NEW HORIZONS ISSUE NO. 1

MARCH 2018

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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- The future of Social Sciences in NTU and beyond

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Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni and Friends,

This April will be the School of Social Sciences’ (SSS) first anniversary—a year after the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) was restructured into two Schools. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone—NTU leadership, faculty members, management and support staff, students and alumni—who have been supportive and efficacious as we worked hard to ensure a smooth transition. I am also honoured to carry on from Chair of HSS to Chair of SSS.

As part and parcel of NTU’s dynamic growth trajectory, we are very proud of our remarkable history—from a “start-up” of just 53 students to a behemoth of over 3,700 students and more than 280 faculty members across nine majors in 13 years. But as we have outgrown the administrative structure that was in place more than a decade ago, the reorganisation of HSS was necessary and timely. Change, as we know, is not always easy, but with it comes the opportunity to forge a new path for SSS and leave behind a legacy we can all be proud of. While this legacy was affectionately recorded in the HSS newsletter, HORIZONS, I am delighted that the name of SSS’s newsletter, NEW HORIZONS, embraces both continuity and change. The School looks forward to contributing to NTU’s exciting future developments under the leadership of President Subra Suresh and the new senior management team.

Our feature story looks at the future of the social sciences at NTU and beyond. Advances in technology are offering innovative solutions and improving lives, but at the same time, posing new challenges to society. There is no question that the social sciences can play a critical role in enhancing the societal benefits of new technology while mitigating its repercussions. As an institution that aims to contribute to cutting-edge global scholarship and to nourish future leaders, we recognise the outstanding contributions of our faculty and staff, and welcome new additions to SSS—and among them are three faculty members who are developing a new Minor, Geography and Urban Studies, to be offered in AY2018/2019. The new Minor is one of the many developments we can expect from SSS as we strive to provide for the educational aspirations of our students, while adapting to the needs of today’s society in Singapore.

In the inaugural issue of NEW HORIZONS, we recognise the outstanding contributions of our faculty and staff, and welcome new additions to SSS—among them are three faculty members who are developing a new Minor, Geography and Urban Studies, to be offered in AY2018/2019. The new Minor is one of the many developments we can expect from SSS as we strive to provide for the educational aspirations of our students, while adapting to the needs of today’s society in Singapore.

I hope you will enjoy our very first issue of NEW HORIZONS, and we look forward to your continued support for SSS’s further development!
OUR NEW FACULTY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

A warm welcome to the new additions to our faculty!

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<td>Assistant Professor Tan Teck Yong</td>
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<td>Public Policy and Global Affairs</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Sabrina Luk</td>
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The School of Social Sciences would like to extend our congratulations to the following faculty and staff for their contributions to the School and University:

Faculty Promotion to Professor

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<td>Assistant Professor Cheon</td>
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Assistant Professor Cheen selected as APS Rising Star

Has off to Assistant Professor Bobby K. Cheon from Psychology! He has been selected as a Rising Star by the Association for Psychological Science (APS) for 2017. APS, one of the largest international associations for psychology, publishes some of the top journals in the field. The Rising Star designation recognizes outstanding psychological scientists in the earliest stages of their research career post-PHD whose innovative work has already advanced the field and indicates great potential for their continued contributions. Congratulations, Assistant Professor Cheon!

HAVE COURAGE IN WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN: SSS CONVOCATION 2017

For the 448 graduates of the School of Social Sciences (SSS), 31 July 2017 was a day of celebration and triumph as they donned their gowns and mortarboards and received their degree scrolls. Their four-year journey as university undergraduates had come to an end.

Gracing the convocation ceremony for School of Humanities and School of Social Sciences as guest speaker was Ms Sun Xueling, Member of Parliament for Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC. In her address, she offered her thoughts on the role social sciences play in today’s world of technology, and some advice on how the graduates could contribute to society as social scientists.

Meanwhile, in his valedictory speech, Mr Mohammad Syafiq bin Mohammad Suhaini, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, reminded his classmates that even as they enter the next stage in their lives, “life is so much more than just work.” He then called upon his classmates to hold true to their cause and prepare themselves to meet future challenges.

“A true believer is one who, despite being shaken to his very core, remains faithful to what he believes in,” he asserted.

SSS RECEIVES GENEROUS DONATION FROM NTU ALUMNI

School of Social Sciences (SSS) received a generous donation of $100,000 for its scholarship fund from Nanyang International Club (NIC). NIC’s contribution is the first major donation to SSS, and it was presented by Dr Sun Xue, founding president of NIC and NTU alumnus of Class 2006, to Professor Liu Hong, Chair of SSS, at a dinner for graduates of the Master of Science in Managerial Economics (AY2014/2017). The dinner, held at InterContinental Hotel Singapore on 26 January 2018, was hosted by Nanyang Centre for Public Administration (NCPA) and Lien Ying Chow Legacy Fellowship.

