

UGRD_SOSS_2520_COR-GA2636_HO JACK YONG



Singapore Management University

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Code & Title	Academic Year / Term	Effective Start Date
COR-GA2636 - Managing Diversity in Asia	AY2025-26 January Term	25/08/2025

Offering Unit / Department / School	Course Career
SOSS	Undergraduate

Course Units	Grading Basis
CU:	GRD - Graded

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Course Description

This course explores various models in managing diversity in Asia. It examines forms of 'difference' such as ethnicity, religion and sexuality, and policy frameworks are important for multicultural societies. The course critically engages with the debates within scholarship of multiculturalism that encourages a theoretically-informed approach towards a range of empirical examples from Europe, North America and Asia. The analysis of empirical examples enables the consideration of demographic, cultural and ideological particularities, as well as nation-building efforts that vary across historical and geographical environments. This context-driven approach will also be taken towards the analysis of contemporary policy issues including citizenship, education and employment, including current debates such as disability in

education and the 'headscarf affair'. The course also includes an applied component which allows students to put the theories to use and to experience how to deal with diversity through three dialogue sessions outside the campus.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Understand social diversity in Singapore and Asia
2. Understand theories that explain diversity and diversity management
3. Identify dominant and normative discourses on diversity and diversity management
4. Analyse and evaluate the policies and programmes that seek to manage diversity
5. Devise evidence-based approaches in understanding and managing diversity

SMU Graduate Learning Outcomes

Disciplinary knowledge, Multidisciplinary knowledge, Interdisciplinary knowledge, Critical thinking & problem solving, Collaboration and leadership, Communication, Intercultural understanding and sensitivity, Understanding of global and Asian perspectives, Ethics and social responsibility, Resilience, Self-directed learning

Discipline Specific Competencies

Communication Skills, Cultural Diversity, Identity Formation, Transnational Flows, Regional Insights

Course Area(s)

AREA - Asia Studies (Intake 2019 to 2023), AREA - Asian Studies (Intake 2018 and earlier), AREA - Business Options, AREA - Business-Oriented Electives, AREA - Communities - Cultures of the Modern World, AREA - Econ Major Rel/Econ Options, AREA - Global Asia Electives, AREA - Grad Req - SG & Asia Studies (Intake 2024 onwards), AREA - Intl & Asian Studies Major, AREA - Public Pol and Public Mgmt Electives, AREA - Social Sciences/PLE Major-related, AREA - Sociology Electives, ENRL - SS Enrolment: 6 ISEP; 1 SUSEP, RQCX - GA206

CLASS SECTION INFORMATION

Instructor(s)

00022687, HO JACK YONG HO (jackyongho@smu.edu.sg)

Instruction Mode

In Person

Assessment Components (New)

Category	Weightage
Class Participation	20

Category	Description	Weightage
Projects/Assignments	Group Project	50

Category	Description	Weightage
Projects/Assignments	Individual Assignment	30

Instructional Methods and Expectations

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

1.	Class Participation	20%
2.	Group Project	50%
3.	Individual Assignment	30%

Class Participation (20%)

Learning is at its best where every participant takes the initiative to contribute ideas and to challenge viewpoints. The instructor will provide a safe space for the meeting of minds to take place; and you will take the initiative to come to class having completed the assigned readings and reflected on the questions provided in the course outline. Marks will be awarded to students who consistently demonstrate an eagerness to enrich collaborative learning through:

- Active listening, by expanding on thoughts and ideas raised by others
- Self-advocacy, through leading conversations that are important to you and your in-group
- Openness, where communication is kind and respectful
- Generosity, volunteering yourself, your time, and resources for the collective good
- Reflexivity, through communication that reflects continuous self-examination

Group Project (50%)

The group project offers an opportunity to connect readings and class discussions with real world issues. Groups comprising 4-5 students will work on projects sponsored by an external partner organisation. Students are expected to demonstrate excellence, professionalism, and efficient project management for all group project outputs. For accountability, students will have to, individually, complete a peer evaluation survey at the end of the term. Groups will be evaluated by the instructor, with inputs from the adjunct teaching mentor and representative(s) of the partner organisation.

