



School of Social Sciences

Academic Year 2023-2024 and Term 2

COURSE CODE: IDIS110
COURSE TITLE: PRACTICUM
CLASS TIMINGS: TBA
LOCATION: TBA

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COURSE GOALS*

This practicum aims to provide students from different social science majors an opportunity to draw from their disciplinary knowledge in addressing the needs of partner clients working on real-world problems. This semester, the class will be working with Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME), a Singapore-based charity dedicated to supporting migrant workers through welfare, empowerment and advocacy. In fulfilling this work, HOME actively seeks to gain insight into issues that impact migrant workers' everyday lives within Singapore. In this practicum, our class will be helping HOME conduct research on two specific issues involving migrant construction workers: 1) the transportation of workers to and from work sites; and 2) food security among construction workers. Specifically, HOME seeks help in:

- Investigating the costs and challenges of implementing safer transportation options for migrant construction workers
- Determining what factors undermine food security among migrant construction workers.

Findings from this practicum will inform HOME's advocacy efforts for migrant workers. This information will also help HOME determine how to approach these issues when appealing to policymakers and members of these industries.

Specific Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the complex issues surrounding the experiences of migrant workers in Singapore
- Conduct a document analysis and key informant interviews in making sense of a particular social problem.
- Reflect on how one's social location shapes personal perspectives on particular social issues
- Present research findings to peers and partner client

CLASS PROCESS

So how will this work? HOME will identify two main themes for the class to investigate. I will assign student groups to conduct research on each of these issues. Per issue, one student group will be in charge of implementing key informant interviews, while the other/s will implement a content analysis of news media and government reports (see Table below). Each student group will be composed of 5 members. These groups will be created based on student preferences gathered in Week 1.

| Social Issue | Group/method |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Transportation challenges and costs | Group 1 (document analysis) Group 2 (document analysis) Group 3 (key informant interviews) |
| Food security challenges and costs | Group 4 (document analysis) Group 5 (document analysis) Group 6 (key informant interviews) |

We are well aware that this practicum takes place over a limited period of time. As such, Prof. Yasmin will take charge of obtaining IRB approval and creating “skeleton” questionnaires for the key informant interviews. Student groups will then take on the work of amending and refining these research instruments, gathering data, and analyzing results. We will also have training sessions for conducting a document analysis.

The class provides ample time for data-gathering and analysis, as well as opportunities for students to check in with each other and learn more about issues of promoting social consciousness and change within public universities. We will also invite representatives from academia and the migrant worker community to discuss the different issues we will be covering in class.

All final results will be presented to representatives from HOME at the end of the semester.

ASSESSMENT METHODS*

There is no final exam for this course. The final grade will be a Pass/Fail grade based on the following course components. In order to pass the course, students must not be absent for more than 2 class sessions without valid reasons supported by documentations.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Class Participation/Work Tasks: | 30 % |
| Field notes/Data tables (group): | 10 % |
| Analytical memo (group): | 25 % |
| Presentation (group): | 10 % |
| Reflection (individual): | 25% |
| Total | 100% |

Class Participation / Work Tasks (30%)

While students will be working mostly with their groups, the success of this class heavily depends on students providing feedback to peers, joining discussions, and sharing their findings with the rest of the class. There are also work tasks that students need to complete (by group) in order for us to move along the process of completing this practicum. All of these tasks require students' engagement, attendance, and commitment to making this project work.

Field notes/ Data tables (10%)

In Week 8, students will submit interview field notes or survey results (depending on your group assignment) that highlight interesting findings from the research. Guidelines for both types of notes will be provided via eLearn. Students must also be prepared to share their findings with the class in Week 9. These findings will be the basis for the analytical memo.

Analytical Memo (25%)

In Week 10, students will write an analytical memo which draws from their findings in addressing questions highlighted by HOME at the beginning of the sem:

- What are the costs and challenges of implementing safer transportation for migrant construction workers? What issues cause the most resistance among industry representatives?
- What factors affect the food security of migrant construction workers? What is the potential impact on migrant workers' physical and mental health?

Guidelines on writing the analytical memo will be available on eLearn. We will also discuss these guidelines in class.

Presentation (10%)

On Week 12 and 13, student groups will be given 15 minutes each to share their findings and analysis with classmates and representatives from HOME. Students will also be encouraged to comment on their classmates' work and provide feedback to help HOME make sense of the class results. More guidelines will be added in eLearn.

Reflection (25%)

In Week 14, students will be asked to submit an individual 500-word reflection on the practicum. Guide questions and format guidelines will be provided via eLearn.

Academic Integrity

See "Codes of Academic Integrity" available at the web site of SMU Student Council of Discipline (<http://smuscd.org/>).

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND EXPECTATIONS

The success of this course is based on a social contract between the student and instructor. Students must commit to doing the readings, and come to class prepared to discuss and debate the different arguments that shape contemporary immigration theory.

During class, students are expected to be active listeners, and respect the perspectives of both their instructor and peers. **Laptops are allowed in class, but only for note-taking and accessing pdf copies of the readings.** I will deduct participation points from students caught on Facebook, Whatsapp, or other forms of social media unrelated to class. **Mobile phones are not allowed during discussion.** For our online sessions, I expect students to still raise questions and contributions through our online platforms. I also expect active participation in discussion forums and other online activities.

In line with this social contract, the instructor will work to make each class engaging, interactive, and interesting. This class runs on continuous assessment – which serves to provide the instructor with a clearer understanding of how you are reacting to and approaching class readings, and also provides important opportunity to raise aspects of the reading that students would like the instructor to elaborate on or focus on in class.

CONSULTATIONS

By appointment.

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

Please be aware that the accessible tables in our seminar room should remain available for students who require them.

RECOMMENDED TEXT AND READINGS

There are no recommended textbooks for this class. All readings will be found in eLearn.

WEEKLY LESSON PLANS

| Week No. | Topic | Other activities/ deadlines | Required Reading |
|----------|--|--|------------------|
| 1 | Introductions <i>What's the point of a practicum?</i> | Class survey on student skills and interests Guest lecture: Dr. Stephanie Chok, Executive Director, HOME | TBA |
| 2 | What do we know? | Group assigned to specific topics and methods Guest lecture: Junjia Ye, Department of Sociology, NTU Work task #1: Each group must look for at least 2 academic articles related to their topic. Share these articles on eLearn | TBA |
| 3 | Research recap (and some new stuff too) | Content Analysis Workshop: Benedict Teo, SoSS Librarian Conducting a Key Informant Interview: Yasmin Work task #2: Create a research plan based on your group's hunches. | TBA |
| 4 | Developing tools for research | Groups will meet with HOME and Yasmin in designated time slots Work task #3: Each group to submit final set of interview questions/plans for document analysis. | None |
| 5 | Data gathering | No class meeting | None |
| 6 | Data gathering | Guest lecture: Han Peng Ho, Lien Centre for Social Innovation | None |

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| | | Work task #3: Provide the class with a 10-minute update on data-gathering. | |
| 7 | Beginning analysis: cleaning and coding | Analyzing documents (1 st half of class) Analyzing interview data (2 nd half of class) | TBA |
| 8 | Mid-term Break | | |
| 9 | Data analysis | Groups will meet with Yasmin in designated time slots Field notes/tables due | None |
| 10 | Data analysis | Share preliminary findings with the class (15 minutes each). Work task #4: Be prepared to provide feedback to your classmates. Analytical memo due | None |
| 11 | Translation | Guest lecture: TBA | None |
| 12 | Presentations | | None |
| 13 | Presentations | Reflection due | None |