

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

COURSE OUTLINE

1. COURSE TITLE

Taking a Stand: Turning Research Insights into Policy Recommendations

2. COURSE CODE

GCAP3056

3. NO. OF UNITS

3 Units

4. OFFERING DEPARTMENT

Language Centre

5. PREREQUISITES

None

6. MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

English

7. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

This is an experiential learning course.

This course aims to help our students engage with public discourse on important social problems facing our local and global society. It introduces an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing social problems, encouraging students to draw upon research insights and knowledge from different disciplines and share their insights with stakeholders such as the Hong Kong (HK) government, NGOs and the public. Addressing a range of social issues facing Hong Kong and the wider global community, students learn to glean research insights from academic literature, to collect information from the HK government under the Code on Access to Information and join the debate on such issues through experiential learning activities such as discussion with representatives from NGOs and/or community members and writing for the media. Working collaboratively in small groups, students will critically review the policies and decisions made by the HK government and propose new solutions for social problems taking into account findings from their own research together with literature on the issues and/or policy ideas from other countries or cities. Students will eventually develop insightful and persuasive arguments on the issues and share their findings with the stakeholders including the HK government and the

public through a variety of channels, including writing letters to the editor and opinion pieces in the newspapers, submitting reports to the HK government and engaging members of the community through online and offline activities. Moreover, the experiential learning provided by this course will facilitate meaningful connections between students and practitioners in the field to explore internship and/or employment opportunities.

8. COURSE CONTENT

WEEKS ONE-TWO: Introductory Sessions

WEEK ONE-The Hong Kong SAR Government (TLA: 1) (3 hours)

This topic introduces the overall structure and organisation of the Hong Kong SAR government. It includes the principles of transparency and accountability of the government, communication and complaint channels, the Ombudsman, Code on Access to Information, and the judicial review of government decisions. Students will learn how to initiate a conversation with various government departments and bureaus and the community (incl. NGOs and members of the public) regarding specific social issues through applying the skills of analyzing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data from the government and other sources. In groups, students will begin to identify a social issue they would like to work on and draw up a plan for their project.

Reif, L. (2014). *The Ombudsman, Good Governance, and the International Human Rights System*. Leiden, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Head, B. W. (2007). *Community Engagement: Participation on Whose Terms?* Australian Journal of Political Science, 42(3), 441-454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10361140701513570>

Wadham, J., Harris, K., & Peretz, G. (2011). *Blackstone's Guide to the Freedom of Information Act 2000* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

WEEK TWO-Media and research literature on social issues (TLA: 1) (3 hours)

Students will explore the complex relationships between the public and academic communities, shaped by the ways social and research issues are debated in mass-media. This will provide students the opportunity to investigate how researchers could influence the public opinions through media engagement. Students will also consider the challenges of communicating research insights to the public with limited background knowledge and explore strategies and skills for effective communication with the public.

Irwin, A., & Wynne, B. (2003). *Misunderstanding Science?: The Public Reconstruction of Science and Technology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simon, D., Kuhlmann, S., Stamm, J., & Canzler, W. (2019). *Handbook on Science and Public Policy*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Hillier, D. (2016). *Communicating Health Risks to the Public: A Global Perspective*. New York: Routledge.

Vannini, P. (Ed.). (2012). *Popularizing Research: Engaging New Genres, Media, and Audiences*. Peter Lang.

McLaughlin, T. (1996). *Street Smarts and Critical Theory: Listening to the Vernacular*. University of Wisconsin Press.

WEEKS THREE-EIGHT: Seminars on broad social issues and forums with guest speakers/
Data Analysis/Writing Workshops

WEEK THREE-Education and cultural affairs (TLA: 1,2) (3 hours)

This seminar will focus on the HK government's attempt to reform the school education, to enhance the services of the public libraries and to renovate museums in the age of digital technologies.

