a successful European University proposal introduced in 2019 by 6 partners: University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), Göteborgs Universitet (Sweden), CY Cergy Paris Université (France), Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona (Spain) and the University of Warwick (United Kingdom). The EUTOPIA alliance brings together six regionally and nationally distinct European universities. By 2025 it will become an open, multicultural, federated operation of connected campuses that facilitates both free movement for its staff and students, and vigorous participation from all the citizens of its associated communities.

EUTOPIA will produce challenge-driven learning and knowledge , prepare empowered European graduates and promote regional and international involvement.

EUTOPIA and its educational model

The EUTOPIA educational model is aligned with a challenge-based approach to learning and encourages application of knowledge and theory to real-world problems. The EUTOPIAn students are involved in a common learning journey to find and implement meaningful solutions for complex issues in a European context .

In order to realize this ambitious new model for higher education in Europe, **EUTOPIA developed and employs the CoLeCo methodology: "From Learning Units to Connected Learning Communities"**.
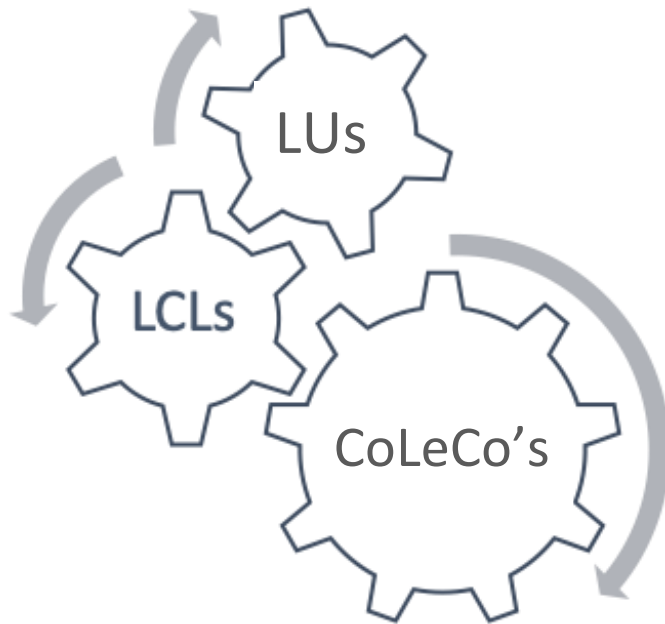
Learning units

The building blocks of EUTOPIA are a selection of EUTOPIA labeled Learning Units (LU's) . These are credit bearing courses in the Bachelor, Master or PhD cycle in one of the EUTOPIA universities and fulfill the criteria of openness characteristic for our alliance:

- They cover interdisciplinary topics
- They involve a range of stakeholders outside academia inspiring teachers and students
- They draw on active teaching and address challenges in European societies
- They adapt to the needs of a diverse range of students by using blended learning techniques

By the end of the 3-year pilot period, 30 learning units of the present curriculum in the EUTOPIA universities will have a EUTOPIA label. These LUs are selected in 3 rounds and gradually inserted in the windows of mobility of our degree programs (ba/ma/phd). Each EUTOPIA partner university will head 5 LUs. The academic staff members who teach a EUTOPIA labeled learning unit, the so-called Learning Unit Leads, are reputed for their pedagogical approach and motivate their students by involving them in assignments inspired by their research activities and/or contracts in a network of external stakeholders.

For a detailed description of the LUs selected thus far, please see appendix 1.

Learning Circles

In order to increase the level of interuniversity connectedness EUTOPIA views **Learning Circles (LCLs)** as developmental and transformational process enablers. LCLs are circles of practice. They create platforms where Learning Unit Leads are introduced to their LU partners, which are topical academic counterparts from the EUTOPIA partner universities. Leads and partners exchange knowledge and share best practices in teaching and learning methods. Facilitated by the EUTOPIA central curriculum team, the Leads open up their course material to students in other universities, and learn to organize their teaching on a collaborative platform.