The contribution is the first major donation to SSS, and is from China-born NTU alumni, some of whom are now citizens or permanent residents of Singapore. This demonstrates NIC’s strong attachment to Singapore and NTU while promoting friendly relations between Singapore and China.

“This scholarship is to encourage SSS undergraduate students to forge a better understanding of contemporary China from an interdisciplinary and regional perspective, which is becoming increasingly important,” said Professor Liu. “China is now the second largest economy in the world and a key driving force for Asia’s economic growth.”

As Chair of NIC and Director of NCPA, I’ve had the privilege of working closely with Dr Sun Xue and NIC for the past few years. Professor Liu added, “and we are very grateful to her and NIC’s generous support. With the Ministry of Education’s matching fund, this scholarship now amounts to $250,000.”

Dr Sun Xue (Nanyang Business School, Class of 2006) received the Nanyang Alumni Achievement Award in 2017 for her outstanding contributions to the global NTU alumni community. She has served the NTU Alumni Association (AAN) (Beijing) for almost a decade, helping grow its members to more than 2,000 alumni. She is presently a member of the NTU Alumni Council as well.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN THE ERA OF UNCERTAINTY

Assistant Professor Wang Jue, from the Centre for Public Administration (NCPA), organised a two-day workshop which was held from 27 to 28 November 2017 at the Orchid Room at Campus Clubhouse. The workshop, entitled “Science, Technology and Innovation in the Era of Uncertainty,” explored how global uncertainty affects talent, research collaborations, and government responses to encouraging collaboration among researchers, and exploring government funding of research and policies, and their implementation.

The workshop was sponsored by NTU’s College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, and National Research Foundation Singapore.
**WORKSHOP ON AGEING AND POPULATION POLICY IN CHINA AND OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES**

Contributed by Assistant Professor Zhan Shaohua

Sociologists of School of Social Sciences organised an international workshop, entitled ‘Confronting a Grey Society: China’s Eldercare and Population Policy in Comparative Perspective’, on 23 August 2017. The workshop was held under the aegis of a joint Singaporean-German research project, with the University of Würzburg as the German partner. It opened with welcome remarks by Professor K.K. Luke, the Associate Dean (Research) of College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and was attended by more than 40 scholars and researchers from Europe, the United States, China, and Singapore.

The workshop was composed of four sessions which included the following topics: ‘Population Planning’, ‘Fertility Trends’, ‘Aging in China’, and ‘Aging in Asia’. Renowned demographer and China expert from the University of Cologne, Professor Thomas Schärf, elaborated on the history of political and demographic deliberations of the family planning policy in China. Dr Bjoern Alpermann, Chair Professor at University of Würzburg, delivered a speech on the shifts in population politics after the end of the one-child policy. Professor Jiehua Lu from Peking University shared his empirical study on demographic change and elderly care in China and Japan. Other presentations at the workshop touched on gender inequality, biopolitics, fertility decline and urban transformations in China as well as ageing issues in India and Singapore.

The workshop was convened by Assistant Professor Zhan Shaohua and Associate Professor Xiao Hong, and financially supported by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and Nanyang Technological University. A follow-up workshop will be held in the University of Würzburg in January 2018, with scholars from the two sides planning to launch further collaborative research in future.

**NOTES FROM THE FIELD: AN EVENING WITH ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KAMALUDEEN**

Contributed by School of Social Sciences Graduate Student Club

The School of Social Sciences Graduate Student Club (SSGSC) organised its inaugural professional development programme on Wednesday, 8 November 2017. The first session featured Associate Professor Kamaludeen Mohamed from the Sociology department. Held at The Hive, it was attended by 20 participants – undergraduate and graduate students from the School of Social Sciences as well as alumni and postgraduate students from the School of Humanities.

‘Notes from the Field’ is intended as an informal sharing session by faculty members from the School of Social Sciences, and aims to give students a greater insight into the world of academia, as well as to foster a greater sense of collegiality in the School.

Associate Professor Kamaludeen discussed issues of identity and ethnicity as participants in Singapore’s education system and academia in general, by using anecdotes in his life journey as an academic and social scientist as vignettes. He answered some questions from the audience pertaining to the nature of doing graduate studies. He also offered honest and thought-provoking advice on managing individual expectations of graduate life, acknowledging and accommodating different life stages of an individual, and practical suggestions on dealing with study, work, and life as a researcher.

**GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN GERONTOLOGY WELCOMES ITS PIONEERING COHORT**

Contributed by Ms Ler Soh Wah

The School of Social Sciences launched a new graduate programme, Master of Science (MSc) in Applied Gerontology, in July 2017. It welcomed its pioneering cohort of 40 students who are made up of civil servants, therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, healthcare professionals, social workers, managers, mid-career individuals, mature students as well as young executives.

