Invitation

Roosevelt Lecture

by Ionica Smeets

Thursday, 26 March 2026

Ionica Smeets is a professor at Leiden University's research group Science Communication and Society, where she studies, teaches and practices science communication. Ionica is the chair of the board of The National Centre of Expertise on Science & Society of the Netherlands.

Additionally, Ionica writes a weekly science column for the Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant*. The children's book *Rekenen voor het leven* [*Maths for Life*], which she wrote with Edward van de Vendel and Floor de Goede, has been translated into seven languages and has won many awards and children's hearts.

HOW (NOT) TO LIE WITH NUMBERS

LECTURER **Ionica Smeets**

DATE **Thursday, 26 March 2026, 16:30-18:00 (Doors open at 16:00)**

LOCATION **Burgerzaal, Town Hall, Lange Noordstraat 1, 4331 CB Middelburg**

Data is everywhere. It is used to conduct quantitative research by researchers at universities, in technology, in the private sector, and by governments. We need data to understand the world. But the heavy reliance on statistics and numbers, and the difficulty most people have in interpreting them, can be overwhelming.

As a mathematician, an expert in scientific communication, and a public intellectual interested in reaching out to wider audiences, Ionica Smeets navigates the challenges of popularizing hard scientific data.

In her lecture, Ionica Smeets will take a closer look at what numbers really mean, tackling a set of fundamental questions: How are statistics produced in the first place? What can they genuinely tell us, and what can they not? When do numbers illuminate reality, and when do they merely create the appearance of certainty? And, perhaps most importantly, how can we learn to interpret statistical claims critically, so we can distinguish solid evidence from misleading figures and avoid being steered by numbers that are taken out of context? Or, to put it in her own words, how can we decide what is the best way to show facts and numbers? How can we talk responsibly about uncertainty behind those numbers? And how do we avoid getting a warning from the *Graph Police*?

After her lecture, which will be in English, the audience will have ample opportunity to ask questions, either in English or in Dutch.

To register for this lecture, ***click here*** by
Wednesday 18 March 2026 at the latest.

This lecture is sponsored by

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Zeeland

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