

UGRD_CIS_2520_COR2603_DANIEL SEAH



Singapore Management University

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Code & Title	Academic Year / Term	Effective Start Date
COR2603 - Singapore: Imagining The Next Fifty Years	AY2025-26 January Term	25/08/2025

Offering Unit / Department / School	Course Career
CIS	Undergraduate

Course Units

Grading Basis
PNP - Pass/Fail

CU:

1

Course Description

The course content is jointly developed by professors from the six local universities and will be delivered using a blended learning approach. Singapore is both a city and a country contained in a small geographical space located in Southeast Asia. It houses a diverse population in terms of race, language, religion, class and nationality. It possesses no natural resources, but has a highly educated labour force. Its economy has experienced significant growth rates, particularly in the late 70s and early 80s, coupled with low unemployment. Like most other more developed economies, it now confronts a range of socioeconomic issues (rapidly ageing population, declining fertility rates, widening income inequality, rising costs of living) amidst increasing global competition, technological advancements, and security threats. At the same time, Singaporeans have become more of a people with a stronger national identity, a greater propensity to participate in the decisions that affect the destiny of the country, and a wider

range of views and voices on the future direction of Singapore, the challenges it confronts, and the strategies and means by which to achieve their preferred goal(s) for themselves, their children, and the country.

Course Learning Outcomes

- 1. Well-informed individuals who are able to develop new frameworks and perspectives in understanding different facets of Singapore society and life in Singapore;
- 2. Critical and knowledgeable individuals with a good grasp of the issues and challenges confronting Singapore;
- 3. Thinking and active individuals who are able to harness the acquired knowledge and skills to develop strategies and policies that would be beneficial to all Singaporeans in the Singapore they envision for the future.

SMU Graduate Learning Outcomes

Critical thinking & problem solving, Disciplinary knowledge, Multidisciplinary knowledge, Interdisciplinary knowledge, Understanding of sustainability issues

Course Area(s)

AREA - Communities - Cultures of the Modern World, AREA - General Education - Arts, AREA - Grad Req - SG & Asia Studies (Intake 2024 onwards), AREA - Singapore Studies (Intake 2019 to 2023), ENRL - Open to Undergraduates only, AREA - Public Pol and Public Mgmt Electives

CLASS SECTION INFORMATION

Instructor(s)

DANIEL SEAH - (danielseah@smu.edu.sg)

Course Instructor(s)

Read my expectations before you bid.

Instruction Mode

In Person

Assessment Components (New)

Category	Weightage
Class Participation	10

Category	Description	Weightage
Projects/Assignments	Brief Opinion Paper	20

Category	Description	Weightage
Projects/Assignments	Reflection Journal	20

Category	Description	Weightage
Projects/Assignments	Group Project	50

Instructional Methods and Expectations

COURSE EXPECTATIONS: PLEASE READ

Before you bid for or enrol in SG50, carefully review the following to decide if this elective is suitable for you. The following are essential components of SG50 in my sections:

(1) Class Attendance (Three-strikes policy):

Students who are absent for three sessions (seminars and/or consultations) in a term without a valid reason **will be removed from SG50 without exception**. To this extent, I will advise the Associate Dean (Teaching) that you be placed on a Leave of Absence (LOA), in accordance with the “Class Hours and Attendance” rules on BOSS.

If three absences are supported only by e-MCs, I reserve a right to request that you obtain a second opinion through an in-person medical consultation. I will review the circumstances of your absence and **reserve the right in its entirety to remove you from SG50 through a LOA** if there are reasonable grounds to conclude that the medical justification provided is not credible or does not objectively substantiate your absence.

A small number of students have treated this pass/fail module as a chance to disengage by declining to attend classes and/or consultations, and failing to account for their absences. This behavior reflects an objective disregard for our partners, the guest lecturers, your student colleagues, and me. For this reason, I will **firmly** apply the three-strikes policy to maintain the trust and goodwill of our partners, guest lecturers and students who commit time and effort to the success of SG50.

It is a matter of personal regret and dismay that I must restate what should be a basic standard of adult conduct. I will always treat students as responsible adults within a respectful and safe learning environment. However, I will and can decisively enforce discipline when necessary. If SG50 is a graduation requirement for you in a final term, consider the implications of this three-strikes policy.

This is the only reminder you will receive regarding attendance and the three-strikes policy. Neither I nor the TA will issue notices during the term. If you choose not to inform me of an absence, I will not follow up. Should you hear from me regarding your attendance, it will be to notify you that a LOA has been enforced.

If this approach to classroom conduct and learning are unacceptable to you, choose another module.

(2) Slides policy: Seminar slides (i.e., non-consultation weeks) will not be released before term or just before a class. This approach fosters active listening and dialogue with the instructor/guest speakers. If you have a medical condition that requires prior access, please contact me for accommodations.