With Singapore’s greying population is on the rise, the introduction of a gerontology programme is timely as there is an urgent need for more trained professionals to join the silver industry. The MSc in Applied Gerontology is an interdisciplinary programme with Asian focus on the needs of the silver population. Its comprehensive curriculum draws from information and insights of social and behavioural sciences, health and medicine, business and policy, and design and engineering.

For candidates interested to pursue this programme, there are several external scholarships available. One of these is the Nege Ann Kongsi Postgraduate Scholarship in Social Sciences, which has been awarded to four students in the first intake of the MSc programme. These individuals are:

- Cally Chantale Ng Jiaying – Social Work Associate
- Kel Chien Liang – Programme Executive
- Lai Suay Theng, Laura – Volunteer
- Pioneer Generation Ambassador (PGA)
- Mo Minyi – Nurse Manager

**PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE CROWNED REGIONAL WINNER IN 2017 UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS**

Ms Scarlet Leong Xin Min, psychology graduate of Class 2017, was awarded the 2017 Undergraduate Awards in September. She was Asia’s Regional Winner for Psychology for her Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus (URECA) paper, ‘Mindful Art Making: A Pilot Approach for Reducing Burnout Among Hospice Care Workers’.

Scarlet was a URECA student with Assistant Professor Andy Ho’s research laboratory, Action Research for Community Health (ARCH). The paper, which had been shortlisted as a Highly Commended Entrant, sprang from a larger research project helmed by Assistant Professor Ho.

She admitted that she always had an appreciation for the study of visual arts, and a rigorous for research that prepared her for her thesis project in her final year. And what made it worthwhile was the results that supported their research hypothesis.

"All in all, the research process became not only extrinsically rewarding, but intrinsically fulfilling," she said, “and I am humbled to have our home-grown paper mentioned on an international platform.”
NTU Economic Growth Centre (EGC) signed the Research Centres Networking Group agreement with other research institutions in Asia Pacific region on 3 August 2017. The agreement was signed during the Singapore Economic Review Conference 2017 at Mandarin Orchard Singapore Hotel.

Research Centres Networking Group (RCNG) is a visiting research programme that aims to facilitate research between the network. The agreement is effective for three years from the date it was signed, 12 September 2013.

According to the RCNG agreement, faculty from the research centres or universities in the network are able to visit other member institutions for one to three weeks, subject to the research need and budget of the host institution. Members of the networking group can also convene at joint workshops and conferences on common themes across research centres.

For this round, the network is comprised of ten academic institutions in Australia, China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Members of the RCNG agreement are:

- Graduate School of Economics, Kobe University (Japan)
- Asian Development Bank Institute, Asian Development Bank (Japan)
- Asian Growth Research Institute (Japan)
- Graduate School of Economics, Kobe University (Korea)
- University of Economics (Vietnam)
- University of Economics, Hiroshima University (Japan)
- Arndt Corden Department of Economics, Australia National University (Australia)
- Centre for New Structural Economics, Peking University (China)
- Centre for Research of Private Economy, Zhejiang University (China)
- Economic Growth Centre, Nanyang Technological University (Singapore)
- Economic Growth Centre, Korea University (Korea)
- Economics Head and EGC Director, NTU Sustainable Earth Office, and Alumni Resource Economics (EAAERE) 2017 Conference.
THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN NTU AND BEYOND

The School of Social Sciences (SSS) was established in April 2017, after 13 years as part of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS). The restructuring was necessary to adapt to the remarkable growth of HSS, which had outgrown its administrative structure put in place more than a decade ago. It had become the largest school in Nanyang Technological University (NTU), with more than 3,700 undergraduates and over 200 faculty members spread across nine majors.

The reorganisation was also effected in consideration for NTU’s humanities and social sciences students—two Schools, SSS and School of Humanities, would better serve the needs of a growing student population.

Professor Liu Hong, previously Chair of HSS from 2010 until the reorganisation allowed the School to concentrate on the development of its degree programmes. Today, SSS has close to 2,000 undergraduates and more than 100 faculty members in the fields of Economics, Psychology, Public Policy and Global Affairs, and Sociology.

Looking back
Founded in 2004, HSS began with only 53 students reading Economics, Chinese, English, Psychology, and Sociology followed in 2005. The School was formed to support NTU’s goal of becoming one of Singapore’s leading in research and education in diverse disciplines. HSS aimed to not only boost scholarship and nurture a vibrant research culture, but also produce world-ready graduates who are prepared to take on the challenges and issues facing Singapore and the world.

Adapting to changes
Changes were expected with the reorganisation—from appointing a new Chair and forming a new management committee to creating new student clubs and even altering the building’s façade to reflect that two Schools were housed within. The changes were part of SSS’s distinctive identity—one that acknowledged SSS’ history when it was once HSS—and position the School as a leading institution for the Social Sciences in Asia.