Connected Learning Communities

Built on the existing LUs, which have transformed through the means of LCLs, the EUTOPIA curriculum is aimed at achieving **inter-university networks connecting students, staff and other stakeholders.** These so-called **Connected Learning Communities (CoLeCos)** co-create course material and develop innovative learning and teaching practices, which address real world challenges. EUTOPIA staff and students can thus realise their (academic) ambitions, and will at the same be involved in shaping their regional/national/European environment. In short: **CoLeCos enable a different learning experience for students as well as for staff, in a participatory and co-created learning journey**.

Involvement in trans-institutional learning communities brings about **ample possibilities for partners to realize their academic ambitions for education, research and innovation in organized international networks.** Learning experience in this context is flexible and mobile, going beyond linear mobility schemes. Staff members that are teaching a EUTOPIA labelled Learning Unit take the responsibility of opening up their course to a selection of students in the partner universities. They therefore create contacts with their EUTOPIA colleagues that are teaching similar or complimentary topics. This cooperation process leads to the development of trans-institutional Learning Communities. Partners can thus combine their research and innovation capacity at a European scale, in a network of challenge-driven students, like-minded academics, and external stakeholders.
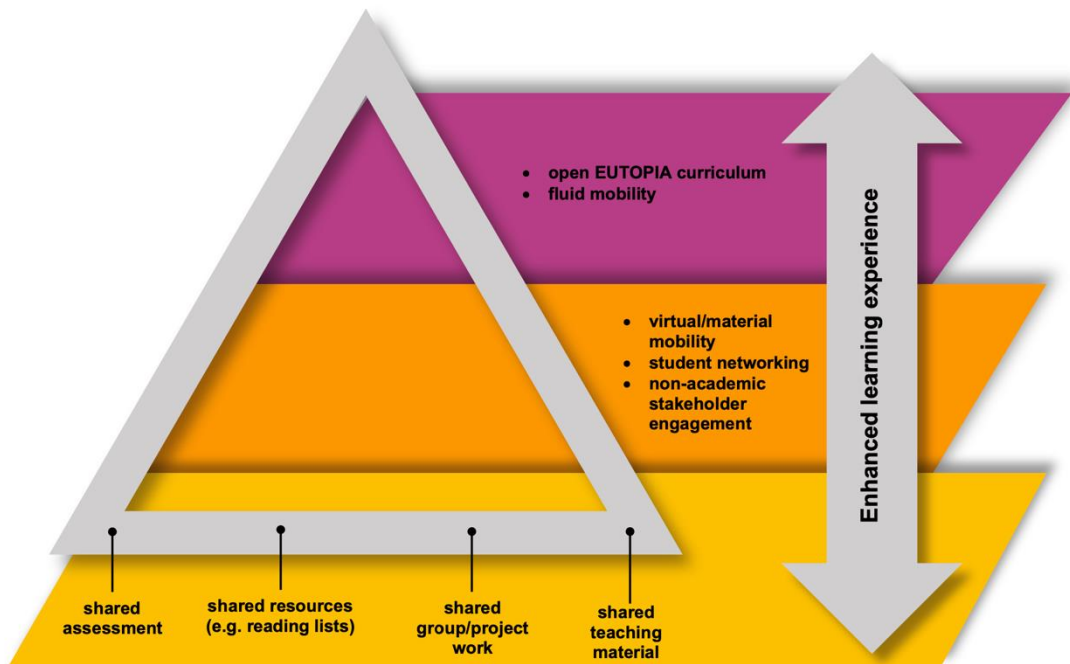
More specifically, involvement in CoLeCos will lead to:

- Increased cross-campus projects/collaborations/grant writing initiatives
- Enhanced skills in leading educational innovation,
- Increased pedagogical impact of curriculum content,
- International and inclusive curriculum content,

- Embedded links with academic and external stakeholders at European level

LEVELS OF CONNECTIVITY

- open EUTOPIA curriculum
- fluid mobility

- virtual/material mobility
- student networking
- non-academic stakeholder engagement