Hille, R. T. (2018). *The New Public Library: Design Innovation for the Twenty-First Century*. London & New York: Routledge.

Tse, T. K.-C., & Lee, M. H. (2016). *Making Sense of Education in Post-Handover Hong Kong: Achievements and challenges*. London & New York: Taylor & Francis.

Hossaini, A., & Blankenberg, N. (2017). *Manual of Digital Museum Planning*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

WEEK FOUR-Public health and environment (TLA: 1,2) (3 hours)

This seminar will focus on the HK government's policies for providing public health care services for an ageing population with the limited resources and the government's long-term decarbonization strategies under the framework of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Heston, T. F. (Ed.). (2018). *eHealth: Making Health Care Smarter*. London: IntechOpen.

Harvey, H., Orvis, R., & Rissman, J. (2018). *Designing Climate Solutions: A Policy Guide for Low-Carbon Energy*. Washington: Island Press.

WEEK FIVE-Data Analysis workshop 1 (TLA: 1,3) (3 hours)

This data analysis workshop will focus on applying the skills of analyzing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data from the government and other sources to their projects.

FORUM ONE (TLA: 1,2) (2 hours)

A presentation and discussion forum with invited guest speakers representing local NGOs, political groups and the government.

WEEK SIX-Housing and transportation (TLA: 1,2) (3 hours)

In this seminar, students will explore the housing and transportation policies of the HK government and critically review the specific issues related to the buses, MTR, taxis, transitional housing, land supply for housing.

Wong, Y. C. R. (2015). Hong Kong Land for Hong Kong People: Fixing the Failures of Our Housing Policy. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Finger, M., & Audouin, M. (Eds.). (2018). The Governance of Smart Transportation Systems: Towards New Organizational Structures for the Development of Shared, Automated, Electric and Integrated Mobility. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

WEEK SEVEN-Smart cities and constitutional affairs (TLA: 1,2) (3 hours)

Students will explore the evolution of HK into a smart city in the midst of the political movements focusing on the use of technologies in law enforcement, organizing and participating in protests as well as the concerns of privacy for smart city residents.

Forrest, G. C. (2016). Police Technology: 21st-Century Crime-Fighting Tools. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.

Cropf, R., A. (2016). Ethical Issues and Citizen Rights in the Era of Digital Government Surveillance. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

WEEK EIGHT-Writing workshop (TLA: 1,3) (3 hours)

This writing workshop will introduce rhetorical strategies in media discourse, persuasive communication in social media and value principles in argumentation that students can apply to write persuasively for their projects.

FORUM TWO (TLA: 1,2) (2 hours)

A presentation and discussion forum with invited guest speakers representing local NGOs, political groups and the government.

WEEKS NINE-THIRTEEN: Consultations, Presentations and Reflections

WEEK NINE-Consultations (TLA: 1,3) (3 hours)

Groups will meet with their instructor to bring their final project into a presentable state

WEEK TEN-Consultations (TLA: 1,3) (3 hours)

Groups will meet with their instructor to bring their final project into a presentable state

WEEK ELEVEN-Community Outreach (TLA: 1,4) (3 hours)

Students will set up and man on-campus outreach booths about their projects, to engage with their peers and the public.

WEEK TWELVE-Community Outreach (TLA: 1,4) (3 hours)

Students will set up and man on-campus outreach booths about their projects, to engage with their peers and the public.

WEEK THIRTEEN-Course Reflection (TLA: 1) (3 hours)

A seminar will be held to reflect on the experiences and outcomes of the course.

Subject to the availability of resources and other constraints, video lectures may be provided to address some of the topics above through a flipped classroom mode. The classroom contact hours may be allocated for small group discussion and tutorial meetings to help students work on their projects.