There was much to be done before the reorganisation was effected. A new management committee was set up to determine the direction SSS would take, and to decide on initiatives to be implemented. The mission and vision of SSS, while it echoed its predecessor, was now more focused. Professor Liu Hong, previously Chair of HSS from 2010 until the reorganisation of the School, was named Chair of SSS. This ensured a continuation of strong leadership, which was welcomed by all.

Further to these administrative changes within SSS, student clubs needed to be re-formed. A pro tem committee was formed for the undergraduate students’ School of Social Sciences Club to prepare for the new executive committee could be held. The School of Social Sciences Graduate Students Club was also formalised for the graduate students.

These changes presented a chance for students to come up with fresh ideas to make the student clubs unique from their predecessors. It was also an opportunity to strengthen ties among their fellow schoolmates.

“I think the restructuring has brought about positive changes…I noticed there is more interaction among SSS students than before. I know of juniors from SSS’ freshmen orientation who are still in contact with one another or even taking electives together.”

Bryan Lim, vice president, SSS Club pro tem committee

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Bryan Lim, vice president, SSS Club pro tem committee
But what remained is the School’s unwavering dedication to provide quality education to its students and equip them with the right skills that would prepare them for today’s constantly changing world. Its vision and mission were not any different from when it was HSS. Now as SSS, it still desired to create vibrant, creative societies and nurture critical and creative thinking in students in a world driven by technology, global connectedness, and climate change.

The call for social sciences in NTU and beyond

The central role the social sciences plays in society today is undisputed. While technology has unequivocally taken the driver’s seat and is disrupting industries, the social sciences provide crucial knowledge for society to come to a collective understanding as to how it can benefit from or mitigate the outcomes of technological developments. Technological advances are one of the biggest and latest challenges our world faces today; new challenges demand fresh perspectives and approaches in confronting them that the social sciences can best provide.

Professor Alan Chan, Dean of College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, and Vice President (Alumni and Advancement), acknowledged that dealing with technological changes is a modern imperative. Speaking at the panel discussion at NTU’s town hall in January, he said it required a concerted effort from all concerned individuals wanting to create a better society. Technologies, he noted, are reshaping the human landscape in significant ways.

“Every technology can be used for the benefit of society, or it can also be abused or misused,” Professor Chan observed. “There is the question of developing new technologies in the service of humanity. There’s the question of applying technologies for the interest of society. There’s also the need to ensure there are robust regulatory frameworks to ensure the proper use of technologies.”

The arts, humanities and social sciences unquestionably have a critical role to play in ameliorating the consequences of technology.

The call for the social sciences is critical, especially with Singapore’s shifting social and economic landscape. Singapore, like most developed countries, is dealing with several social issues which include—but not limited to—a rapidly greying population, social mobility, and social diversity. These are issues where social sciences research would be valuable.

In November 2016, Singapore’s Ministry of Education (MOE) announced it had set aside $350 million over the next five years for research in social sciences and humanities. This is notably an increase of 45 per cent of MOE’s spending on research in social sciences and humanities compared to five years prior. Additionally, the funding is part of the work of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) set up by the government in January 2014. Its purpose is to provide a coordinated direction for social science and humanities research. Meanwhile, SSRC aims to develop the social science and humanities research ecosystem by supporting research that is relevant to Singapore and other societies; building global networks of researchers and policymakers as well as encouraging cross-disciplinary work; and developing local talent in these fields. As a research-intensive institution, NTU would benefit from this initiative.

Being adaptable to society’s needs

SSS programmes are created with the needs of today’s society in Singapore and beyond in mind. The curriculum ensures that students learn not only from textbooks and history, but also stay in tune to current trends and events.

The School’s latest graduate programme addresses one of Singapore’s main societal concerns—rapidly aging population. The Master of Science in Applied Gerontology programme offers an interdisciplinary Asia-focused curriculum, ensuring its relevance in the region. Its courses concentrate on the challenges of an aging population from the perspectives of social sciences as well as related courses in engineering, design, and medicine. It welcomed its pioneering cohort in July 2017, and had received 70 applications for 25 spots when it was launched.

As part of SSS’ initiative to expand its programme offerings and interdisciplinary studies, a new minor will be introduced come the 2018/2019 academic year. The minor, Geography and Urban Studies, will be helmed by three assistant professors specialising in human geography. With the addition of this minor, students would have greater insight, exposure and freedom to pursue interdisciplinary interests beyond traditional school lines.

Assistant Professor Felicity Chan, one of the three professors in charge of the minor, summed up the importance of human geography: “I think what (geography) has at its core is the study of space and society and I think this is extremely core to Singapore. It is going to be extremely relevant as Singapore becomes 7 million or 10 million at some point. We want our geography programme to equip students to think spatially and to understand the significance of space in their everyday lives as well as in the way they think about relationships and society.”

