

*Description*

My previous curriculum and this syllabus is developed specifically for the many girls in Hong Kong, who, like me, went to an all-girls Christian high school, schools that were a product of the British colonial rule. It is a peculiar space to grow up in because being in a culture that has idioms as “silence is golden” and “harmony is the most precious”, all types of personal struggles — no matter how small or big, are internalized; all types of societal disapproval and discrimination are implied and rarely outwardly expressed, creating a false impression of acceptance. Thus, for me, to care, one must learn to assert. To assert, not from an American/ Eurocentric view, but from one that makes sense and empowers in the context that I grew up in. This is a syllabus for the many girls in Hong Kong, who grew up not knowing the language and their ability to assert themselves, who then grew up to realize that their body, the body of an Asian womxn, is a body that is fetishized, a body that is expected to stay a certain shape, a body that is likely to be harassed and/or assaulted, all while being a body that is not expected to reject, react or resist.



(Photograph by Ka-Man Tse, in *Narrow Distances*)

### *Class Duration & Structure*

- Each class begins with the instructor and the students tidying (caring) for their space, e.g. stacking all the classroom chairs onto the sides, sweeping the floor, placing a carpet in the middle for everyone to sit barefoot
- After tidying the space, everyone sits for a couple of minutes in silence, and are reminded that this is a time, like any time in their life, where it is okay not to be okay.
- Regular classes are 1.5 hours. Class with speakers/out of class activities will be 2 hours.

### *Schedule*

#### **Week 1: “Kong Girl”<sup>1</sup>**

- Wordmap brainstorm
  - Words, esp. Cantonese slang used to describe womxn in Hong Kong (Will be referenced throughout)
- Womxn in Hong Kong
  - Discussion: Prior to class, students were asked to select a womxn from Hong Kong that they either look up to or resonant with. In class, they will speak about
  - Introduction to *Womxn of Hong Kong* panel assignment
    - The class will culminate in a panel students organize for their peers in the school, they will decide on the theme and which speakers to invite
- Historical framework
  - Brief introduction of history and experience of the body of Asian womxn
- Planting activity
  - Students put on blindfold and each is passed a pot
  - Place dirt, pass to the next student
  - Student passed a plant and plant it in the pot, pass to the next student
  - Take care of plant till end of term
- Take home assignment: Record how many times they apologize in the week, and to whom

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Understand how language, especially slangs, shape our perception on gender, sexuality and expectations for womxn

#### **Week 2: Sex Ed and Health**

- Discuss apology data viz
- Sex Ed & womxn’s health basics (which were barely covered in local schools in Hong Kong)

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<sup>1</sup> “Kong Girl” is a slang directly translated to Hong Kong girls, but used to represent a negative stereotype portraying Hong Kong womxn as worshipping money, narcissistic, being obsessed with foreign culture, and suffering from the so-called “Princess Syndrome” which means girls or non-married womxn requesting others to treat her like a princess.

(Elorza, Izaskun; Carbonell I Cortes, Ovidi; Albarran, Reyes; Garcia Riaza, Blanca; Perez Veneros, Miriam (2011). *Empiricism and analytical tools for 21 Century applied linguistics*. Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca. p. 457. [ISBN 9788490121542](#).)

- STDs, Condom demo
- Sanitary product options
- What is consent? What does that look like?
- What can I do if my boundaries are violated?
- Who are my safety networks? How do I build a safety network?
- Where do I find an affordable therapist in Hong Kong? Procedure + Questions to ask.
- What should I do when someone reached out to me for help?
- Historical framework:
  - How is the Asian body view in different places?

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Learn about consent, boundaries and power dynamics
- Learn that they have choices in regard to their relationship with their body
- Gain clear idea of the actions they can take if someone harass/assault them
- Start to form their safety network and learn how to brace themselves

### **Week 3: Being Queer in Heep Yunn<sup>2</sup>**

- What does queerness in Hong Kong look like?
  - Denise Ho's coming out, Gigi Chao's father's marriage bounty
  - Images from Tse-Ka Man's *Narrow Distances*
- Where are queer spaces/events/organizations/resources in Hong Kong? What are their limitations?
  - Pink Dot / Gay Games 2020
  - Butterfly
  - Non-public groups

### **Speakers (tentative):**

- Beatrix Pang, Founder of Small Tunes Press
- Ho Yuen Man, HYS alum (secondary school), Marketing at Nike & Rugby Referee at Hong Kong Rugby
- Vincy Chan, HYS alum (primary school), artist and singer-songwriter, transgender activist

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Acknowledge that many lesbian relationships exist in the school
- See and understand that queerness does not only exist in the heteronormative framework: which is still mostly the case in Hong Kong (Slang: TB, TBG)
- Learn about the different resources that could be helpful to them or their friends
- Learn how to form their own support group if needed resources is not available
- Learn how to be an ally (Idea of safety network)

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<sup>2</sup> Name of the high school I went to in Hong Kong, which has both a primary and secondary school (Primary 1-Primary 6, From 1-Form 7)

#### **Week 4: Healing from Within**

- Wet market grocery shopping and cooking as group
- Chinese medicine concepts introduced

##### **Learning Objectives:**

- Learn about self-care through food and through providing for oneself

#### **Week 5: “Active” Healing**

- Skateboarding workshop and sharing with *Girls CAN Skate*

##### **Learning Objectives:**

- How to be confident in male-dominated spaces, you don't have to be the best or great to be confident
- Learn to trust themselves
- Care for others (Students are partnered up when they learn how to drop-in/go down a slope)
- Learn that you can be terrible at something but still enjoy yourself, which can be an empowering lesson

#### **Week 6: Womxn of Hong Kong Panel**

- Theme and speakers to be determined by students
- Plant planting:
  - Students bring back the plant they took home in the beginning of the term and repot them together in a space in the school

##### **Learning Objectives:**

- How to spread care by community organization, knowledge sharing
- Learn that even though they are the students, their voice and perspectives matter
- Learn how to care for and take ownership of a space through the communal garden