Proposal

Project topics will be confirmed by Week 3. With project topics assigned to all groups, students will research the organisation, key stakeholders, and pertinent issue(s) raised, in order to develop appropriate research questions and methods. Initiate a discussion with the instructor and/or adjunct teaching mentor if necessary. By Week 5, teams must deliver a five-minute project presentation deck that:

- a. Provides a background of the issues and gaps
- b. Proposes research questions and how the group intends to answer the research questions
- c. Details the group's project schedule, individual roles, and responsibilities

Pitch

Groups will discuss project findings and offer recommendations to the client through a 15-minute pitch, followed by a 10-minute Q&A. The pitch will take place during class on Week 13. Presentation decks must be submitted via eLearn 24 hours before the presentation date / time (or earlier). All members of the group are to be dressed in formal attire at the presentation. Presentations must be engaging, and will be evaluated based on the group's ability to convince assessors that:

- Recommendations are grounded in theory and substantiated through research
- Recommendations will address the identified issue(s) in the short and long term
- The recommended roll-out plan can be implemented immediately, with observed outcomes within specified timeframes

Report

The group project report is a collaborative written assessment that describes the project's aims, research questions, methods, and recommendations. This report must include the following sections:

- a. Infographic: *Visual executive summary of all pertinent points*
- b. Table of contents
- c. Introduction: *Background of project and issue(s)*
- d. Literature review: *Summary of academic and topical research*
- e. Method: *Explain how research was carried out and data analysed*
- f. Findings and discussion: *Explain research outcomes and their implications*
- g. Recommendations: *Detail practical steps to address the issue(s)*
- h. Bibliography
- i. Appendices (if any)

The length of the final group report should be 3,000 words (+/-10%), excluding *a*, *b*, *h* and *i*. Reports will be evaluated based on:

- Content organisation: Logical flow or arguments
- Clarity and coherence: Clearly written, in one voice
- Soundness of research: Cites credible studies and articles
- Functionality: Extent to which recommendations are deemed as practical and useful
- Creativity and visual appeal: Easy to locate information and read

Before the end of Week 9, all groups are expected to schedule a meeting with the instructor / adjunct teaching mentor to present a draft of the project report. The complete report is due 24 hours before the presentation date / time on Week 13 (or earlier). Reports are to be submitted via eLearn. Only one submission is allowed per group.

Individual Assignment (30%)

You are required to complete one five-minute presentation, and one 1,500-word reflection essay.

Details of the individual presentations will be shared in class.

To score favourably on the individual essay, you must demonstrate reflexivity, confront past and present assumptions, and apply critical thinking. Good essays will contain insights synthesised from readings, class discussions and personal experiences.

GRADE PENALTIES

Absences: Attendance is compulsory for all classes, for the entire class duration. If you expect to miss a class, or parts of a class, inform the instructor or teaching assistant at the earliest possible time. If you foresee that you will be missing numerous classes during the term, consider enrolling in another term. Students that accumulate 3 or more absences (in full or in parts) will receive no *Class Participation marks* for the course.

Late submissions: Grade penalties will apply for the late submission of any assignment, presentation, report, or peer evaluation input. Submissions that are late by more than one hour will not receive a grade. Exceptions may be considered for legitimate health and personal reasons. A doctor's note recommending 1-2 days of rest will not be considered as students have ample time to work on all individual assignments throughout the term.

Weekly Lesson Plan

COURSE SCHEDULE

<i>W</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic & Thought Starters</i>	<i>Readings</i>
1		<p><u>Diversity, Power, Privilege</u></p> <p>The differences that exist between us might, in some instances, accord power and privileges; and in other instances, diminish our influence in society. What powers do you have? Who or what has bestowed these powers onto you? What do people give, in exchange for power? Is more power necessarily desirable? What have you sacrificed for power?</p>	<p>Johnson, A.G. (2005) 'Chapter 2: Privilege, Oppression and Difference', in <i>Privilege, Power and Difference</i>, Boston: McGraw-Hill, pp. 12-40.</p> <p>Chua, B.H. & Kwok K.W. (2001) 'Social Pluralism in Singapore', in R. Hefner (ed.), <i>The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia</i>, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, pp. 86-118.</p> <p>Teo, Y. Y. (2018). <i>This is what inequality looks like</i>. Ethos Books.</p> <p>(Chapters: Preface; Step 1: Disrupt the narrative; Everyday lives)</p>