The new offering takes into consideration key issues such as migration, immigration and social activism societies in Singapore and around the world today grapple with. Undergraduates can look forward to an expanded universe of society-related topics that are also research interests of these professors. Geography and Urban Studies offered by SSS will complement physical geography courses offered by Asian School of the Environment (ASE) and National Institute of Education (NIE).

These developments demonstrate how SSS strives to remain relevant in today’s ever changing world while fulfilling its ideals of teaching and scholarship in the social sciences. According to the QS World University Rankings, NTU is ranked among the top 50 universities in the world, with the social sciences ranked 22nd. Given that the university is less than 50 years of age, and the social sciences in NTU started not more than 14 years ago, this is a commendable feat.

Rankings are important, but strong values are essential for success are well. In his message to students, NTU President Professor Subra Suresh expressed his honour in being part of a university that stands for the values that he holds dear—excellence in education, learning, discovery and innovation; sustainable impact on society; global engagement; improving the human condition; and dedication to our communities. “As future leaders and global citizens, you will have a substantial impact in influencing the human condition and the course of the 21st century,” he added.

Our mission is not to merely improve our standing among the world’s best universities. We must also ensure students from SSS develop a breadth of imagination and depth of perspective, and are well-equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century—in NTU and beyond.
Professor Helga Nowotny is Professor Emerita of Science and Technology Studies, ETH Zurich, and a founding member and former President of the European Research Council (ERC). The establishment of the ERC was a major breakthrough in Europe, which transformed the European research landscape, attracted international talent, and helped shape the development of a knowledge-based economy throughout the European Union.

Currently, Professor Nowotny is Chair of the European Research Area Council Forum Austria, an expert panel advising the Austrian Minister responsible for science and research. She is also Vice-President of the Council, for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings; and University Council member of the Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich. Professor Nowotny has been Nanyang Visiting Professor at NTU since 2016, and in that capacity contributed significantly to the University and especially on the optimal structure and funding strategy of research councils, and also the contribution of the social sciences and humanities to economic and social development.

Throughout her distinguished career, Professor Nowotny has been at the forefront of science and innovation policy matters. A prolific scholar at the same time, Professor Nowotny has published widely, especially in Science and Technology Studies (STS) and on the changing conceptions of time in social contexts.

A strong advocate of interdisciplinary research, Professor Nowotny has been actively involved in the development of social science and complexity science at NTU. Not only has she contributed in many important ways to research and innovation at NTU, but also her advice is much sought after by policy makers in Singapore. She has provided expert input to further developing Singapore’s research landscape, especially on the optimal structure and funding strategy of research councils, and also the contribution of the social sciences and humanities to economic and social development.

Since her secondary school days, Assistant Professor Felicity Chan found her forte in maps and geography, which marked the beginning of her lifelong pursuit of the subject. Her passion in seeking to understand how people interact and connect with the urban environment has led her to places all over the world—United States, Germany and Switzerland, where she spent the last 15 years in these countries. She also speaks four languages – English, Mandarin, German and Indonesian.

Assistant Professor Chan is fascinated with maps and is an ardent lover of them. “I am excited about maps—I love maps—and mapping, and I’m interested in how people interact in space, and how the spatial arrangement affects that interaction.” This is just one reason for her love of geography.

Another reason for her love for the subject is her curiosity for human interaction in the urban environment. She shares how she did particularly well in geography while in secondary school and seemed to understand it better compared to other subjects. This led her to taking on the subject in junior college as well. “I think it’s because I’ve always been interested in how people interact in the urban environment,” she comments. She recalls how she was in an architecture course but dropped out of it after three days and went back to doing geography. “I was interested in the built environment but geography seems to be a Major in the near future.”

School of Social Sciences welcomed three new faculty members—Assistant Professors Felicity Chan, Ian Rowen, and Ye Junja. They joined NTU in the second half of 2017.

They will be the spearheading a new Minor in Geography and Urban Studies, which will be offered in the 2018/2019 academic year. Its primary focus will be on human geography, and will complement the physical geography programmes and courses offered at the Asian School of the Environment (ASE) and National Institute of Education (NIE). This gives students a more interdisciplinary perspective to the subject of geography.

“We recognise that Singapore is not only 100 percent urbanised, but it is in a region that has all these other dimensions of the environment that we should know of,” Assistant Professor Felicity Chan says. “There is a bigger environment—the global environment as well as a more immediately, regional environment out there—which is critical for us to understand.”

Assistant Professor Ian Rowen adds that while Singapore may not have volcanoes or earthquakes, she plays a significant social, political and economic role in the region. “Singapore is not simply a clichéd crossroads, but in itself it’s positioned more than anywhere in Southeast Asia to be participating in broader scholarly conversations about space, power, economy and so on.”

