SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
(in collaboration with SMU-X)

COR-GA2636: MANAGING DIVERSITY IN ASIA

Term 2, 2024/25

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This SMU-X course explores a range of theoretical and applied approaches to the management of diversity that guide interactions of cross-cultural groups in Singapore and across Asia. Through discussions on contemporary discourses on social identities and multiculturalism, as well as project work with an external partner organisation, *Managing Diversity in Asia* will challenge students to reflect critically and to consider systems and structures that perpetuate social inequalities. Students will learn to cultivate cultural sensitivity and critical awareness on issues related to diversity and diversity management. The course will additionally provide opportunities for students to practice reflexivity, dialogue, intercultural skills, as well as to examine implicit biases through reflexive and dialogical approaches that will equip students with critical communication and leadership skills to engage in difficult conversations aimed at acknowledging and bridging differences.

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.

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 <u>consistently</u> demonstrate an eagerness to enrich collaborative learning through:

- <u>Active listening,</u> by expanding on thoughts and ideas raised by others
- <u>Self-advocacy</u>, through leading conversations that are important to you and your in-group
- <u>Openness</u>, where communication is kind and respectful
- <u>Generosity</u>, volunteering yourself, your time, and resources for the collective good
- <u>Reflexivity</u>, 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 <u>external</u> 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 <u>Week 3</u>. 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 <u>Week 5</u>, teams must submit and deliver a 10-minute project presentation deck that:

a. Provides a background of the issue(s), from multiple perspectives
b. Suggests, through literature review, possible explanations of the issue(s)
c. Proposes research questions
d. Explains how the group intends to answer the research questions
e. Details the group's project schedule, individual roles, and responsibilities

Pitch

Groups will discuss project findings and offer recommendations to the <u>client</u> through a 15-minute pitch, followed by a 10-minute Q&A. The pitch will take place during class on <u>Week 13</u>. Presentation decks must be submitted via eLearn <u>24 hours before the presentation date / time</u> (or earlier). All members of the group are to be dressed in formal attire at the presentation. Presentations must be <u>engaging</u>, 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. <u>Infographic</u>: *Visual executive summary of all pertinent points*
b. <u>Table of contents</u>
c. <u>Introduction</u>: *Background of project and issue(s)*
d. <u>Literature review</u>: *Summary of academic and topical research*

e. <u>Method</u>: *Explain how research was carried out and data analysed*
f. <u>Findings and discussion</u>: *Explain research outcomes and their implications*
g. <u>Recommendations</u>: *Detail practical steps to address the issue(s)*
h. <u>Bibliography</u>
i. <u>Appendices</u> (if any)

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

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

Before the end of <u>Week 9</u>, 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 <u>24 hours</u> before the presentation date / time on <u>Week 13</u> (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 reflection essay, you must demonstrate <u>reflexivity</u>, <u>confront past and present assumptions</u>, and <u>apply critical thinking</u>. Good essays will contain insights synthesised from readings, class discussions and personal experiences.

GRADE PENALTIES

<u>Absences</u>: 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.

<u>Late submissions</u>: Grade penalties will apply for the late submission of any assignment, presentation, report, or peer evaluation input. Submissions that are late by <u>more than one hour</u> 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.

STYLE GUIDE

The prescribed style of referencing for all assignments for this course is the <u>APA (7th Edition)</u> 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.

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.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University believes that in the academic realm, as in life, integrity and honesty are critical foundations. Students, together with the faculty and the administration, aspire to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. SMU expects and hopes that in the course of his/her study and time at the University, every student will live by these standards. Students should refrain from activities and conduct that depart from fair, honest and diligent pursuit of knowledge. Examples of undesirable activities include the following:

- *Cheating*: Using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material, or study aids in examinations or other academic work or preventing, or attempting to prevent, another from using authorised assistance, material, or study aids.
- *Plagiarism*: Using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment.
- *Fabrication*: Submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise.
- *Multiple submissions*: Submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfil another academic requirement.
- *Misrepresentation of academic records*: Misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student's transcripts or academic record, either before or after coming to the University.
- *Facilitating academic dishonesty*: Knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of the Code.
- *Unfair advantage*: Attempting to gain unauthorised advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise.

