HH2001 Singapore: The Making of a Cosmopolitan City-state
[Seminars: 39 hours; Academic Unit: 3.0]

Learning Objective
- Introducing key processes, forces and individuals in shaping modern Singapore;
- Enhancing students’ analytical capacity in interpreting historical events since 1819 from a regional and global perspective;
- Demonstrating the importance of how history is a crucial force in the formation of a national identity for a young country such as Singapore

Content
This course focuses on the evolution of Singapore in the regional and global contexts since 1819. It will discuss various factors—institutional, cultural, socio-political and international—that have shaped the trajectory of Singapore over the past seven decades. The successful story of Singapore’s economic development will be understood within the domestic multi-ethnic mosaic and complex regional relationships. It is the interplay of these forces that underscores the emergence and challenges of a cosmopolitan global city-state with an emerging national identity.

Course Outline

Seminar I: Introduction: Changing Approaches to Singapore History

Seminar II: Singapore 1819: Before and After

Seminar III: Singapore as a Nexus of Regional Trading Networks
  Huff, The Economic Growth of Singapore; Liu Hong and S K Wong, Singapore Chinese Society in Transition: Business, Politics and Socio-economic Change,

Seminar IV: Immigration and the Formation of a multi-ethnic Colony, 1819-1945

Seminar V: The Winding Road to Independence
  Barr and Trocki, eds., Paths Not Taken: Political Pluralism in Singapore; Liu and Wong, Singapore Chinese Society in Transition

Seminar VII: Changing Economic Development Strategies and the Making of a New Regional Wing, 1972-the present
Huff, The Economic Growth of Singapore; Lee Kuan Yew, From third world to first

Seminar VIII: Social Change and Education in a Multi-ethnic Society: A Historical Perspective
Li Tania, Malays in Singapore: culture, economy, and ideology; Ong Jin Hui, Tong Chee Kiong, and Tan Ern Ser, eds., Understanding Singapore Society.

Seminar IX: Singapore as a global city-state: culture, religion, and society
Chua Beng Huat, “Placing Singapore in East Asian Pop Culture;” Chong, Management of Success; Ong, Tong, and Tan, Understanding Singapore Society.

Seminar X: Singapore in the regional and global context: ASEAN, America and China
Edwin Lee, Singapore; Leifer, Michael, Singapore's Foreign Policy

Seminar XI: The Future in the Past: The relevance of history in nation-building
Huang and Hong, The Scripting of a National History

Learning Outcome
Apart from familiarizing key processes in Singapore’s recent history, the students will be able to understand the significance of history in shaping national and cultural identity and a variety of factors contributing to Singapore’s success so far (and the challenges it faces). They will be able to develop analytic skills in interpreting the past events and their continuous relevance.

Student Assessment
Class participation and presentation: 15%
Book Review (Lists of Texts to be announced later) 10%
Singapore History Project (3000 words) 25%
Final Examination: 50%

Book Review
The book review will be a 1000 word review of a key text on Singapore’s history. The list of texts will be made available on the first day of class.

Singapore History Project
Students have to their own topic on Singapore history for the Singapore History Project. They will be required to use stipulated primary sources for this project. This will include the Oral History Archives and other resources at the National Archives of Singapore, as well as your own oral history or field recordings.

Textbooks and Readings