Assistant Professor Ye Junja hopes that the new Minor will broaden students’ minds when they think about space and urban life—one of the many topics the new Minor will include. “One of the takeaways we want for all our students is that space matters,” she comments. “In fact, space has become more important when we think about borders, processes of exclusion, density, or even about apps such as Tinder and Uber.”

Geography and Urban Studies is slated to be a Major in the near future.

* Extracted from the citation read at Professor Nowotny’s conferment of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters in 2017

Assistant Professor Felicity Chan
By Ms Violet Koh
Rowen's eclectic nature is not only reflected in his work but also his hobbies. In his free time, he finds himself playing wei qi, reading classical Daoist texts, doing yoga, rock climbing, scuba diving and making interactive art installations. Also fluent in Mandarin Chinese and Bahasa Indonesia, his works as a translator include “Tibetan Environmentalists in China: The King of Dz,” and award-winning films such as ‘Splendid Float’ and ‘Spider Lilies’.

Of his multifaceted interests and hobbies, Assistant Professor Rowen shares that it was on his East Asian Studies advisor’s suggestion that he gravitated towards geography. “Space permeates just about any aspect of human enquiry. Geography, historically, was a science of empire; it’s moved on from the past. But geography is in many ways an expansive discipline. It has its own traditions yet also touches on a variety of disciplines, be they cultural anthropology, political science, sociology and so on. All of these have spatial dimensions.”

He has many notable professional achievements - some of which date back to his graduate student days where he was successfully published in flagship journals of three different disciplines - Annals of Tourism Research, Journal of Asian Studies and the Annals of the American Association of Geographers. Also during his time as a graduate student, he delivered invited talks from Stanford University to School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and even New York University, Shanghai. But perhaps one of the highlights of his academic life would be his article on the Sunflower movement in the Journal of Asian Studies published by Cambridge University Press. “My article was on a list of many publications that Chinese censors tried to get pulled from the Cambridge University Press website. To see my work listed alongside that of so many esteemed scholars was a great honor.”

As it turns out, her curiosity for geography took her to many places, both physically and intellectually. Instead of spending just four years in Canada, she ended up staying there for 10, earning her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees at York University, and her doctorate at The University of British Columbia. She flew across the Atlantic Ocean to be a postdoctoral research fellow at the Max Planck Institute in Germany, and thereafter, travelled to down under to New Zealand to be a Research Leader in the Urban Encounters project at Massey University. She then returned to Singapore, and joined NTU as an assistant professor in July 2017.

After being away for almost two decades, the self-confessed “city-phile” is thrilled to finally be able to work on research that is focused on Singapore. “It is really nice being in Singapore doing the sort of work that I do because there’s so much going on,” she enthuses. “I’m very excited to be in a place where the field is not so far removed from me, geographically, anymore.” She is currently working on research that takes a critical look at inclusion and integration in the context of migrant workers in Singapore.

If she had not gone down the academia route, she might have been a chef, Assistant Professor Ye reveals; it was something she had contemplated while waiting for the results of her PhD application. Now she turns to cooking to unwind from the daily grind, whipping up mouthwatering dishes like shakshuka or chicken tajine, and hosting leisurely dinners for her loved ones at home. “The whole ritual of going to the grocery store, making lists, buying things; I enjoy it all,” she says. “The whole process of assembling, and waiting, and smelling… there’s quite a sensuousness to a meal that I find quite satisfying.”

Assistant Professor Setoh Pei Pei

MOE ACADEMIC RESEARCH GRANT AWARDS

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EXTERNAL GRANTS

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<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>NRF – Behavioural Studies in Energy, Water, Waste and Transportation Sectors (BSEWWT)</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Kenichi Ito</td>
<td>Making Recycling Fun In Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>MSF</td>
<td>Assistant Professor Eunae Cho</td>
<td>Predictors and Consequences of Work-Family Experiences: Study of Working Caregivers of Older Adults</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TYPE A – SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH THEMATIC GRANT CALL 2016

PSYCHOLOGY

Title: Fostering Harmonious Intergroup Relations in Early Childhood
Principal Investigator: Assistant Professor Setoh Pei Pei
Description: In Singapore’s ethnically diverse community, promoting intergroup harmony is essential. As racial biases are known to be firmly entrenched and resistant to change once we enter adulthood, it is crucial to understand the nature and early development of such biases in order to develop early prevention and intervention strategies. The project aims to investigate the development of race preferences in Singaporean children with the goal of gaining knowledge about the major contributors to pro-in-group behaviour during childhood, as well as key insights about the relationship between identity development and social attitude formation.
Insights from the project will lay the empirical foundation for developing novel early intervention methods, and an evidence based, experimentally-validated pre-school intergroup harmony curriculum. The latter will help shape children’s identity to encompass the values of inclusivity, diversity, and unity. The project will contribute to the enhancement of pre-school education, through Nanyang Technological University’s collaboration with NTUC First Campus, which will include the implementation of the intergroup harmony curriculum at NTUC First Campus pre-schools.
Changing Patterns of Chinese Immigration and Diasporic Formation in the United States


Transnational Social Underpinnings of Chinese Capitalism: Dual Embeddedness and New Migrant Entrepreneurship in Singapore


Lee Kuan Yew's Thoughts on Talent and Singapore's Development Strategy


Tourism as a territorial strategy in the South China Sea


Diaspora and Migration: History of the Chinese in Southeast Asia


Youth Activism


Tourism as a territorial strategy in the South China Sea


在台灣上演「一中」Performing ‘One China’ in Taiwan: An ethnography of Chinese tourism [In Chinese].