Total: 43 Hours

9. COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (CILOs)

CILO	By the end of the course, students should be able to:
CILO 1	Synthesise and critically analyse data/information/viewpoints gathered from various stakeholders including the HKSAR government, NGOs, and the public regarding social problems, so as to develop and support actionable policy recommendations;
CILO 2	Collaborate with peers from multiple backgrounds and draw on research articles from multiple disciplines to develop wide-ranging insights into the discourses and power relations informing social problems facing Hong Kong and global society;
CILO 3	Recognise and evaluate value principles in public discourse so as to make more informed and knowledgeable decisions in the development of rhetorical strategies for arguments on pressing social issues;
CILO 4	Apply knowledge and insights gained from research activities by writing for the public as informed citizen-scholars via newspaper articles, reports to the HK government and social media campaigns.

10. TEACHING & LEARNING ACTIVITIES (TLAs)

CILO alignment	Type of TLA
CILO 1, 4	<p>1. Experiential Learning Project</p> <p>Students will work in small groups to develop insights and arguments on a particular social issue facing Hong Kong via research and community engagement. This will not only involve a review of relevant literature but also collecting insights and data from the government, community leaders (NGOs) and/or community members through fieldwork. They will share their findings with stakeholders and the public through various channels such as writing letters to the Editor, opinion pieces in newspapers/online media, social media campaigns and policy recommendation reports. Interactive lectures and consultation sessions will help guide the students towards the effective realisation of their project. The following TLAs are also in this way directed towards the processes and outcomes of this project.</p>
CILO 2, 3	<p>2. Seminars and guest speaker forums</p> <p>Seminars on current social issues in Hong Kong which will also include presentations by guest speakers, e.g. NGO representatives, to share their values, experiences and perspectives. Some seminars may be delivered as video screencasts or podcasts through a flipped classroom approach so the classroom contact hours can be spent on small group discussion. Students will prepare for these through research; by reading assigned materials and outlining their responses and thoughts via discussion questions. During the seminars, the students will share their ideas on these issues, interact with guest speakers and identify areas for further investigation for their own projects.</p>
CILO 2, 3	<p>3. Writing workshops using digital tools and social editors</p> <p>Writing workshops will be held for students to practice the skills of contacting government and community leaders (NGO) and members of the public, and, in addition, writing persuasively. Group writing projects will be facilitated by social editors such as Google docs and online platforms such as Padlet and Google sites. These activities will be channelled into building an online collaborative community of "writers for the public" where materials and resources will be shared e.g. a Facebook group.</p>
CILO 2, 4	<p>4. Community engagement activities</p> <p>Students will set up booths on campus, for example on the Li Promenade, to share their finished projects with members of the university community and the public. Students will showcase the work done for their project, e.g. newspaper articles, reports for the government, pictures from field trips, and records of online engagement.</p>

11. ASSESSMENT METHODS (AMs)

Type of Assessment	Weighting	CILOs to be addressed	Description of Assessment Tasks
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Methods			
Argumentative Research Paper (group)	25 %	1, 2, 3	Small groups of students will work together to write a short argumentative research paper that will critically review the government policies and offer policy recommendations; the paper can then be adapted into different forms as reports to the government, letters to the editor, social media posts and oral presentations
Community engagement portfolio (group)	40 %	1, 2, 4	Students may choose to engage the community in different ways including writing for the newspaper, preparing reports for the government, designing and launching persuasive campaigns on social media; students should work in groups to build the community engagement portfolios to document their roles in the team efforts of engaging the community. The portfolio should include the following three compulsory items: 1. Evidence of requesting information from the government and/or community leaders/members 2. Evidence of writing for the public, e.g. newspaper articles, government reports or social media posts 3. An infographic or a video clip making the argument
Reflective learning journal (individual)	35 %	2, 3, 4	Students should keep a multimodal learning journal through writing, voice-recording and/or filming to reflect on the learning processes. The drafts of these journals should be shared in a discussion board in Moodle where peer learning can take place. Students will be evaluated based on the depth of their reflection as well as the breadth of their contribution to the discussion board.

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