



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

GA308 Overseas Project Experience: Applied Social Sciences in Globalised Asia (SMU-XO)

Topic: Exploring Social Change in Bangkok, Thailand

Term 1, AY 2025/26



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PRE-REQUISITES

- This course is open to all SMU undergraduate students.
- Senior students will be prioritised over freshmen and sophomore students.
- The course will be capped at 25 students.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Millions of tourists visit the Bangkok every year, drawn to the city's rich history, culture, and creativity. While the city does offer a rich tapestry of sights and experiences, political tensions, economic disparities, and social inequalities are often out of sight for most foreign visitors. The city's dense urban landscape also exacerbates presents a host of issues that commonly afflict rapidly growing metropolises, including pollution, rising temperatures, mental health issues, etc. Over the past few decades, many non-governmental organisations have stepped up efforts to address social issues in the city with considerable success – from support of migrant workers to human trafficking, HIV/AIDS to sexual violence.

This course will explore the success factors of social change programmes in Bangkok through an interdisciplinary lens that draws from the fields of sociology, communication and management. In partnership with a Bangkok-based SMU-X partner, participants of this SMU-X Overseas programme will receive hands-on guidance on a real-world project to address a social issue in Thailand. Over the course of six seminars at SMU during the term, participants will learn about life and work in the land of smiles, public communication frameworks that drive social change, as well as the systems that support and challenge social change management in the city and beyond. A 11-day fieldwork and cultural immersion trip to Bangkok, Thailand (December 2025) will follow, where participants can expect to meet with social changemakers and to present their project deliverables to local stakeholders.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, participants should be able to:

- Understand and articulate the complexities of social change initiatives.
- Exercise interdisciplinary thinking in examining and addressing social change issues.
- Evaluate social change messaging and campaigns.
- Apply research skills through study design, data collection and data analysis.
- Understand the sociocultural nuances of working with Thais and Bangkokians.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

1. Course participation	20%
2. Group Project	50%
3. Individual assignments	30%

COURSE SCHEDULE: SINGAPORE

#	When	Theme	Readings
1	Week 1	Introduction to Social Change	<p>Jason, L. (2013a). Preface. <i>Principles of Social Change</i>. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Jason, L. (2013b). Changing the rules of the game. <i>Principles of Social Change</i>. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Michie, S., & West, R. (2012). Behaviour change theory and evidence: a presentation to Government. <i>Health Psychology Review</i>, 7(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/17437199.2011.649445</p>
2	Week 2	Determinants of Social Change	<p>Brauer, M. and Bourhis, R.Y. (2006), Social power. <i>European Journal of Social Psychology</i>, 36, pp. 601-616. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.355</p> <p>Deutsch, M. (2006). A framework for thinking about oppression and its change. <i>Social Justice Research</i>, 19, 7-41. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-006-9998-3</p> <p>Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., & Saguy, T. (2009). Commonality and the complexity of “we”: Social attitudes and social change. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Review</i>, 13(1), 3-20. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868308326751</p> <p>Carey, G., Crammond, B. Systems change for the social determinants of health. <i>BMC Public Health</i> 15, 662 (2015). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-015-1979-8</p> <p>Knowles, E. S., & Linn, J. A. (2004). Approach-Avoidance Model of Persuasion: Alpha and Omega Strategies for Change. In <i>Resistance and Persuasion</i> (1st ed., pp. 117–148). Psychology Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410609816-10</p>
3	Week 3	Movements for Social Change	<p>Bhattarai, J. J., Bentley, J., Morean, W., Wegener, S. T., & Pollack Porter, K. M. (2020). Promoting equity at the population level: Putting the foundational principles into practice through disability advocacy. <i>Rehabilitation Psychology</i>, 65(2), 87. https://doi.org/10.1037/rep0000321</p> <p>Hollomotz, A. (2013). Disability, oppression and violence: Towards a sociological explanation. <i>Sociology</i>, 47(3), 477-493. https://doi.org/10.1177/003803851244856</p> <p>Pleyers, G. (2020). The Pandemic is a battlefield. Social movements in the COVID-19 lockdown, <i>Journal of Civil Society</i>, 16(4), 295-312. https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2020.1794398</p> <p>Gienapp, A. & Hostetter, C. (2022a). Overview of theory of change concepts and language. <i>Developing a theory of change: Practical guidance</i>. https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-theoryofchange-guidance-2022.pdf</p> <p>Gienapp, A. & Hostetter, C. (2022b). Step-by-step guidance and examples. <i>Developing a theory of change: Practical guidance</i>. https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-theoryofchange-steps-2022.pdf</p>
4	Week 4	Communicating for Social Change	<p>Grazzini, L., Rodrigo, P., Aiello, G., & Viglia, G. (2018). Loss or gain? The role of message framing in hotel guests' recycling behaviour. <i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>, 26(11), 1944-1966. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2018.1526294</p> <p>Hastings, G., & Domegan, C. (2023a). Delivering global change: How social marketing can make a difference. <i>Social Marketing: Principles and Practice for Delivering Global Change</i>. New York: Routledge.</p>

			<p>Hastings, G., & Domegan, C. (2023b). The four social marketing orientations. <i>Social Marketing: Principles and Practice for Delivering Global Change</i>. New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Hastings, G., & Domegan, C. (2023c). The shoulders of giants: Why theory matters. <i>Social Marketing: Principles and Practice for Delivering Global Change</i>. New York: Routledge.</p>
5	Week 5	Special Topic	This session will focus on themes relevant to the applied group project. Readings for this session will be uploaded on eLearn
6	Week 6	Social issues in Thailand	<p>Bualar, T. (2015). Employer dilemma over disability employment policy in Thailand. <i>Journal of Public Affairs</i>, 15(3), 231-236. https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1508</p> <p>Kheokao, J. & Kheokao, D. (2024, June 17). Thailand. <i>Digital News Report 2024</i>. United Kingdom: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2024/thailand</p> <p>World Bank (2021). Towards Social Protection 4.0: An Assessment of Thailand's Social Protection and Labor Market Systems. http://hdl.handle.net/10986/35695</p> <p>United Nations (2025, February 1). Voluntary National Review: Thailand. <i>United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</i>. https://repository.unescap.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12870/7996/ESCAP-2025-PB-VNR-Thailand.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y</p>
7	Week 7-8	Class Activity (TBC)	Nil
8	Week 12	Preliminary presentations	Nil
9	Week 14 Online	Safety Briefing	Nil

COURSE SCHEDULE: BANGKOK

<i>Day</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Place</i>
1	Check-in	Accommodation: Lobby
	Class Workshop I	Accommodation: Meeting Room
2	Class Workshop II	TBC
3	Meeting with Project Partner	TBC
4	Class Workshop III	TBC
5	Visit	TBC
	Fieldwork	Self-planned
6	Visit	TBC
	Networking event	TBC
7	Fieldwork & Project work	Self-planned
8	Fieldwork & Project work	Self-planned
9	Class Workshop IV	TBC
	Fieldwork	Self-planned
10	Final Presentation	TBC
	Lunch	TBC
11	Trip Debrief	Accommodation: Meeting Room
	Check out	Accommodation: Lobby