The celebration of co-proximity within city life has a long history in urban studies, beginning with analyses of contact with subjects different from ourselves. As new diversities arising from migration continue to both enrich and complicate the dynamics of urban community, there has been a renewed interest in the potential of the everyday intercultural encounter in shared spaces. This paper identifies two key strands of geographical imaginaries in the growing fields of urban diversity and coexistence. I first review the geography of togetherness through the sharing of space between moving on to discuss the spatialities of structured and structuring practices that can enclose these micro-publics. Consequently, I then highlight the work of difference-making that is done at both policy and everyday level that generates, filters, sorts, and organizes diversity. What emerges is the need for more attention to the impact of governance and management of diversity and the contingent effects of the characteristics and histories of migrant populations and the local politics of place.

How Does Culture Matter in the Face of Globalisation?

Globalization has made exposure to multiple cultures not only possible, but often necessary and unavoidable. This article focuses on how people react and adapt to increasing globalization and multiculturalism. We posit that reactions to multiculturalism and intercultural contact are not universal and are themselves shaped by cultural experiences. That is, culture provides a frame of reference for reconciling and negotiating the inflow of foreign cultures and peoples. Although exposure to foreign cultures can wander in a worldview, thereby enhancing creativity and reducing prejudice, intercultural contact can also bring about negative exclusionary responses such as aversion, disgust, and defensiveness. We explore how culture and individual differences, such as a belief in racial essentialism, critically shape reactions to intercultural contact. Our discussion sheds light on recent geopolitical and societal shifts that reflect an increased backlash against rising globalization and cultural diversity.

Hukou Reform and Land Politics in China: Rise of a Tripartite Alliance

This article calls attention to the role of land rights, many face increasing insecurity in their livelihoods. The article is based on an extensive survey of local policy documents and a case study of Chengdu Municipality in Sichuan Province.

Internal Spatial Fix: China’s Geographical Solution to Food Supply and its Limits
Assistant Professor Zhan Shaohua (Sociology), Lingli Huang. 2017. Geoforum, 85, 140-152.

Over the past three decades, China has managed to maintain and even increase grain production in the context of rapid industrialization and urbanization through a process of internal spatial fix in which grain production is relocated to and concentrated in less developed inland regions. However, the fix created political and environmental problems that will undermine it in the future. Using national statistical data and two case studies, this paper demonstrates how the fix has been a result of complex interactions between central and local actors and is a key factor shaping China’s trajectories of food politics and agrarian transitions. It also reveals that confronting the underproduction crisis of food under capitalist accumulation China has first sought to produce sufficient grain within its national border rather than rely on overseas resources.

Managing Urban Diversity Through Differential Inclusion in Singapore
Assistant Professor Ye Junjia (Sociology). 2017. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 35 (6), 1033-1052

This paper interrogates processes of everyday urban diversification by challenging dominant narratives of “diversity” and “integration”. I address the management aspects of urban diversification through the normative and productive categorisations of race, citizenship and civility in shared spaces to highlight the forms of differential inclusion of newcomers, drawing upon ethnographic data from Jurong West in Singapore, to explain subjective inclusion through state-led measures and everyday forms of coexistence. There are two key aspects of differential inclusion discussed here: at the explicit rules that form the basis of differential state treatment of its population by race, ethnicity and citizenship status and b) the implicit principles in which migrants are included according to normative forms of appropriate behaviour in public spaces. Consequently, social norms and civility become tools of inclusion, and, relationally, exclusion, producing a politicised logic of managing diversity both in structural and everyday spaces. Recognising the profound ways in which differential inclusion shapes space through its subtle yet pervasive ways not only imparts analytical purchase to the study of everyday interactions but also grafts the meaning of belonging and difference onto the ever-changing contours of diversification in the city.
Neurobiology of Culturally Common Maternal Responses to Infant Cry

This report coordinates assessments of five types of behavioral responses in new mothers to their own infants’ cries with neurobiological responses in new mothers to their own infants’ cries and inexperience mothers to infant cries and other emotional and control sounds. We found that 684 new mothers in 11 countries (Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, France, Kenya, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and the United States) preferentially responded to their infants’ vocalizing distress by picking up and holding and by talking to their own infant, showed implicit bias favoring own race. Furthermore, children’s explicit bias was unrelated to racial categorization performance and implicit bias. The findings suggest that manizers’ strategic efforts toward their superiors, subordinates, and external stakeholders affect the financial conditions of school districts. The findings suggest that superintendents’ managing upward toward school boards increases fund balances, whereas managing downward toward school principals decreases fund balances. Apparently, the relationships between school boards, superintendents, and school principals contain different priorities and incentives that influence their behaviors in managing school district budgets.

