

Arts, Culture & The Global City



PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS AN UPDATED COURSE OUTLINE, WHICH IS DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS EDITIONS.

Course Identification

Course Title:	Arts, Culture and the Global City
Course Code:	ACM306 (SMU-X)
School:	Arts and Culture Management Program School of Social Sciences Singapore Management University
Course Teaching Period:	AY2024/25, T2
Course Schedule:	Thursdays, 1530 - 1845 hours
Class Venue:	TBC
Course Instructor:	Assistant Professor Hoe Su Fern Email: sfhoes@smu.edu.sg
Official SMU-X Industry Partner:	TBC
Course Advisories:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *This is a SMU-X module with real-stakes involved, and students should be prepared to invest ample effort to maximise their learning *Students should be open to flexible out-of-the-box learning, and be interested in the process of learning rather than chasing for grades *THIS IS AN ADVANCED LEVEL THREE ARTS MANAGEMENT MODULE REQUIRING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF ARTS MANAGEMENT AND CULTURAL POLICY
Accessibility and Accommodations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ 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 asap. ▸ You are also welcome to contact the university's disability support team if you have questions or concerns about academic accommodations: dss@smu.edu.sg

Course Description

Across the globe, the arts and culture have been identified as key instruments for urban rejuvenation and global competitiveness. Asia is no exception - over the last twenty years, there has been a proliferation of large-scale arts and cultural infrastructure, as well as an energetic bubbling of artist-led initiatives in cities such as Singapore, Jakarta, Hong Kong and Seoul.

This course aims to explore the growing and diversified roles of "arts" and "culture" in contemporary global urbanism, and to interrogate how categories such as "arts" and "culture" can transform cities. In particular, this course will focus on the changing conditions and challenges of the arts and culture in today's global and urban landscape, with a focus on the role of Singapore in the Asian region during this time of rapid change, global complexity and increasing austerity.

Through an analysis of a range of real-world case studies and experiential learning, students will critically consider questions such as: What are the roles of arts and culture in cities today? Can the arts and culture become key drivers of urban growth, enabling cities to forge and maintain global connections? Do they differentiate cities, and generate distinctive place-identities amidst a globalising world? How do art events and exhibitions like biennales influence cultural and city development, and give rise to more diverse, reflective and vibrant societies? Can the arts and culture create, reinforce and enhance sense of place and belonging in global cities, especially for the less privileged? What are some of the particularities and specificities of the arts within cities in the Asia-Pacific region?

Ultimately, this course aspires to provide students with a reflexive understanding of the unique arts ecologies in today's global landscape, and a heightened appreciation of the significance of the arts to urban processes, practices and everyday life.

Learning about the Arts and its Urban Environment in the Time of Unprecedented Change

We are living in unprecedented times. At the point of designing this course, the Covid-19 global pandemic resulted in the closure of all arts spaces in Singapore, and the rise of "social distancing" as a norm. In most cities, the routine of social life was disrupted, street life was grinded to a halt, and "non-essential" public spaces were left desolated. And while the economic impacts of the pandemic are becoming obvious, the influence upon public spaces and arts-based community change remain uncertain.

This course will harness this opportune moment to enable self-reflection and deepen sensitive understanding of the unique character and identity of local places and their communities, even within turbulent times. It will adopt a practical studio approach, based on the frameworks of cultural mapping and participatory design. **Self-motivated fieldwork and self-directed engagement will be core to the learning process. Students should be prepared for sessions that will require them to venture outside - alone and/or in small project groups - into public spaces to conduct cultural mapping and case study research.**

Course Goals

The primary focus of this course will be on urban cultural planning, with a focus on critically interrogating the recent popularity of “creative placemaking.”

This focus will be contextualised within a wider exploration of the arts and its urban environment, through an entanglement of actors. Key questions include:

- How have the arts and culture emerged as an urban planning and development target in cities across the globe?
- What are the shared global strategies and what is unique in the purposes, practices and outcomes of urban cultural planning in Singapore?
- What is the place of the arts in community-based urban development today?
- What is the relationship - and disconnects - between cultural planning efforts and the on-the-ground life and needs of arts and cultural activities?
- How can artists, planners and community development practitioners employ the arts to promote positive and inclusive change while addressing the agency of those they address?

