

Writing Assignment 2

Instructions

Please respond to one of the prompts below in an essay of approximately 1000 to 1200 words.

Strong essays will refer to and engage with ideas in the assigned readings and will offer an argument.

If you refer to passages from the readings or any other source, be sure to cite it in the text. For this you may simply use the parenthetical, in-text method. For example:

Scott writes, "high-modernist city planning is really crappy" (Scott, 1998: 137).

(This is just an example. He did not write this. Basically just give me the last name of the author, the year of publication, and the page number or numbers of the quote or idea you are referring to.)

Do not simply cut and paste from the internet for your answer. That is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for the essay. If you use an idea or text that comes from another source, simply provide a citation for it.

Due Date and Time: Friday, 23 March 2018 at 5:00 pm. Late papers will be marked down five points per day for the first two days. After the second day, papers will not be accepted and receive zero marks.

Please email me your essay as a Word file, not a .pdf file. My email address is samson_lim@sutd.edu.sg.

Reminders

- Just because this is a new assignment does not mean you should forget everything that you've studied before. Think about the concepts you've been introduced to in this course (e.g. modernism, liberalism, etc.) and in your other HASS courses (e.g. materialism, functionalism, psychoanalysis, etc.) and see if they might be relevant for thinking about the issues that you will write about for this essay.
- If you find something becoming too abstract, think through a concrete example. This may help you keep the essay grounded in the 'real world.' Concrete examples also help the reader understand what you are trying to communicate.

Prompts for Written Assignment 2

1. Summarize and evaluate James Scott's critique of the "high-modernist" city in a coherent essay that puts forward a clear argument in relation to his ideas.
2. Rem Koolhaas suggests that statements that liken Singapore to "Disneyland with the Death Penalty" are "frivolous" (Koolhaas, 1995, p. 1013). Instead, he notes that "the 'Western' is no longer our [the 'West's'] exclusive domain" (Ibid, p. 1013). What does he mean by this and how is it relevant to city planning in Singapore?
3. Based the readings that we have covered so far, produce a general definition of what you think 'modern city planning' encompasses and evaluate its legacy on the way that Singapore has developed since the 1950s.

You may focus on various design principles, political aims, or other aspects of city planning. You may also draw on all the readings to date, including those from the earlier weeks of the term.

4. Open-ended question: If you wish, you may formulate your own essay topic. If you choose to do this, please be sure that I have approved of your topic before you begin writing. This is to ensure that the question you pose is both relevant to the course and can be answered in 1200 words.

Suggestions for Questions 1 and 2

To help you ground your answer to both questions 1 and 2 in 'concrete' events, you may want to consider incorporating some of the ideas brought up by Loh in his article on public housing in Singapore.

- For question 1, for example, Loh frames his understanding of public housing in Singapore as an attempt to create a high-modernist state (per James Scott). In what ways was this so? Is it a relevant concept for him to use?
- For question 2, Loh talks about how both the colonial and post-colonial governments of Singapore pursued similar 'modernist' strategies for housing development, yet one was more 'successful' than the other. How might this be relevant to Koolhaas' claim?