Taiwan’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: The Geopolitics of Transnational Justice in a Contested State

This article examines Taiwan’s new president’s 2016 proposal for a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC), and addresses the ways in which this TRC serves domestic, regional and international policy goals. For Taiwan as a contested state, the TRC is part of a larger strategy that includes consolidation of a collective memory about earlier authoritarian state violence, cultural and political distinction from the irredentism and authoritarianism of China, and demonstration of adherence to international norms of democracy and human rights. We argue that the Taiwan case reveals the instrumental and rationalist strategy of a TRC as a geopolitical strategy, particularly for relatively stable democracies facing external existential threats from an authoritarian country. We further demonstrate the need for ongoing research on transitional justice in Asia, and emphasize that political transitions are not only situated within nation states, but also in regions where TRCs may have profound geopolitical effects.

Touring in Heterotopia: Travel, Sovereignty, and Exceptional Spaces in Taiwan and China
Assistant Professor Ian Rowen (Sociology). 2017. Asian Anthropology, 16(1), 20-34

This article uses the case of Chinese tourism to Taiwan to theorize the mutual constitution of tourism mobilities and exceptional spaces of sovereignty. Human flows between China and Taiwan have proliferated despite incompatible sovereign claims. Since 2008, China has sent millions of tourists across the Taiwan Strait even as it points over a thousand missiles in the same direction. Taiwan, itself a “de facto state” and therefore deprived of a permanent core of sovereignty and a normative world order of sovereign nation-states, is partly defined by its relations with China. This relationship is being refashioned through cross-strait tourism. Based on analysis of border-crossing regulations and ethnographies of tourist spaces, particularly at airports and protest sites, conducted between 2012 and 2015, this article argues that tourism mobilities are not only the effect but also the cause of transformations in the performance of sovereignty and territoriality. In other words, such mobilities not only articulate within exceptional spaces, but they can produce and reconfigure such spaces as well.

Understanding Human Performance in Sociotechnical Systems – Steps Towards a Generic Framework

Humans, their performance, actions and decisions play a significant role in a vast range of operations in complex sociotechnical systems. Numerous studies have therefore endeavored to understand people’s actions and/or inactions within their working environment and to identify those factors, also known as Performance Shaping Factors (PSFs), that contribute either positively or negatively to sociotechnical system performance. However, aspects required to comprehend the resilience of sociotechnical systems during times of crisis are often created based on data and research derived from a specific domain, and therefore are difficult to apply beyond the domain of interest. Thus, this paper presents a generic framework to develop a standardised list of PSFs, referred to as the Performance Shaping Factors (PSFs), that contribute either positively or negatively to sociotechnical system performance. Knowledge of and familiarity with the PSFs is often created based on data and research derived from a specific domain, and therefore are difficult to apply beyond the domain of interest. Thus, this paper presents a generic framework to develop a standardised list of PSFs, referred to as the Performance Shaping Factors (PSFs), that contribute either positively or negatively to sociotechnical system performance. Knowledge of and familiarity with the PSFs is often created based on data and research derived from a specific domain, and therefore are difficult to apply beyond the domain of interest. Thus, this paper presents a generic framework to develop a standardised list of PSFs, referred to as the Performance Shaping Factors (PSFs), that contribute either positively or negatively to sociotechnical system performance. Knowledge of and familiarity with the PSFs is often created based on data and research derived from a specific domain, and therefore are difficult to apply beyond the domain of interest. Thus, this paper presents a generic framework to develop a standardised list of PSFs, referred to as the Performance Shaping Factors (PSFs), that contribute either positively or negatively to sociotechnical system performance. Knowledge of and familiarity with the PSFs is often created based on data and research derived from a specific domain, and therefore are difficult to apply beyond the domain of interest. Thus, this paper presents a generic framework to develop a standardised list of PSFs, referred to as the Performance Shaping Factors (PSFs), that contribute either positively or negatively to sociotechnical system performance. Knowledge of and familiarity with the PSFs is often created based on data and research derived from a specific domain, and therefore are difficult to apply beyond the domain of interest. Thus, this paper presents a generic framework to develop a standardised list of PSFs, referred to as the Performance Shaping Factors (PSFs), that contribute either positively or negatively to sociotechnical system performance. Knowledge of and