Students who complete this course should acquire the following course-specific skills :

- A critical understanding of the development of cultural planning approaches globally, with the ability to highlight central assumptions, global trends and practices, and local peculiarities
- A sound grasp of the major scholarly approaches to, and debates on, urban cultural planning and urban cultural economies, and the ability to contextualise them in relation to specific instances and case studies
- A critical ability to question the role of the arts in urban regeneration and revitalisation, and the consequences and repercussions
- An inter-disciplinary comprehension of the use of the arts for global urban competitiveness, such as biennales, cultural districts and blockbusters, and how they relate to different spaces and communities

Overall Learning Objectives

On completion of this course, students should acquire the following skills, attributes and outcomes:

- a better social, ethical and cultural understanding of self and others
- critical analysis and creative thinking skills; ability to access and synthesise knowledge
- information management and information literacy through the practice of library, media and ethnographic research
- the ability to effectively prepare and present their ideas in both verbal and written mode at a competent level
- increased capacity for teamwork, flexibility, cooperation and tolerance through group discussions and collaboration
- self-directional and organisational skills, with the ability to set goals and manage time and priorities
- receptiveness to new ideas, differing opinions and alternative perspectives, and adaptiveness of knowledge to new situations
- a willingness to explore, experiment and learn from mistakes

Course Programme

In order to facilitate learning, this course has been organised thematically into **Three Blocks**:

1. **Block One** will provide a conceptual framework and empirical backdrop so as to enable students to better understand and analyse the development, functions, impact and limitations of processes of globalisation and urbanisation on the arts and culture today. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the multifaceted character of global cities and the debates that they have engendered in relation to artistic and cultural production, consumption and management.
2. **Block Two** contextualises the role of arts and culture in global cities today, particularly within the context of Singapore. This block will explore the quest to use arts and culture for global city status by cities all across the globe, especially those from Asia including Singapore. It will examine the ambitions and projects undertaken by these cities, so as to better understand the conditions and stakes involved in utilising the arts and culture for global city imaging and branding. Students will encounter and analyse specific instances and real-life case studies from Singapore and other global cities such as Taiwan, Sydney and London, so as to better understand the production, distribution and consumption of arts and culture in today's globalised and urbanised landscape.
3. **Block Three** will re-think perceived notions of the identity, ideology and representation of global cities through ground-up and artist-initiated projects and spaces. Apart from exploring how artist-led interventions are fertile ground for new modes of artistic expression and cultural citizenship, students will also investigate whether and how processes of globalisation operate to create, maintain and deepen socio-cultural challenges and tensions such as inequality. This block will also shine the spotlight on the group projects, where the final weeks will be dedicated to workshopping, refining and presenting the project proposals.

SMU-X Industry Partner

TBC.

Course Teaching Schedule

**Students should note that session topics and dates may change accordingly to the overall class learning requirements as well as the schedule of the course partners and collaborators*

Block One: Framing the Global Cultural City

Week 1	Introduction: Whose City? + The Rise of Urban Cultural Planning
Week 2	Global Aspirations: The Arts as Quick Fix for a Global Urban Cultural Economy
Week 3	Practicum I: The Arts in Public Spaces - Whose Agenda?
Week 4	From Urban Planning to Placemaking + Industry Partner Sharing Session

Block Two: What's wrong with Placemaking the Global Cultural City

Week 5	Practicum II: Cultural Mapping Fieldwork
Week 6	From Placemaking or Place Management: Can We Make Space for Making?
Week 7	From Planned Policies to Everyday Politics: Cities for People, By People + Initial Site Analysis Clinics
Week 8	Recess Week

Block Three: Negotiating the Global Cultural City

Week 9	From Placemaking to Casemaking: The Place of the Arts in Community Building
Week 10	Practicum III: Case Study Fieldwork
Week 11	Making Space, Holding Space: Vernacular Creativity and the Undercommons
Week 12	Practicum IV: Group Project Clinics
Week 13	Group Project Showcase + Conclusion: Together-in-Difference

Assessment

More details will be provided in class.

Overview of Assessment:

The assessment is based on a continual learning and assessment mode. Each assignment is designed to ensure that you develop a significant foundation of knowledge as well as relevant arts management skills. The assessment criterion aims to reward not only your ability to research and present information but also your ability to synthesise and present arguments.

There are FOUR components to the assessment for this course.:

Assignment No.	Area/Topic	Description	Weightage (%)	Due Date:
1	In-Class Behaviour	Class Attendance and Participation	10	Throughout
2	Individual	Photo-Essay	20	Week 4
3	Individual	Field Notes	20	Throughout, Due Week 15
4A	SMU-X Group Project	Cultural Mapping + Initial Proposal	10	Week 7
4B		Revised & Updated Proposal	10	Week 10
4C		Pitch Presentations	15	Week 13
4D		Case Report	15	Week 15

Academic Integrity

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorised 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.

If you are unsure if an action might constitute a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, speak with me. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at <http://www.smuscd.org/resources.html> as well as <http://researchguides.smu.edu.sg/plagiarism>

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