(3) No blended learning: SG50 is not part of SMU's blended learning modules. Every class (i.e., non-consultation weeks) will typically run according to the scheduled time (7pm-10.15pm). If you prefer shortened class hours, my SG50 sections are not aligned with your learning preferences. Please enrol only if you can commit to the scheduled class time.

(4) Client's Brief and Project Scope: My SG50 sections (G1 and G2) emphasize social services in the non-profit context. To this end, G1 will work with Ray of Hope ("RoH"), an Institution of a Public Character ("IPC"). It is a lean, non-profit organization, but we have a very

successful working relationship with RoH as a SMU-X partner. G2 will work with the TENG Ensemble (“TENG”), a critically acclaimed IPC which is a Singaporean Chinese fusion performing arts company.

RoH and TENG will present a brief, a real problem, for our SG50 sections (usually an operational or strategic matter that it cannot address because of its capacity). I strive to curate RoH and TENG’s problem into a manageable project that can be completed within one term. However, similar to real-world challenges when we are presented with a client’s brief, you should expect some imperfections. For example, in previous projects, RoH’s “dirty” data points (incomplete data) had to be used for data analysis, or they wanted to explore a proof of concept on social impact without much precedence. You will need to manage RoH/TENG’s brief with professionalism and resourcefulness.

The way to deal with the imperfections is to be proactive. Seek clarifications from RoH/TENG and manage expectations during consultations. They are friendly, knowledgeable, and accessible. So long as you remain relatively open-minded and curious, RoH and TENG’s projects should be eye-opening experiences. If you are unfamiliar with the non-profit sector, you will be introduced to individuals, including those who work for RoH/TENG, who dedicate time, resources, and professional skills to aiding the most vulnerable and marginalized in Singapore.

(5) Engagement with partners: During the consultation weeks, RoH/TENG will involve its staff who perform different functions at various levels of seniority to engage you. They are your stakeholders in this project. While I work closely with RoH beforehand to agree and align the project’s key deliverables for each consultation, you might face different, apparently conflicting, perspectives/expectations from the stakeholders about the Week 13 project. These conflicting perspectives potentially include my suggestions during our faculty-student consultations.

Again, as in real life, this is an inevitable outcome of our different roles and experiences, although we are addressing the same problem. For instance, a staff whose professional role is mainly operational and “beneficiary-facing” may not always be able to account for the broader, strategic priorities at stake compared with another staff who is more senior within the same organization.

The approach is to listen critically, identify the contradictions (real or apparent) relative to RoH/TENG’s brief, and to seek clarifications from the stakeholders (including me) before Week 13. Please treat these consultations as part of a learning process for stakeholders management, an indispensable and underrated skill for success in our professional lives.

6) Week 13 Group Presentations & Peer Evaluation: For the Week 13 Group Project, you will receive a **single grade as a group**. All group members share the grade, regardless of individual contributions, to reflect the professional reality that team outcomes are often collective, even when individual efforts vary. As young adults preparing to enter the workforce or already have internship experiences, you must address conflicts within your groups independently. In this respect, you will form your own groups.

There is one exception to the single grade rule and this exception potentially applies in the context of a peer evaluation. This is because, during group projects, conflicts can arise for various reasons (e.g., freeriding). The following peer evaluation process applies:

(i) **Key Principle:** Peer evaluation is not compulsory for SG50. However, if you form the view that a group member has not contributed meaningfully, you can submit a peer evaluation for the instructor's review. This is a key principle of peer evaluation for SG50 and it might differ from your experiences in other modules and expectations that contain peer evaluations. Consider this key principle for SG50 very carefully before you bid for DLTI.

(ii) **Starting a Peer Evaluation** ("Complainant"): Any student within the group may submit a peer evaluation concerning another member (the "Respondent"). The Complainant must:

- Use the official peer evaluation form (provided in Term 1);
- Sign the form to affirm the accuracy of the complaint against a group member;
- Upload a log of the Respondent's contributions (including but is not exhaustive of dates, tasks, and relevant messages or documents);
- Curate and confine your log to a maximum of three A4 pages. As a complainant, it is your responsibility to present a focused and coherent evidentiary case. The log is not an evidentiary "dump" and the instructor will not sift through excessive or disorganized evidence to identify your strongest points. Any evidence from page 4 of the log will not be reviewed; and
- Note that peer evaluation only applies to the Week 13 Group Project. More details will be released during term.

(iii) **Corroboration Strengthens Probative Weight of Complaint:** A single complaint by one complainant submitted under 9(ii) will be reviewed by the instructor. However, it carries less probative weight than a complaint supported by multiple group members within that group.

As an illustration: in a 6-person group, if only one member submits an evaluation against another, this is permitted. However, the evidential quality of this single complaint is weaker because it is uncorroborated by others. Less probative weight will be attached to this type of complaint by the instructor. The group members must decide among themselves whether to submit a complaint collectively, and which member(s) to include in the submission.

