



Social Science Practicum

IDIS 110

Term 2, Academic Year 2023-24

Version Updated: 2023-10-19

Instructor Info



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Office Hrs: To Discuss



SOSS-CIS 4-34



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Course Info



Prerequisites: NA



TBD



TBD

TA Info



TBD



TBD

Course Description

This class seeks to provide an experiential learning experience for students of the social sciences interested in *tackling real-world challenges* and *contributing towards resolving real social issues in Singapore*.

DBS Foundation have kindly agreed to be our corporate partner and support our efforts.

Ultimately, the aim of the class is to produce a potentially public facing report (with our partners' permissions to include what they shared on respective segments) with a short video summary, with two goals:

1. To increase awareness of the current state of financial inclusion of two groups in Singapore: (i) low-income families and (ii) persons with disabilities. This would focus on taking their lens to comprehensively understand the barriers they face in becoming financially included* and sustainable in the long term (including during retirement), what help is currently available, and where the gaps are.
2. To produce a series of practical and implementable suggestions based on best practices here and elsewhere of how we as a society could help, based on the recommendations of our community partners, sector experts, and your own interactions with the target group (TBD).

**This includes structural barriers in areas like employment, care giving, and transportation, as well as mindset issues and vulnerability to income/ health shocks, etc.*

Course Goals

Specifically, the course has aims to provide students with:

- Opportunities to work with community partners and experts to understand the problems faced by vulnerable groups
- Apply their social science education to resolving real-life problems
- Have an opportunity to make a positive impact in the context of Singapore

Instructional Methods and Expectations

As a researcher focused on creating greater equality in a time of growing divides, I am excited to have this opportunity to work with you on making a real difference. I understand this module is pass/ fail so I will endeavor to keep your workloads light. Your role is then to complete the tasks assigned to you in a timely fashion so as to not hold back the class while my role is to make this process as painless as possible.

Accessibility and Accommodations

SMU (and I, personally) strive to make learning accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability or any other circumstances, please let me know immediately. You can also contact the university's disability services team if you have any questions or concerns about academic provisions: included@smu.edu.sg.

Generally, as long as your request is reasonable and fair to your classmates, I am happy to make any accommodations you require.

Assessment Methods

The final grade is Pass/Fail, based on the following deliverables. To pass, students must complete all assigned tasks to satisfactory quality and not be absent for more than 2 sessions without valid reasons supported by documentation.

100%	<u>TOTAL</u>
30%	Work Tasks
50%	Final Report/ Multimedia
20%	Individual video reflections

Work Tasks - 30%

Groupings and Organization

You will be divided into four groups with the following allocation with two working on each target community (PWDs or low-income families):

Low-income Families	Group 1 Group 2
Persons with Disabilities	Group 3 Group 4

Work tasks are specific deliverables that will be discussed and agreed upon between groups and myself leading to the final report in Week 15. Given the fluid nature of the course, this is the plan:

- Create a schedule of deliverables, to be discussed and agreed upon by all groups by Week 2.
- From Week 3, each group will give a Weekly update on these deliverables (verbal, no presentation required).
- The hope is to Work progressively towards the final report, with each group working with me and the TA on their specific sections of the report.

Mandatory Declaration of Individual Contributions

Groups are free to choose how to divide the tasks in an equitable manner that fits everyone's course schedules. To prevent free-riding, each group must submit a declaration detailing the individual contributions of each member. This statement needs to be signed by ALL members. If any group member feels the distribution was unfair, they are free to approach me based on what was reflected in the statement and I will call up the group member(s) in question to hear their side and decide on potential courses of action. Obviously, this is not ideal. So do your best to negotiate equitable workloads.

Final Report and Launch - 50%

As mentioned earlier, there are *three key deliverables* for this course: (i) a final report detailing your findings and recommendations due in Week 13 , (ii) a video summary of this based on your individual contributions in Week 15, and (iii) a launch event to publicize/ celebrate the publication of this report.

I. Final Report

The aim is to finalize this by Week 13. This will **NOT** be like a typical assignment submission. We will work progressively toward this through out the weeks depending on the agreed of work task scheduling to prevent overloading you during your finals. The final length and format will depend on what we find but the plan is to keep this short and succinct since the vast majority of people, myself included, dislike reading long convoluted prose, no matter how worthy the cause. Your TA and myself will work with each group to rationalize the content for the report as a whole.