2		<p><u>Governing Diversity: Theories & Practices</u></p> <p>Some differences in society are recognised and celebrated while others are not. Multiculturalism is a foundational pillar on which discourses of social integration and inclusion are built. Yet, even in societies that profess to celebrate and practice multiculturalism, inequalities persist. How can multiculturalism be put into practice? What is the state's role? What is your role?</p>	<p>Bokhorst-Heng, W.D. (2007). Multiculturalism's narratives in Singapore and Canada: Exploring a model for comparative multiculturalism and multicultural education, <i>Journal of Curriculum Studies</i> 39(6): 629-658. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220270701506324</p> <p>Nagy, S.R. (2014). Politics of multiculturalism in East Asia: Reinterpreting multiculturalism. <i>Ethnicities</i>. 14(1), 160-176. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796813498078</p>
3		<p><u>Group Project Briefing</u></p> <p><u>Identity, Tribalism & Belonging</u></p> <p>As spaces for diversity flourish, and groups organise around shared experiences of oppression, "identity politics" has emerged as a contentious force in the organisation of societies. What function does 'identity' serve in the management of diversity? What are the appeals and drawbacks of 'representation'? Do we need to relate to 'identities' to feel like we belong?</p>	<p>Solomon, Andrew. (2012). "Son", in <i>Far From the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity</i>, Scribner, New York, pp. 1-48.</p> <p>Patai D. (2018) Cultural Competence, Identity Politics, and the Utopian Dilemma. In: Frisby C., O'Donohue W. (eds) <i>Cultural Competence in Applied Psychology</i>. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78997-2_17</p>

Managing Race and Religion

What is your race and religion? This is a question that has become increasingly irksome for many. All of us have experienced some racial and religious categorisation – formally and informally. Even as it's become clear that categories are seldom 'categorical', categorisation persists as a means to manage diversity. What purpose does categorisation serve at societal, institutional, inter-group and interpersonal levels? How does categorisation facilitate the management of interracial and interreligious relations? Has it coloured your views of others, and of yourself?

Ratcliffe, P. (2004). 'Race-Thinking', 'Race' and Racism(s): Exploring the Roots of Exclusionary Forces' in *Race, Ethnicity and Difference: Imagining the Inclusive Society*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, pp. 15-26.

Orton, A. (2016). Interfaith dialogue: seven key questions for theory, policy and practice.

Religion, State and Society, 44(4), 349-365.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2016.1242886>

Wong, L. (2021, June 25). *Speech on*

multiracialism and

faultlines by Mr

Lawrence Wong,

Minister for Finance.

IPS-RSIS Forum on

Race and Racism,

Singapore.

[https://www.mof.gov.sg/](https://www.mof.gov.sg/news-publications/speeches/speech-on-multiracialism-and-faultlines-by-mr-lawrence-wong-minister-for-finance-at-the-ips-)

[news-publications/](https://www.mof.gov.sg/news-publications/speeches/speech-on-multiracialism-and-faultlines-by-mr-lawrence-wong-minister-for-finance-at-the-ips-)

[speeches/speech-on-](https://www.mof.gov.sg/news-publications/speeches/speech-on-multiracialism-and-faultlines-by-mr-lawrence-wong-minister-for-finance-at-the-ips-)

[multiracialism-and-](https://www.mof.gov.sg/news-publications/speeches/speech-on-multiracialism-and-faultlines-by-mr-lawrence-wong-minister-for-finance-at-the-ips-)

[faultlines-by-mr-](https://www.mof.gov.sg/news-publications/speeches/speech-on-multiracialism-and-faultlines-by-mr-lawrence-wong-minister-for-finance-at-the-ips-)

[lawrence-wong-minister-](https://www.mof.gov.sg/news-publications/speeches/speech-on-multiracialism-and-faultlines-by-mr-lawrence-wong-minister-for-finance-at-the-ips-)

