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**SMU unveils new courses to prepare graduates for an AI-enabled future**

*Students will gain greater ownership of their learning, deeper understanding of the society they will serve, and the applied fluency to work with AI*

**Singapore, 11 August 2026** – As artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes industries, careers and society, Singapore Management University (SMU) is introducing a new suite of courses that reflects a global imperative of universities — how higher education should evolve to prepare graduates for a future where technical expertise alone is no longer enough.

Launching in the new Academic Year 2026/27, starting 17 August 2026, the new courses span AI, sustainability, law, psychology, business, technology and the arts. Several are designed for students outside the disciplines that would traditionally own them: Accounting students building AI agents, law students working through the economics of the rules they will one day apply, and undergraduates from any school learning Singapore's history through dance. (*Refer to Appendix for List of Courses*)

Together, they offer an early view of SMU's broader curriculum transformation, demonstrating how the University is preparing students to combine deep disciplinary knowledge with critical thinking, creativity, ethical judgement and intercultural understanding.

The new offerings arrive as SMU implements its **AI in Education Strategy**, endorsed by the University's Board of Trustees in February 2026, which will reshape undergraduate education from Academic Year 2027/28. The strategy brings students through a progressive mastery journey that rests on three commitments: (1) Protect core competencies so that students demonstrate critical thinking, independent reasoning, disciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding and communication independently of AI; (2) Develop AI capabilities to enable students to apply AI responsibly, effectively and fluently; and (3) Strengthen distinctly human capabilities and value-add such as professional and ethical judgement, integrity, collaboration and creativity.

Meanwhile, every SMU student will have complimentary access to AI tools such as Gemini Education Plus, so no student's fluency depends on what they can personally afford.

"Preparing students for AI is not a matter of adding a course," said Professor Venky Shankararaman, Vice Provost (Education Strategies and Innovation) at SMU. "Students must first be able to demonstrate they can work independently of AI. Building on that foundation, they will learn to apply AI within their discipline and, crucially, articulate their own human value-add in

work that is genuinely complex. What runs through all of these new courses is the same conviction: although fluency in technology is necessary, what remains distinctly ours — judgement, creativity, the understanding of people and societies — is what will set our graduates apart."

### **Preparing graduates to shape their own impact**

SMU has expanded its Work-Study Elective (WSE) offerings with *Strategic Management Work-Study Elective (MGMT389)*, helmed by Dr Whitney Zhang. Designed for Year 3 and Year 4 students, this five-month programme combines self-directed academic learning with extended industry placements, allowing students to apply classroom knowledge to real organisational challenges over the course of a semester.

The *Strategic Management Work-Study Elective* introduces a *Design-Your-Own (DYO)* model that gives students greater flexibility and ownership by enabling them to source internship opportunities with companies or start-ups aligned with their interests and career aspirations. Rather than following a predefined placement pathway, students work with faculty to shape personalised learning objectives, encouraging initiative, independence and self-directed learning. Throughout the placement, students work closely with faculty advisers who provide structured guidance through goal-setting, progress reviews and reflective learning, ensuring that academic development remains closely integrated with workplace experience.

The types of companies has been expanded to include Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Social Impact initiatives under the newly introduced *Societal Impact Elective (SIE)* and DYO-SIE, which reflects SMU's conviction to nurturing students who are not only commercially ready, but socially conscious and civically engaged.

Together, these new courses reflect SMU's belief that experiential learning should do more than prepare students for employment. It should empower them to take ownership of their learning, contribute meaningfully to organisations and communities, and develop the judgement, creativity, adaptability and sense of purpose needed to make their mark in an increasingly complex world.

### **Preparing graduates to understand people and society**

Among the University's newest courses is *Choreographing the City-State: Dance and Multiculturalism in Singapore*, which explores Singapore's history, multiculturalism and evolving national identity through dance. As Singapore invests in becoming a regional creative node, this course arrives at a timely moment.

Combining historical inquiry with practical workshops led by local dance practitioners, the course introduces students to Chinese, Malay, Indian and contemporary dance traditions while examining their historical, political and cultural significance. It grew out of the University's own

artistic work, *Return of Return*, a high energy production staged at the [2025 SMU Arts Fest](#) that drew Malay, Chinese and Indian dance language together with hip-hop, and a fusion that marked a distinctly Singaporean movement vocabulary. The course was co-developed by Professor Darlene Espena, prolific songwriter [Jimmy Ye](#), who guides SMU's artistic activities as the Director of Student Life, and Gin Lam, resident choreographer of SMU Eurhythmix.

"We are not just launching a course; we are creating an academic incubator for a distinctly Singaporean dance vocabulary that codifies and celebrates our multicultural identity," said Professor Mark Chong, SMU's Dean of Students.

