**GES1009/SSA2203**

**Singapore’s Business History**

**AY2018-19**

**Semester 2**

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**MODULE OVERVIEW**

This module traces the business history of Singapore from its origins as an East India Company outpost, as an entrepôt for regional and international trade routes to its current status as a global city and centre for international finance and business. This module offers an introduction to business history and explores different case studies in the local context. These case studies range from ‘rags to riches’ stories of early migrant communities, popular local brands, and present day entrepreneurs.

Major topics include: trading communities, commodities, networks and migration, entrepreneurship, family business, heritage, globalisation, state and business.  We will also consider the popular culture aspects of business in SG.

**OUTCOMES:**

This module's aims are twofold: to provide students with a good introduction to business history as a field of study and to explain the development of Singapore, from its early settlement years to the present from the perspective of business history.

Students will:

* Gain a good understanding of Singapore's history, with a strong business/economic focus.
* Become familiar with many leading business figures and the history of firms and products that are household names in Singapore. Some of these names include: the Sarkies brothers and Tan Kah Kee.
* Think critically about how and why Singapore's business developed in a particular manner from 1965 onwards.
* Develop a better appreciation of business and heritage issues. For instance, why are 'heritage brands' increasingly popular? And how has the history of early business been represented in our museums?
* Develop their writing and critical thinking skills via the continuous assessment tasks and tutorial activities.

**LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

*As with any module, the more you read, the more you will benefit from the module. Lectures complement and develop from the readings. For some weeks we have listed additional readings – these readings provide an additional layer of ‘depth’ to the topics we’ll be discussing in class.*

