

Last weeks in The Netherlands

I am going to be straight up and say that I have never liked the word “final.” To me, the word “final” has too many negative connotations. For example, a final exam is the worst exam ever because it’s your last chance to secure a good grade in a class; a final countdown is one that usually leads to an end of a fun event; and the final week of a trip is both stressful and upsetting because you are leaving somewhere fun, have to pack, and need to face reality (unless you love packing and hate where you traveled to). My final weeks in Amsterdam and at the university are ones that have been filled with gratitude, sadness, and inconsistent emotions, and I’m sure some students who have/are studying in a foreign country can relate to all of this ~drama~ (I’m calling it drama because I’m dramatic). Here is a nice blog about all of my worries regarding my final weeks and their projected solutions, enjoy!!

- **Worries 1-4:** First of all, I am overwhelmed with SO many things: repacking my life into three medium sized suitcases, planning final hugs and goodbyes with all of my friends, passing all of my classes, and preparing for a harsh slap in the face from reality.
 - **Solutions 1-4:** As for these solutions, I think I have the packing under control since I have gotten rid of a huge heap of clothes I realized I never wear and don’t plan on replacing them since I have 0 euros. I also am strangely good at rolling my clothes into little balls and stuffing them in my shoes to save room in my suitcase (try it sometime)!! For the goodbye dilemma, I think I will ration out specific hours and/or nights to hug people in groups and maybe incorporate some drinks. Passing my classes and the reality slap will bring the hardest solutions. One, because I won’t be able to retake any exams from this period in the future if I fail, so I am leaving this one up to the universe. And two, because I have been avoiding setting up the proper schedule to move back into Brooklyn and graduate on time because I want to spend every waking minute focusing on Amsterdam. I will probably regret this.
- **Worries number 5-7:** I am sad and feel like I am running out of time. That being said, I literally am running out of time, but I feel like I am running out of time to tell people things. Time pressure makes me super nervous and not sleep because I feel like I have to utilize all of the seconds/minutes/hours I have, which in turn, leads me to crash and miss out on a lot of daylight hours from sleeping too much... it’s a lose-lose situation. I am also very sad because I feel like I have built myself a great life here, developed a fun routine, and made an awesome group of friends. It took me awhile to finally feel comfortable being in Amsterdam and growing close to my new friends, and it hurts that I will have to abandon that. I also tend to follow a realist perspective; I know I will never see a lot of the people I have met here again, and will never get these moments of my life back, which makes me even more upset.
 - **Solutions 5-7:** I feel like I am being very negative, so my positive solutions are to make sure I tell my friends why they are the best and how much I appreciate them everyday, and to get an adequate 6-8 hours of sleep a night for optimal functioning.
- **Worries 8 and 9:** Saying thank you to everyone and remembering everything. I kind of forgot to journal the whole time I have been here and I am scared I will forget a lot of precious memories. I usually take a lot of pictures but I’ve been slacking on that as well. I feel like

human brains can only remember so much detail so I hope I can write and photograph more before I say my final goodbyes.

- **Solutions 8 and 9:** My solution is to keep focusing on how much time I've spent with my friends and this city instead of journaling and taking pictures, and how that will probably make up for my lack of entries and albums. I will also take thousands of pictures during my final weeks as an ode to my experience. As for my "thank yous", I will try and get all of those out without being too sappy and annoying, but we'll see.
- **Final worry number 10:** Tying up loose ends. This one is hard! I am a very emotional person and love people, so I take people's impact on me and my impacts on people very seriously. I have always believed that every person I have had a conversation with (for more than ten minutes) has changed my life in some way, either big or small, and want to do the same for others. My experience in Amsterdam and at the VU has led me to meeting a ton of people who will leave a lasting impression with me, and I hope people can say I did the same for them. Many people, from my International Advisors at the university (go Kelly and Ilin!), to my fellow students at Uilenstede, and to strangers I have encountered on my city adventures and trips, have all left a little piece of them within this chapter of my life.

I know my the rest of my final weeks here in Amsterdam will be wonderful, and I am looking forward to them. Final weeks tend to bring a boost in togetherness, appreciation, and FUN because people know it may be the last time that they are in a certain situation and want to take advantage of that. That's the only time I have thought of the word final in a positive light. I hope my weeks are filled with easy exams, many kitchen pre-drinks, non-stop dancing, and a lot of hugs!! P.S. Thank you to everyone who has made Amsterdam an A+ event in my life, you know who you are!!!

-Kate Jahnsen
Semester in Amsterdam Student Blogger



Monopolizing the photo booth at the farewell holiday party