(iv) **Instructor's Role:** The instructor will review a complaint and determine whether a grade reduction for the Respondent's Week 13 Group Project is justified. The instructor's decision to reduce the Respondent's grade is based on the details of the complaint and whether it is supported by the objective quality of the submitted evidence.

If the complaint is fully supported by the evidence, **the instructor reserves the right in its entirety to award a grade reduction for the Week 13 Group Project against the Respondent on a case-by-case basis.** A grade reduction can involve a drop to a lower letter grade or a decrease in the numerical range within the same grade band. It is in this sense that an exception to the single grade policy applies.

The Respondent must take note of the considerable impact of this grade reduction for the final grade of the whole elective. **The Respondent should also consider that a grade reduction may result in a failing grade for this elective,** particularly if SG50 is a graduation requirement in the Respondent's final term at SMU

Important Boundaries: Students cannot request or demand a grade reduction for the Week 13 Group Project against a Respondent as a form of retaliation or to "compensate" for their higher effort. The instructor's determination of a grade for the Week 13 Group Project is non-negotiable. Any decision that involves a determination of the Respondent's grade—whether to impose a reduction at all and to what extent—rests solely with the instructor's professional judgment.

To avoid doubt: the decision to submit a peer evaluation is the Complainant's right, but this right does not contain any entitlement to a specific outcome or grade reduction. In other words, there is a right to initiate a process of peer evaluation but not a right to determine the academic outcome because grading falls under an instructor's expertise and competence.

Very important: Choose another elective if you disagree with this approach and the processes in 6(i)-(v) for the Week 7 Group Project.

(v) Definitions: The terms "Complainant" and "Respondent" may refer to one or more students, depending on the context.

While some students might feel uncomfortable in navigating conflict within a group, you must attempt to resolve issues internally and constructively wherever possible. This is because working through differences is part of adult life and professional collaboration. The peer evaluation process exists as an accountability mechanism if a resolution is impossible. Use this mechanism responsibly.

Finally, the presentation order will be assigned by me and, for fairness to everyone, cannot be changed after it is finalized. If a group member cannot present as scheduled because of unforeseen circumstances, the proper way is for the group to adapt. This might involve another member stepping in to cover for them, or be proactive and negotiate a swap with another group ahead of time.

Takeaway: Peer evaluation is a right, not a requirement.

To conclude: RoH/TENG and I look forward to working with you if you are ready to embrace the rewards and challenges that SG50 offers.

However, if these expectations are misaligned with your learning style or goals, I invite you to explore other sections/electives where the structure and content are a better fit.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Assessment method	Weightage	Description
Class participation	10%	Individual Assessment
Brief Opinion Paper	20%	Individual Assessment
Reflection Journal	20%	Individual Assessment
Group Project	50%	Group-based Assessment
Total:	100%	

Brief Opinion Paper (20%) – Students will work independently to submit an opinion paper (maximum 600 words) on a selected topic. The details of this assignment will be released at a later date.

Reflection Journal (20%) – Students will write an end of course journal entry (maximum 600 words) that will reflect on the learning journey during this SMU-X course.

Group Project (50%) – Students will work in groups (5 students per group) to submit a group project. The details of this project will be released during the semester. However, the key deliverables are the group project presentation in Week 13 (7pm) and a two-page Executive Summary (maximum 1,200 words) submission after the presentation. Details to follow during term.

Finally, a one-page mid-term review of the group project is due in Week 7. Consultation slots for guidance on the group project will be announced at a later date.

Weekly Lesson Plan

PROVISIONAL CLASS TIMETABLE (the order of the schedule might change based on the guest speakers' availabilities in 2026; please consult an updated timetable before Term starts)

Week	Date	Activity	NOTES
1		PROJECT DEMO	PARTNER'S PROBLEM
2		CONTENT 1	SINGAPORE IN THE WORLD
3		PARTNER 20 mins CONSULTATIONS	
4		CONTENT 2	ECONOMIC ISSUES IN SINGAPORE
5		GROUP CONSULTATIONS	20 MIN SLOTS PER GROUP WITH DR SEAH
6		CONTENT 3	DIVERSITY, SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT
7		CONTENT 4	POPULATION ISSUES IN SINGAPORE
8		RECESS WEEK	ONE PAGE MID-TERM REVIEW OF GROUP PROJECT
9		PARTNER CONSULTATION	20 MIN
10		CONTENT 5	SECURITY AND THREATS

11		CONTENT 6	ASPIRATIONS AND IDENTITIES
12		GROUP CONSULTATIONS	20 MIN SLOTS PER GROUP WITH DR SEAH
13		GROUP PRESENTATIONS	

Recommended Textbooks and Readings

N/A

Other Information

N/A

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.

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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.