

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY**

**IDIS110 G1 SOCIAL SCIENCE PRACTICUM**

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**Course Overview**

In this practicum, we will focus on an aspect of unmet social needs in Singapore. Early phases of the class will focus on deepening our understanding of nuanced aspects of such social needs in Singapore and the varied responses to such needs. Guided by our partners, students will focus on a specific aspect of social needs, and identify why gaps remain. Subsequently, students will be engaged in design thinking workshops, in which they will design, prototype and test possible ways to address these needs.

During the four phases of this practicum (described below), students will learn, hands-on, the process of translating research into action through participating in practical design thinking exercises. Students will also learn about how to write grant proposals based on the innovative ideas they generate. Throughout, the professor and students will collaborate with partners, including partner organizations and a design thinking professional.

Note: the class is graded on a pass-fail basis

Accessibility and Accommodations: SMU strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability, please let me know immediately. You are also welcome to contact the university's disability support team if you have questions or concerns about academic accommodations: [included@smu.edu.sg](mailto:included@smu.edu.sg)

**Class structure**

Each three-hour weekly session will involve a combination of lectures, discussions and group activities focused on specific topics. All students must attend every session. The semester is broken into four unequal phases:

Phase 1: Discovery. In order to participate in later phases, students will learn as much as possible about our specific unmet need in Singapore – through secondary research and via an experts panel. Through this process, students will break into groups, each with a specific sub-problem as their focus for the design thinking phase.

Phase 2: Design thinking. Students will participate actively in design thinking exercises intended to translate their sub-problem of focus into an actionable result – a unique, innovative intervention designed to address (at least potentially) the sub-problem.

Phase 3: Testing phase. During this phase, students will take steps to test the plausibility of their idea and refine their designs.

Phase 4: Presentation. Students will present their ideas and receive feedback. After the semester, students will submit two pieces of writing: individual reflections and a group-written grant application based on their ideas.

### **Course Objectives**

1. Sensitivity to Developments in Asia:  
Enhance academic and practical understanding of key social issue within Singapore. Obtain sufficient knowledge about these issues to engage in design thinking exercises that generate practical and innovative ideas designed to address these problems.
2. Disciplinary Knowledge:  
Critically evaluate specific social issues through the lens through several social science disciplines, including sociology, political science and psychology.
3. Critical Thinking:  
Apply design thinking methodology to generate and refine innovative and practical approaches that can address specific problems.
4. Intercultural Understanding and Thinking:  
To understand how different cultures experience specific problems differently.  
To display cultural understanding in designing solutions.
5. Communication:  
To hone the skill of presenting innovative ideas to experts clearly and engagingly. To learn how to write a grant proposal.

**Course outline – subject to change**

	Topic
1	Introduction to unmet needs in Singapore, partners, practicum structure and orientation to the design thinking process
2	Understanding unmet social needs in Singapore
3	Panel discussion from experts and partners
4	Field visits and interviews
5	Data analysis
6	Data analysis
7	Design Thinking Workshop I (brainstorming, barebones prototype)
8	RECESS WEEK - Prototyping
9	Prototyping and testing
10	Design Thinking Workshop II (display prototype)
11	Finalizing prototype and presentation
12	Presentation (Half of the groups will present)
13	Presentation (Remaining groups will present)
14	Conclusions memo due

**Course components (pass-fail) – components subject to change**

Group research results written report (Week 7)	20 percent
Design thinking application and workshop participation (Weeks 7, 10)	15 percent
Final presentation—poster session (Week 13)	15 percent
Conclusions memo (Week 14)	25 percent
Class participation and presentations (throughout the semester)	15 percent