Enhanced learning experience

shared assessment

shared resources (e.g. reading lists)

shared group/project work

shared teaching material

APPENDIX 1: SELECTED EUTOPIA LEARNING UNITS

Results selection round 1

I.   **LU Europe in the World** (MA, 15 HEC, SEM1 – UoG)

Leads: Ann-Kristin Jonasson, Lisbeth Aggestam

This course provides for an inter-disciplinary understanding of Europe's role in the world and draws on a range of approaches in the social sciences and the humanities. It examines the political, economic, social and security relations of Europe in comparison with the rest of the world from historical and contemporary perspectives. The study of "Europe" is understood in a broad sense to encompass various international organizations, state actors and civil societies. The course assesses the international significance of European integration, the impact of global developments on Europe, and the changing role of Europe in the new world order. The first part of the course investigates Europe in the world from a system-level of analysis with a focus on global governance, the EU as a global actor and power shifts in the international system. The second part of the course pursues a thematic analysis of three core concepts: security, trade and migration. These three concepts are studied across time and across international political and economic systems. The thematic analysis includes a consideration of the broadening concept of security and the security strategies of European states and institutions; the European financial crisis and the changing presence of Europe in the global political economy; and finally the impact of international migration on European societies and states.

II.   **LU Geography, Environment and Sustainability** (BA, xx HEC, SEM2 - UPF)

Lead: Antoni Luna

Introduction to the spatial effects of the globalizing forces of the economy and its impact in different environments, societies, and cultures. This course focuses on several complex and often interrelated environmental issues, beginning with a discussion of global climate change and the role of greenhouse gases in other environmental problems, including deforestation, ozone depletion, and the health of the world's oceans. This course explores also the different representations of the world, from the naturalistic point of view to the contemporary discourses about landscapes, conservation and land management, sustainability from a geographical perspective. To do so it reviews key concepts in geography and analyze its meaning, through history and its evolution. The clashing and blending of cultures caused by globalization and the new technologies that profoundly alter human environmental experience suggest new geographical narratives and

representations that are explored here by a multidisciplinary point of view. The main goal of the course is to introduce students to various perspectives, both representing different modes of examining the depth and complexity of human meaning attached to landscapes and embedded in the spaces and places of modern life, focusing in some activities like tourism, local rural development or city branding. The topics covered range widely and include interpretations of the historic relationship between nature and culture, space, place, and landscape in literature and the visual arts, philosophical reflections on geographical knowledge and cultural imagination. The classes will combine thematic and regional approaches as well as some in-depth case studies

III. LU Multilingualism & Diversity (BA/MA/PHD - UoW)

Leads: Chantal Wright & Jo Angouri

MultiDiv corresponds to an existing activity at the University of Warwick. It is conceived to feed/lead to a Learning Community which can address the complex relationship between Language and In/equality. The modern world is interconnected, mobile, multilingual and diverse. Linguistic diversity however does not indicate linguistic equality. On the contrary, the linguistically diverse nature of contemporary societies has implications for social justice, with potentially differential access to resources and the public sphere. In this context the politics of language are a significant factor for the promotion of social cohesion. A learning community on Language and in/equality (working title) can explore the role of language as a key factor in globalized societies and offer solutions to complex problems where language plays a role. This orientation is challenge based and interdisciplinary by design, bringing together disciplines that have well-matched interests but rarely engage in meaningful interaction. MultiDiv is a specialised and highly intensive summer programme for students and academic/non-academic stakeholders interested in Multilingualism, Diversity and Social Justice pedagogy, policy and research from a Linguistics, Modern Languages and Translation Studies angle. MultiDiv is a unique hub which brings together senior academics as well as UG (undergraduate) /PG (postgraduate) research developed through the formal curriculum and relevant extracurricular activities. It takes the form of an intensive, face-to-face week-long activity and involves workshops, data training and sessions on interpreting research for wider audiences, policy makers and the media most notably.

To our knowledge, there is no other summer programme bringing together those discipline areas and with a structure similar to what MutliDiv is committed to. Specifically, the emphasis on bringing together UG/PG research is a unique feature of MutliDiv. To our knowledge there is no other programme that includes UG

researchers as equal participants to PhD students and senior academics. MultiDiv seeks to become an incubator for new ideas, research projects, curriculum innovation and policy intervention. MultiDiv is aligned with the Communities of Practice (CofP) framework and seeks to empower the participants, from all career stages, to drive innovation in teaching, learning, research and policy.

MutliDiv is, by design, relevant to curriculum content directly addressing issues related to multilingualism in society. MutliDiv has already brought together Warwick/Monash students and it is an opportunity to develop a global network which can organically grow through the interests of its community.