The course is also a pilot for a wider model. It was designed to bring co-curricular learning into credit-bearing academic study, allowing students to translate commitments they already hold into academic learning and build a distinctive set of courses connecting classroom study with selected co-curricular experience over time.

Two further courses in the School of Social Sciences turn the same attention outward. *Ethnic and National Identity Politics (POSC328)* examines why some ethnic minorities are integrated into national identities while others are accommodated or excluded, drawing heavily on Southeast Asian cases. *Psychology of Identity and Personal Narrative (PSYC114)* explores how people construct a sense of self through life story, social context and culture.

### **Preparing graduates to work with AI**

Several new courses build AI capability inside a student's own specialisation rather than alongside it, from accounting to law to software engineering.

Chief among them is the *Financial Services AI Immersion Programme (IS4002)*, a new SMU-X course that forms part of the [Young Talent Programme – AI in Finance \(YTP-AIF\)](#) initiative announced at SMU in May 2026 by Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong, intending to build a pipeline of AI talent for the financial services industry. The development of YTP-AIF was led by SMU-X and SMU's School of Computing and Information Systems (SCIS), in collaboration with the Institute of Banking & Finance (IBF) and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS).

Lasting up to 13 weeks, it kicks off with a two-week masterclass bootcamp, followed by course and project work during term time, experiential learning, and internship placements for students who meet the specific criteria. Open to all eligible Year 2 to 4 university students in Singapore, the YTP-AIF initiative is designed as a structured pathway that connects formal education and extended industry projects, exposing undergraduates to real-world industry requirements as they become AI-proficient professionals in financial institutions.

Partners in the YTP-AIF initiative are Amazon Web Services and Bloomberg, with over 20 participating financial institutions, including JPMorgan Chase, DBS and Prudential.



In this pilot edition, prerequisites have been relaxed to accommodate and embrace a mix of backgrounds, to bring together students of varying technical and business skills levels so they can work on projects together, and complement and learn from one another. The course is led by Senior Lecturer Randall E. Duran from SCIS and Emmaline Lim from SMU-X.

"What will distinguish a graduate in an AI-enabled world is not how much they know about the technology, but what they know to do with it — and what they can see it cannot do," said Prof Shankararaman. "Fluency can be taught quickly. Judgement, creativity and a real understanding of the people and societies one serves take longer. That enduring mission remains the true purpose of a university education."

### **About Singapore Management University (SMU)**

Established in 2000, Singapore Management University (SMU) is recognised for its high-impact, multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance, and for its interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning. Home to over 13,000 students across six schools and two colleges, SMU offers bachelors, masters and PhD programmes across Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems, Integrative Studies, Law and Social Sciences, as well as executive development and continuing education programmes. SMU graduates are consistently ranked among the most employable in Singapore, and command one of the highest mean starting salaries. Through its city campus, SMU enjoys strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community in Singapore and beyond.

[www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

## **Appendix**

### **List of Courses**

#### **School of Computing and Information Systems**

- SE201 — AI-Driven Software Engineering — Arne Jonni Suppe
- IS4001 — Smart Building Analytics — Sachin Gupta
- IS4002 — Financial Services AI Immersion Program — Randall E. Duran
- CS467 — Open-Source Software Systems — Christoph Treude
- CS447 — IT Audit and Data Protection — Chris Poskitt
- CS448 — Digital Forensics — Chris Poskitt

#### **Yong Pung How School of Law**

- LAW4091 — The Economics of Corporate, Finance and Business Law — Florian Gramper
- LAW4092 — Law of Emerging Technologies: Cybersecurity, Cryptocurrency and Artificial Intelligence — Nicholas Seng
- LAW4089 — Commercial Remedies in Litigation and Arbitration — Tay Yong Seng
- LAW4094 — Civil Litigation: Pre-trial Practice — Lin Chunlong
- COR-LAW2649 — The Future of the Singapore Legal Profession: Wellbeing and Sustainability of the Profession — Lau Kwan Ho

#### **School of Accountancy**

- ACCT439 — Agentic AI for Accounting — He Jianzhong

#### **Lee Kong Chian School of Business**

- MGMT389 — Strategic Management Work-Study Elective — Whitney Zhang Wei

#### **School of Social Sciences**

- POSC328 — Ethnic and National Identity Politics — Jacob Ricks
- PSYC114 — Psychology of Identity and Personal Narrative — Davelle Lee Jing Yi

#### **College of Integrative Studies**

- COR3305 — Ethics and Society for the Social Sciences — Brandon Yip
- COR2261 — A Good Enough Ancestor — Ijlal Naqvi



- Choreographing the City-State: Dance and Multiculturalism in Singapore — Darlene Machell de Leon Espeña

**Note:** *Choreographing the City-State* is slated to begin in Term 2 of AY2026/27. This list reflects new courses confirmed at the time of publication; further courses may be introduced in subsequent terms as the University's curriculum renewal continues.