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| WEEK (date) | Lecture Topic | READINGS |
| 1. 14th Jan | An introduction to Business History (Why study Singapore’s Business history?) | * Vinnie Lauria, “What Makes An Asian Tiger? Singapore’s Unlikely Economic Success Lies in its History” *Forbes Magazine,* 2/10.2014 * W.G. Huff, *The Economic Growth of Singapore: Trade and Development in the Twentieth Century.* Chapter 1. [E-book]   **Additional:** Geoffrey Jones and J Zeitlin, *The Oxford Handbook of Business* [E Book] This is a great resource and we recommend you browse it for key ideas regarding business history. |
| 1. 21st Jan | Free Trade Fever? Singapore as a colonial entrepot. | * Tan Tai Yong, “ Port Cities and hinterland: A comparative study of Singapore and Calcutta,” *Political Geography* 26 (2007) * Stephen Dobbs, *The Singapore River: A Social History 1819-2002.* Chapter 2.   **ADDITIONAL:**  Cynthia Chou, “Agriculture and the End of Farming in Singapore” in T. Barnard, *Nature Contained.*[E-book] |
| 1. 28th Jan | Business Communities and early industries in a colonial port setting.  (*Read on at least two of the communities featured here)* | * Yen Ching-hwang “Class Structure and Social Mobility in the Chinese Community in Singapore and Malaya 1800-1911” *Modern Asian Studies*, 21, 3 (1987) * Jayati Bhattacharya, *Beyond the Myth:Indian Business Communities in Singapore,* pp.30-32; 38-64. * Amreen Ali Talib, “Hadramis in Singapore” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* (1997) 17:1, pp.89-91. * Ben Simpfendorfer, *Singapore’s Hadrami Community in today’s Economy.* [E-Book |
| 1. 4th Feb **( Eve of PUBLIC**   **HOLIDAY – no lecture)** | The challenging years: Great Depression, The Japanese Occupation and recovery. | * Watch: The Discovery Channel’s *History of Singapore*, Part 2. (This is a three part series produced in 2005). Part 2 covers the idea of Singapore as an “Accidental nation’. The first 25 minutes looks at colonial Singapore and the Japanese occupation. Available in the library or on Youtube. |
| 1. 11th Feb | The ‘Singapore Model’ of Development | * J.J. Woo *Singapore as an International Financial Centre* (2015).Ch3 [E-book] * Asad-ul Iqbal Latif, *India in the Making of Singapore*, chapter 4 “Looking West to India” [E-book]   Additional:  Stephen Haggard and Linda Low, “State Politics and Business in Singapore,” in Edmund T. Gomez (ed) *Political Business in East Asia,* [E Book]  On recent projects to uncover Singapore’s industrial history:  <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/have-any-stories-on-singapores-industrial-heritage-to-share> |
| 1. 18th Feb | Two industries in Review (Shipping and Banking) | * J Huff, *The Economic Growth of Singapore,* Chapter 4 “Shipping” * Grace Low et.al, *Building Bridges, Carving Niches*   **Additional:**   * Michael Miller, “Pilgrim’s Progress: The business of the Haj” *Past and Present,* 19.1 (2006) * J.J. Woo *Singapore as an International Financial Centre* (2015).Ch3 [E-book] * Asad-ul Iqbal Latif, *India in the Making of Singapore*, chapter 4 “Looking West to India” [E-book] |
| 23rd Feb-3rd Mar | RECESS WEEK |  |
| 1. 4th Mar | Firms – Retail and Leisure | * Goh Chor Boon, *Serving Singapore,* Ch 2. * Stephanie Po-Yin Chung, “Moghul’s of Chinese Cinema: The Story of Shaw Brothers in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, 1924-2002’ *Modern Asian Studies,* 41.4 (2007) OR   “Old World Theme Parks” in *Biblioasia* Volume 12 Issue 1 (Apr-Jun2016) on entertainment in Singapore. (available via the NLB website)  **Additional:**  Chua Ai Lin, “Cultural Consumption and Cosmopolitan Connections: Chinese Cinema Entrepreneurs in 1920s and 30s Singapore” in Rea and Volland (eds), *The Business of Culture: Cultural entrepreneurs in China and Southeast Asia 1900-65”* |
| 1. 11th Mar | Entrepreneurship | * Sin Yee Then & Nicolai Volland, “Aw Boon Haw, the Tiger from Nanyang” in Rea and Volland (eds), *The Business of Culture”* * Haji Mohamed Mustafa in Battacharya, *Beyond the Myth,* pp.274-81.   Watch an episode of “The Successors” Season 6 available on Toggle TV. (Choose from episodes on CYC tailors, the owner of Elsie’s Kitchen catering, and a family funeral business)  <https://tv.toggle.sg/en/tv/shows/the-successors-s6/info> |
| 1. 18th Mar | ‘Wealth cannot last three generations’: Family Firms in review | * Stephanie Po-Yin Chung, “The Transformation of an overseas Chinese family: Three Generations of the Eu Tong Sen Family, 1822-1941.” *Modern Asian Studies,* 39.3 (2005) * M.Dieleman, J. Shim, M. Ibrahim, *Asian Family Firms: Success and Succession.*(NUS Business School) |
| 1. 25th Mar | Guest Lecture: TBA | TBA |
| 1. 1st April | SG Icons from Singapore Airlines to Curry Puffs | * Lai Ah Eng, “The Kopitiam in Singapore: An Evolving Story about Migration and Cultural Diversity”2010   [E-resource]   * Kevin Hick, *Mr SIA Fly Past.* Chapter 6 “The Singapore Girl”[ E-Book] |
| 1. 8th Apr | Singapore’s business world today | J.J. Woo *Singapore as an International Financial Centre.* Ch5.  **Additional**:  Ben Simpfendorfer, *Singapore’s Hadrami Community in today’s Economy.* [E-Book] |
| 1. 15th Apr | REVISION |  |
| READING WEEK (20th Apr-26th Apr) |  |  |

**ASSESSMENT:**

The CA for this module consists of:

**Tutorial participation:**15%

**CA1.**  Response Paper (800 words).  15%

Due in WEEK 6 to be submitted during Lecture time. (hardcopy and softcopy submission) Monday 18th Feb.

**CA2**.  Heritage Essay (1300 words maximum). 30%

Each tutorial class will have a workshop session where students can discuss their fieldtrip and the assignment in Round 4 of tutorials. The final assignment is then due in the tutorial class in Round 5 (one week after the workshop).

*For both assessment tasks papers that are submitted late without a valid reason (with supporting documents) will be subject to a penalty of half a grade per day that they are late.*

**Exam**: 40%

(OPEN BOOK)

**TUTORIALS: Tutorials are held on an odd and even basis. Attendance at tutorials is very important as we cover key themes in class.**

Round 1 (Weeks 3 & 4) Colonial Singapore

Round 2 (Weeks 5&6) Nationhood and business

Round 3 (Weeks 7 & 8) Students will conduct a self-guided field trip for the business & heritage assignment

Round 4 (Weeks 9&10) Workshop and student sharing related to the field trip.

Round 5 (Weeks 11&12) the Kopitiam in Singapore vs Starbucks. The local, the global and the ‘glocal’…[Your heritage assignment is due during your tutorial class time in Round 5]