MultiDiv corresponds to existing curricula already in place at the EUTOPIA institutions and colleagues from Warwick, VUB and Gothenburg have identified synergies and opportunities for creating a multilevel learning community which brings together Linguistics, Modern Languages and Translation Studies with work on Literacy and Technology.

The programmes named below provide an indicative map of areas where there is convergence and complementarity between institutions; this is conceived as a foundation for a strong EUTOPIA learning community and includes Linguistics and Translation Studies approaches to the study of Multilingualism (e.g., University of Warwick, VUB and Gothenburg) with work on Mutlilingual Education (e.g., VUB's : Multilingual Master in Linguistics and Literary Studies) and Literacy and Technology (e.g., Gothenburg's MA in Information Technology and Learning).

IV.   **LU Data Analysis & Critical Thinking** (BA, xx HEC, SEM2 - CY)

Leads: Valerie Nachef & Matthieu Cisel

In a world where fake or biased information gained momentum through the power of social networks, teaching of critical thinking and reasoning is more important than ever. In this course, we will dwell on the the concepts of fallacy and cognitive bias and how they relate to the field of data analysis. We will see how statistics and data visualisation techniques can be used in a misleading way. Confusion between correlation and causation is one of the most common fallacies, and is often found in the field of data analysis; we will explore the diversity of fallacies through real life examples. Therefore, it will represent an initiation to argumentation, propositional and probabilistic logic.

Content of the course:

- Propositional logic
- Argumentation
- Cognitive biases
- Logical fallacies

V. **LU Introduction to Cognitive Science** (MA, xx HEC, SEM2 – UL)

Lead: Urban Cortes

The course Introduction to Cognitive Science aims at helping students in:

- Understanding the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of scientific inquiry in the sciences of the mind;
- Integrating findings about selected cognitive phenomena from different disciplinary perspectives;
- Acknowledging gaps in understanding the mind;
- Recognizing and tackling challenges encountered in integrating knowledge from different disciplinary contexts;
- Developing skills of collaborative research;
- Getting to understand basic concepts of cognitive science through learning about and researching selected cognitive phenomena.

The course is based on examining and discussing knowledge of – as well as the process of scientific inquiry into – three selected cognitive phenomena: visual perception, emotions, and decision-making. The learning process consists of two phases.

In the first phase (occupying approximately one third of the course), the students are provided with an overview of basic knowledge about each selected phenomenon from different disciplinary perspectives; this phase is carried out in the form of lectures and concludes with a written examination of the acquired knowledge.

The second phase (occupying approximately two thirds of the course) is carried out in the form of active learning. We encourage students to critically examine the existing understanding of the above-mentioned phenomena, acknowledging gaps in knowledge and identifying areas of research that present a challenge to the collaboration of different research disciplines. The teaching process is based on working in groups, whereby particular problems encountered in researching selected phenomena are tackled in the form of collaborative riddle-solving. Through examining these particular problems, students confront more fundamental issues in researching the mind. For example, in solving a riddle where students experiment with different approaches to eliciting emotions, students learn not only about emotion research, but also about the more general issue of task-dependent research designs in cognitive science, the concept of demand characteristics in psychological research, and the fundamental problem of relating measurements of behavioural and physiological parameters to participants' lived experience.

VI. **LU Technological Business Development** (MA/PHD, 6 HEC, SEM1&2 – VUB)

Lead: Thomas Crispeels

In this course, master students from different programs work together in interdisciplinary groups. Based on real life research results, emanating from the research departments of the university (VUB), students engage in a so called 'technological business development project'. The university researchers of these labs are then involved in the definition of the project and the coaching of the students, with the support of the TBDP educational team. Typical tasks performed in these projects are, a.o., customer discovery, market analysis, customer validation, formulation of problem-solution combinations, financial analysis…

In the beginning of the first semester, we organize a matchmaking event between students and projects. Students can also submit their own business development projects. We implement a structured process to coach the students and the researchers involved, including regular plenary sessions (interim sessions, 3 per semester). During these sessions, the different groups present their advances to their colleagues. In between plenary sessions, the students work independently whilst being supported by the researchers involved and the TBDP team. By the end of the course, the students present a final report.