[for-finance-at-the-ips-](https://www.mof.gov.sg/news-publications/speeches/speech-on-multiracialism-and-faultlines-by-mr-lawrence-wong-minister-for-finance-at-the-ips-)

			rsis-forum-on-race-and-racism-in-singapore-on-25-june-2021
5		<p>Group Project Proposal</p> <p><u>Managing Gender & Sexuality</u></p> <p>Many of the Asian societies that continue to honour traditional gender roles often regard ‘gender equality’ as a foreign, Western concept. As conceptions of gender, gender norms, and heteronormity evolve globally, tensions have erupted over the ways in which gender and sexuality ought to be managed in society. What are some of these tensions in your community? How do these tensions affect you? How can these tensions be better managed?</p>	<p>Jagdish, B. (Host). (2020-2021). Saga [Audio podcast episodes 1-12]. <i>Association of Women for Action and Research</i>. https://aware.org.sg/saga/</p>
6		<p><u>Diversity on Digital platforms</u></p> <p>Digital platforms have created avenues for global conversations on a variety of diversity issues. Yet, digital platforms have also enabled echo chambers, conspiracy theories, and disinformation. Are digital spaces good for diversity? How can diversity be better managed on digital platforms? Do algorithms and artificial intelligence make good diversity managers?</p>	<p>Mundt, M., Ross, K., & Burnett, C. M. (2018). Scaling Social Movements Through Social Media: The Case of Black Lives Matter. <i>Social Media + Society</i>. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118807911</p> <p>Swisher, K., Coaston, J., Klein, E., & Manjoo, F. (2021, June 17). We need to talk about cancel culture. <i>The New York Times</i>. https://www.nytimes.com/article/cancel-culture-trevor-noah-event.html</p>

7		<p><u>Managing across Generations</u></p> <p>Ageism is prevalent in many Asian societies; societies that have traditionally considered respect for the elderly to be an important virtue. While medical advancements have enabled us all to live longer lives, new tensions have emerged as more people of diverse generations compete for space and resources. What are some examples of ageism in your community, and how has it coloured your view of intergenerational conflicts? How does ageism intersect with the other “- isms” that are present in your community?</p>	<p>Applewhite, A. (2017). <i>This chair rocks: a manifesto against ageism</i> (Revised edition). Networked Books. [Introduction & Chapter 1]</p> <p>Soin, K., & Thomas, M. (2017). “We must do something about ageism”, in Soin, K., & Thomas, M. (Eds). <i>The Art of Advocacy in Singapore</i> (pp. 11-18). Ethos Books.</p> <p>Ng, S. H. (1998). Social psychology in an ageing world: Ageism and intergenerational relations. <i>Asian Journal of Social Psychology</i>, 1(1), 99-116. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-839X.00007</p> <p>Fuente-Nunez, V.D.L., & Mikton, C. (2021). <i>Global report on ageism</i>. World Health Organisation. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240016866</p>
8		Mid-term break	