If you are unsure if an action might constitute a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, speak with me and/or your teaching assistant. See: http://researchguides.smu.edu.sg/plagiarism

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

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING (EPTL)

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

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COURSE SCHEDULE

W	Date	Topic & Thought Starters	Readings
1		**Diversity, Power, Privilege** 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?	Johnson, A.G. (2005) 'Chapter 2: Privilege, Oppression and Difference', in *Privilege, Power and Difference*, Boston: McGraw-Hill, pp. 12-40. Chua, B.H. & Kwok K.W. (2001) 'Social Pluralism in Singapore', in R. Hefner (ed.), *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, pp. 86-118. Teo, Y. Y. (2018). *This is what inequality looks like*. Ethos Books. (Chapters: Preface; Step 1: Disrupt the narrative; Everyday lives)
2		**Governing Diversity: Theories & Practices** 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?	Bokhorst-Heng, W.D. (2007). Multiculturalism's narratives in Singapore and Canada: Exploring a model for comparative multiculturalism and multicultural education, *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 39(6): 629-658. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220270701506324 Nagy, S.R. (2014). Politics of multiculturalism in East Asia: Reinterpreting multiculturalism. *Ethnicities*. 14(1), 160-176. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796813498078
3		Group Project Briefing	
		Identity, Tribalism & Belonging 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?	Solomon, Andrew. (2012). "Son", in *Far From the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity*, Scribner, New York, pp. 1-48. Patai D. (2018) Cultural Competence, Identity Politics, and the Utopian Dilemma. In: Frisby C., O'Donohue W. (eds) *Cultural Competence in Applied Psychology*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78997-2_17
4		**Managing Race and Religion** What is your race and religion? This is a question that has become increasing 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/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

W	Date	Topic & Thought Starters	Readings
5		Group Project Proposal	
		Managing Gender & Sexuality 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?	Jagdish, B. (Host). (2020-2021). Saga [Audio podcast episodes 1-12]. *Association of Women for Action and Research*. https://aware.org.sg/saga/
6		**Diversity on Digital platforms** 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?	Mundt, M., Ross, K., & Burnett, C. M. (2018). Scaling Social Movements Through Social Media: The Case of Black Lives Matter. *Social Media + Society*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118807911 Swisher, K., Coaston, J., Klein, E., & Manjoo, F. (2021, June 17). We need to talk about cancel culture. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/article/cancel-culture-trevor-noah-event.html
7		**Managing across Generations** 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?	Applewhite, A. (2017). *This chair rocks: a manifesto against ageism* (Revised edition). Networked Books. [Introduction & Chapter 1] Soin, K., & Thomas, M. (2017). "We must do something about ageism", in Soin, K., & Thomas, M. (Eds). *The Art of Advocacy in Singapore* (pp. 11-18). Ethos Books. Ng, S. H. (1998). Social psychology in an ageing world: Ageism and intergenerational relations. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology,* 1(1), 99-116. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-839X.00007 Fuente-Nunez, V.D.L., & Mikton, C. (2021). *Global report on ageism*. World Health Organisation. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240016866
8		Mid-term break	
9		**Managing Disability** 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?	Barnes, C. (2019). Understanding the social model of disability: Past, present and future. In *Routledge handbook of disability studies* (pp. 14-31). Routledge. Parker, K. (2001). Changing Attitudes Towards Persons with Disabilities in Asia. *Disability Quarterly*, 21(4), 105-113. http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/322/392 Lee, J., Mathews, M., Wong, F. S., Zhuang, K. (2017). Beyond the Business Case: Different Models of Including People with Disabilities at Work. *Disability Quarterly*, 37(4). https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/6099/4819

W	Date	Topic & Thought Starters	Readings
10		**The Practice of Diversity and Inclusion** 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?	Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender & society*, 20(4), 441-464. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243206289499 Barak, M. E. M. (1999) 'Beyond Affirmative Action,' Administration in Social Work, 2(3-4), 47-68. https://doi.org/10.1300/J147v23n03_04 Ferdman, B. M. (2017). Paradoxes of Inclusion: Understanding and Managing the Tensions of Diversity and Multiculturalism. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 53(2), 235–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886317702608 Krentz, M., Vaughn, E., Ruiz-Cabrero, J., Jaafar, M., & Teo, C. (2020, April 30). The Diversity Dividend in Southeast Asia. *Boston Consulting Group*. https://image-src.bcg.com/Images/BCG-The-Diversity-Dividend-in-SE-Asia-Apr-2020_tcm9-246802.pdf
11		**Building an Inclusive Community** 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?	Johnson, A.G. (2005) 'What Can We Do?' and 'Epilogue', in *Privilege, Power and Difference*, Boston: McGraw-Hill, pp. 107-141.
12		Project Workshop	
13		Group Project Pitch & Report	