II. Video Summary

As part of the final report, we will produce a short video summarizing the report, including snippets from your individual video reflections (see below), *by week 14*.

One member of each group will be chosen (based on skills) to work exclusively on this as part of the multimedia team. The team will be exempted from having to write the report (but they will participate in all discussions and producing other deliverables)

III. Launch Event

The final report and summary video will be launched at an event to be held in SMU *around Week 16* after the final exams. This will include organizations/ groups we would like to appreciate, such as DBS Foundation and community partners, as well as individuals/ communities that we want to reach out to (we will discuss this as a class). Tentatively, we already have budget from SMU and elsewhere.

Individual video reflection - 20%

Rather than a written reflection, students will submit a short (3-5 minute) video reflection that will be used for the final video summary in week 11 after the field components. This should include the following elements (and anything else they think is important for the public to know.:

- What they thought about the challenges faced by the group they focused on;
- How it contrasts with their previous beliefs (or not)'
- What else they learned from the course as a whole; and
- How they will apply what they learnt going forward

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 offense.

When in doubt, students should consult me early. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at <https://oasis.smu.edu.sg/Pages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx>

Emergency Preparedness for Teaching and Learning (EPTL)

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

Contacting Me

My email address is on the first page. Unless I am travelling or your email was sent on a public holiday, you can generally expect responses within approximately 24 hours. If you send an e-mail on Saturday, you may not hear back from me until Monday.

In case of academic emergencies you may contact me on Telegram (username: @NathanPeng) but please do not use this in non-emergency situations. Email remains your primary means of contacting me.

Material

Required journal articles and book chapters, if any, will be provided on eLearn.

Class Schedule

Note: As this is an exploratory project, the schedule may change as the project develops. I seek your understanding on this.

Week 1	Course Overview and Expectations Sharing on Target Groups	Course Outline (Please read in detail) [TBD with DBSF] Sharing by the instructor and/ or partners on the challenges faced by target groups
Week 2	Making Plans	Discuss and finalize schedule of work tasks To choose members of multimedia team
Week 3	Literature Review	Before class, you will conduct a literature review of (i) the challenges faced by the target groups and (ii) the solutions currently in place to address these. After a brief introduction, you will use class time to share your main findings for discussion. If time permits, we will also discuss potential ideas based on the review.
Week 4	Fieldwork Preparation	Continue literature review and distill these to specific questions about what challenges the target groups might face and potential solutions to explore with them. Essentially, this is to prepare you for your field attachments/ visits on what to look out for.
Weeks 5&6	Partner visits/ field attachments	For these 2 weeks, you will be allotted a time to visit/ volunteer with community partners (just for a day or less, not the entire two weeks). The goal is to speak to front-line experts and members of target community to better understand the problem.
Week 7	Sharing of Observations and Solutions	Groups will give a simple presentation of what they learned to the entire class, together with initial ideas about how to help. Expert community/ sector partners to come to class and engage the groups and clarify if the groups' insights are accurate and comment on potential ideas. Class to discuss potential refinements to ideas.

WEEK 8 (2-8 Oct): Midterm Break

Week 9	Final Report Planning	We will come together as a class to discuss the content and structure of the final report, as well as what to include in the video summary
Week 10	Final Report Writing and Discussion	Groups will arrange for a consultation with me during class time. The remaining time will be used for report writing. All groups will share has been written so far, and we will work on it together in preparation for the showcase to the partners
Week 11	Discussion of Final Report Draft with DBSF	[TBD with DBSF] The draft of the final report should be ready, and we will discuss it together with DBSF and other partners. Individual Video Reflections Due
Week 12	Editing of Final Report	Groups will arrange for a consultation with me during class time. The remaining time will be used for report writing. All groups will share has been changed/ updated based on DBSF's feedback.
Week 13	Review of Learning and Launch Planning	This week will be a review of what has been learned and to celebrate the end of term and discuss the launch. Note: For the launch: students will not be burdened by the administrative aspects. Final Report Due
Week 14	Study Break	
Week 15	Exam Week	
Week 16	Promotional Launch (TBD)	Final Report Launch at SMU with partners [TBD with DBSF]

NOTE: Readings are subject to change and will be updated prior to class. You will be notified of these at least two weeks before class.