9		<p><u>Managing Disability</u></p> <p>In a world designed for the able-bodied majority, persons with disabilities have, since time immemorial, been excluded from most domains of social life. The emergence of the social model has, however, presented a paradigm shift for how disability might be viewed. Has the social model influenced public and institutional policies in your country? How can we apply the social model to the management of disability interests in social institutions? Are there persistent barriers in your community where the social model might not apply?</p>	<p>Barnes, C. (2019). Understanding the social model of disability: Past, present and future. In <i>Routledge handbook of disability studies</i> (pp. 14-31). Routledge.</p> <p>Parker, K. (2001). Changing Attitudes Towards Persons with Disabilities in Asia. <i>Disability Quarterly</i>, 21(4), 105-113. http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/322/392</p> <p>Lee, J., Mathews, M., Wong, F. S., Zhuang, K. (2017). Beyond the Business Case: Different Models of Including People with Disabilities at Work. <i>Disability Quarterly</i>, 37(4). https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/6099/4819</p>
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10		<p><u>The Practice of Diversity and Inclusion</u></p> <p>To manage diversity, social institutions often undertake 'inclusive' practices to promote differences (e.g., affirmative action plans, scholarships) and to protect the marginalised (e.g., anti-discrimination policies). For those on the margins, these practices often seem to offer little, by way of real change. Others opine that these practices are inherently discriminatory, and that they are an affront to meritocratic ideals. If you were put in charge of managing diversity for an institution, what will you do to manage diversity? What are some principles that would guide your actions? What challenges do you foresee?</p>	<p>Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations. <i>Gender & society</i>, 20(4), 441-464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243206289499</p> <p>Barak, M. E. M. (1999) 'Beyond Affirmative Action,' <i>Administration in Social Work</i>, 2(3-4), 47-68. https://doi.org/10.1300/J147v23n03_04</p> <p>Ferdman, B. M. (2017). Paradoxes of Inclusion: Understanding and Managing the Tensions of Diversity and Multiculturalism. <i>The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science</i>, 53(2), 235–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886317702608</p> <p>Krentz, M., Vaughn, E., Ruiz-Cabrero, J., Jaafar, M., & Teo, C. (2020, April 30). The Diversity Dividend in Southeast Asia. <i>Boston Consulting Group</i>. https://image-src.bcg.com/Images/BCG-The-Diversity-Dividend-in-SE-Asia-Apr-2020_tcm9-246802.pdf</p>
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11		<p><u>Building an Inclusive Community</u></p> <p>The role of a diversity leader can be overwhelming. On top of representing the diverse interests of various groups, this person must consider institutional responsibilities while navigating sociocultural and political sensitivities in the external environment. With all that we've learnt throughout the term, how prepared are you to be a diversity leader? What other skills will you have to develop to succeed in the role? What will you do from here?</p>	<p>Johnson, A.G. (2005) 'What Can We Do?' and 'Epilogue', in <i>Privilege, Power and Difference</i>, Boston: McGraw-Hill, pp. 107-141.</p>
12		Project Workshop	
13		Group Project Pitch & Report	

Recommended Textbooks and Readings

WEEKLY READINGS

A list of weekly readings for the course is provided in the 'Course Schedule' below. Review and reflect on the 'thought starters' as you read and formulate your own positions. Pen thoughts as you read and strive to share these thoughts during class discussions to challenge your assumptions and sharpen your positions.

Other Information

COURSE GOALS

1.	Understand social diversity in Singapore and Asia
2.	Understand theories that explain diversity and diversity management
3.	Identify dominant and normative discourses on diversity and diversity management
4.	Analyse and evaluate the policies and programmes that seek to manage diversity
5.	Devise evidence-based approaches in understanding and managing diversity

CLASS SESSIONS

Classes comprise of one 3-hour workshop each week. Students are expected to attend all classes fully prepared to discuss readings and assignments.

STYLE GUIDE

The prescribed style of referencing for all assignments for this course is the APA (7th Edition) style with in-text referencing. See: <http://researchguides.smu.edu.sg/apastyle>. While in-text references will count toward the word-count, bibliography does not.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offence.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructors of the course. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at <https://smu.sharepoint.com/sites/oasis/SitePages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx>.

Responsible Use of AI

The University recognises the importance of equipping students with the skills to navigate an AI-driven world. While AI tools may support learning, they must be used judiciously and responsibly. Students must not present AI-generated output as their own work.

Each course may set specific guidelines on the use of AI in assessments. Students are required to follow these guidelines carefully and should seek clarification from the instructors if uncertain.

Misuse of AI constitutes a breach of academic integrity and will be subject to the same penalties as other acts of academic dishonesty.

Copyright Notice

Please note that all course materials are meant for personal use only, namely for the purposes of teaching, studying and research. You are strictly not permitted to make copies of or print additional copies or distribute such copies of the course materials or any parts thereof, for commercial gain or exchange.

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Accessibility

SMU strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. Students who anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability are encouraged to inform the course instructor as soon as possible. Students may also contact the university's disability services team if they have questions or concerns about academic provisions:

accessibility@smu.edu.sg. Please be aware that the accessible tables in our seminar room should remain available for students who require them.

Digital Readiness for Teaching and Learning (DRTL)

As part of emergency preparedness, instructors may conduct lessons online via the Zoom platform during the term, to prepare students for online learning. During an actual emergency, students will be notified to access the Zoom platform for their online lessons. The class schedule will mirror the current face-to-face class timetable unless otherwise stated.