Course Code / Title : 1002 SINGAPORE SOCIETY IN TRANSITION

Pre-requisites : NIL

No. of AUs. : 3 AUs

Contact Hours : 52

Course Aims

Contemporary Singapore has been described by observers in many different ways. The country has been perceived by some as a model of economic success and multi-ethnic harmony. Others have criticized the high degree of state regulation in the nation-state. This course provides a sociological perspective on various aspects of Singapore society, from its historical formation to its post-independence social transformation. Issues to be covered include the question of national identity and culture. We examine whether Singaporeans possess a common identity and a culture to call their own. Matters concerning the exercise of political power and the maintenance of authority will also be analyzed. We explore methods of governance that shape society and individuals. Finally, we examine social divisions, for example, class, gender, and religious affiliations. Students will learn to develop the ‘sociological imagination’- the ability to relate personal problems of everyday life to the larger political, economic, social and cultural issues.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

To be advised by the teaching Professor

Course Content

Week 1: The Sociological Imagination
What is sociology and what do we mean by the Sociological Imagination? How do we go about studying Singapore sociologically?
Readings:

Week 2: The Formation of Modern Singapore
What is modernity? How did Singapore become the way it is today? Why do we remember certain portions of Singapore’s history and not others?
Readings:
Week 3: Governing Singapore
What do we mean by power and authority? How did certain individuals come to possess both? How is authority maintained and how has its exercise shaped Singapore and Singaporeans?
Readings:

Week 4: The Singaporean Culture
Who exactly are Singaporeans? How is the Singaporean identity related to the formation of the ‘nation-state’? What is this thing called culture? Is there such a thing as a unique Singapore culture? How is culture related to the question of race and ethnicity?
Readings:
- Chapter 4 - Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir and Bryan Turner (2014) Conscription, the Singaporean Core and the Question of Loyalty pp. 51-63.

Week 5: Social Stratification – Who Gets Ahead?
What is class? How are Singaporeans divided into different socio-economic statuses? What has class to do with the political-economy of Singapore and other forms of social divisions?
Readings:
Week 6: Screening of Documentaries

- Film: *Gods Must be Hungry* (2005) produced by Oak 3 Films with Discovery Networks Asia.

Week 7: Practicing Religion in Singapore

What is religion? Are Singaporeans religious? What has religiosity to do with the modernization of Singapore? How do we account for the transformation in the patterns of religious practices?

Readings:


Week 8: Gender and Family

What is the difference between sex and gender? How are the roles of men and women in Singapore constructed and for what purposes? How is the family related to gender identities and responsibilities?

Readings:


Week 9: Inter-Ethnic Relations - Minorities at Risk?

What is ethnicity? How do we understand minorities sociologically? To what extent have education and state policies shaped the beliefs and conduct of Singaporeans?

Readings:

**Week 10: Consumerism - Between the Global and the Local**

What is consumerism? Why do Singaporeans consume certain commodities over others? What has consumption patterns to do with identity, social divisions and politics?

Readings:

**Week 11: Managing the Singaporean Space**

What is the Singaporean space and what does it entail? Who are the stakeholders in shaping these spaces? What are the considerations that go into determining the outcomes of these sites?


**Week 12: Civil Society in Singapore**

What do we mean by a civil society? Does Singapore possess one? What roles does civil society play and how is it related to the practices of the state?

Readings:

**Course Assessment**

CA1 Term Paper : 30%
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