

Special Projects with International Organisations

- Instructor: Assistant Professor of Political Science Song Jiyoung
- School: School of Social Sciences
- Previously offered: Term 1 AY2014-15 (Aug – Nov 2014)
- Next course-run: Term 1 AY2015-16 (Aug – Nov 2015)

Course Description

The Special Projects with International Organisations (IOs) is a highly interactive and innovative course to provide students with the opportunity to develop advanced research skills under individual or group supervision while working with international, governmental or non-governmental organisations as their 'project' interns. In doing so, students learn to use their knowledge and research methodologies directly into practice. The course focuses on students' academic writing by progressively developing a proposal, draft, revision, and final paper whilst given regular feedback by the instructor. Participating IOs include UN agencies and inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) in Southeast Asia as well as foreign embassies (GOs) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in Singapore. 'Project' interns are separate from the official SMU OCS-registered internships.

The course consists of two parts. One is the project's research component and the other is the internship opportunity. For the research component, students will be closely supervised, individually and in a group, on the specific individual projects how and where to find relevant primary sources and secondary literature, and to progressively write an original research paper. The Special Project also offers an exclusive opportunity to work with one of the well established IOs, foreign GOs or INGOs in the region so that students can be exposed to the real world of Asian and international affairs and explore opportunities for continuously working with them. Such unique opportunities will enable students to critically analyse contemporary political and international affairs in Asia, evaluate existing public policies and suggest policy recommendations to their respective hosting institutions. This is innovative yet experimental teaching and learning by doing beyond classroom, the success of which depends on students' active participation and communication.

Participating organisations vary each year. The areas of focus are broadly defined as migration and human security. Partner institutions include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Asia-Europe Foundation, the Embassy of the United States of America, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the British High Commission, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, the Embassy of Timor-Leste, the Royal Thai Embassy, the Embassy of the Philippines, the World Refugee and Save the Children.

In AY2013-14, the confirmed IOs are UNDP, IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR and EmancipAsia. A group of four students will be allocated to each organisation.

On Friday 4 April 2014, a mini public Symposium is scheduled as the last class where students present their final projects to the class, the hosting institutions and invited guests from the public.

Course Goals

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

- 1) comprehend IOs and current Asian affairs, and develop research agendas collaboratively;
- 2) advance their writing and research skills;
- 3) critically analyse political issues in Asia and evaluate existing policies from a theoretical perspective;
- 4) engage meaningfully with partner organisations as their 'project' interns and meet their expectations; and
- 5) present the research outcomes orally and visually to a small public audience

Assessment Methods

Participation (Individual Grades, IG) 20%

IO Presentation (Group Grades, GG) 10%

Research Proposal Workshop (GG) 5%

Peer Review (IG) 5%

Draft Paper (IG) 10%

Symposium Presentation (IG) 20%

Final Research Paper (GG) 30%

Instructional Methods and Expectations

Students are expected to be highly communicative, engaging and motivated to work with international organisations (IOs). Communication failure will affect the grades.

Week	Topic
1	Special Projects and IR theories
2-4	[IO Presentation] <ul style="list-style-type: none">• INGO: EmancipAsia at http://www.emancipasia.org• IGO: UN Development Programme at http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home.html• IGO: UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees at http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home• IGO: UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx• IGO: International Organisation for Migration at http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home.html• IGO: UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation at http://en.unesco.org/• IGO: UN Children's Fund at http://www.unicef.org/• IGO: UN Office of Drugs and Crime at http://www.unodc.org/• GO: Embassy of Timor-Leste in Singapore• INGO: Amnesty International at http://www.amnesty.org
2	Understanding of IOs (I)
3	Understanding of IOs (II)
	Understanding of IOs (III)
5	[WORKSHOP] Proposal Presentations]
6	Politics, IR and the UN
7	[WORKSHOP] Research Methodology: How to Write a Research Paper

8	Recess (No Class)
9	[WORKSHOP] Searching and Understanding UN Data Systems
10	Human Security and Development
11	Transnational Migration and Global Governance
12	Civil Society
13	Symposium
15	Final Paper Due
