

SS5427: SPECIAL TOPICS IN APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Special Topics in Applied Sociology

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

5427

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course provides an advanced exploration of selected topics in applied sociology, with an emphasis on the critical analysis of contemporary social issues, particularly in the context of Hong Kong. Through engagement with scholarly literature, empirical research, and sociological debates, students will strengthen their ability to apply theoretical insights to real-world challenges. The course also offers an opportunity to explore areas of sociological inquiry that extend or complement the core curriculum.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Evaluate current concepts, approaches, theories, and areas of study pertinent to the special topics in the discipline of applied sociology;	30	x	x	x
2	Identify special issues within the special topics in question; and	30	x	x	x
3	Critically analyze most current issues and problems related to the special topics in question.	40	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	LTA1: Lecture	The course will be delivered through instructor-led lectures supported by selected readings. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings in advance to facilitate informed discussion and critical engagement during sessions. Where appropriate, guest lecturers with subject-matter expertise will contribute to the course by delivering lectures on specialized topics.	1, 2, 3	

2	LTA2: Class Discussion	Students will actively participate in class discussions and activities designed to deepen their understanding of the subject matter. Engagement includes posing thoughtful questions, responding to peers, and contributing to critical dialogue throughout each session.	1, 2, 3	
3	LTA3: Group Project	Students will work in small groups to undertake a research project designed by the course leader. Each group will produce a research paper of approximately 2,500 words and present their findings in a formal group presentation. Peer assessment will be incorporated as part of the evaluation of the presentations.	1, 2, 3	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	AT1: Class Assessments - Students will participate in in-class activities and discussions. They are also required to complete and submit individual worksheets, which will be used to assess their participation and understanding of the course material. This assessment task is designed to evaluate their learning outcomes.	1, 2, 3	30	Allow AI to (1) conduct proof reading; (2) generate initial ideas; (3) conduct preliminary analyses.	Yes

2	AT2: Quiz - Students will take a quiz during the sixth or seventh lecture. This quiz will assess their understanding of the theories, knowledge, and material covered so far, as well as their ability to apply what they have learned effectively.	1, 2, 3	30	This is a closed-book quiz consisting of multiple-choice and narrative questions. The use of computers, mobile devices, and the internet is not permitted. The use of AI tools is also prohibited.	No
3	AT3: Group Research Paper - In small groups, students will conduct a research project on a selected topic in applied sociology, with a focus on the Hong Kong context. Each group will submit a research paper of approximately 2,500 words, excluding references, demonstrating both theoretical insight and practical application. The project will culminate in a group presentation, which will also be assessed through peer evaluation.	1, 2, 3	20	Allow AI to (1) conduct proof reading; (2) generate initial ideas; (3) conduct preliminary analyses.	Yes

4	AT4: Group Research Presentation - Each group will present their research project, with all members participating. Presentations will be held during Lectures 11 and 12, with each group allocated up to 12 minutes (timing to be confirmed). Peers will assess the presentations of other groups to support learning and reflection.	1, 2, 3	20	Allow AI to (1) conduct proof reading; (2) generate initial ideas; (3) conduct preliminary analyses.	Yes
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

AT1: Class Assessments

Criterion

The ability to participate actively in class activities and discussions, and to complete individual worksheets that demonstrate understanding of the course material, will be assessed. These tasks are intended to evaluate students' learning outcomes. Consistent attendance and respectful collaboration are also expected.

Excellent

High (A+, A, A-)

Good

Significant (B+, B, B-)

Fair

Moderate (C+, C, C-)

Marginal

Basic (D)

Failure

Unsatisfactory (F)

Assessment Task

AT2: Quiz

Criterion

The ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of key theories and concepts covered in the course will be assessed, along with the capacity to apply this knowledge critically and accurately in response to the quiz questions. Marks will be awarded for clarity of argument, depth of analysis, and appropriate use of course materials.

Excellent

High (A+, A, A-)

Good

Significant (B+, B, B-)

Fair

Moderate (C+, C, C-)

Marginal

Basic (D)

Failure

Unsatisfactory (F)

Assessment Task

AT3: Group Research Paper

Criterion

Evaluation will be based on the clarity and relevance of the research question, the application of appropriate sociological theories, the quality of data collection and analysis, the depth of critical insight into the Hong Kong context, the coherence and structure of the written report, and the effectiveness of the group presentation. Peer evaluation will also contribute to the overall assessment.

Excellent

High (A+, A, A-)

Good

Significant (B+, B, B-)

Fair

Moderate (C+, C, C-)

Marginal

Basic (D)

Failure

Unsatisfactory (F)

Assessment Task

AT4: Group Research Presentation

Criterion

Assessment will be based on the clarity and organization of the presentation, the ability to communicate key findings effectively, appropriate use of sociological concepts, engagement with the audience, and equal participation among group members. Peer evaluation will also inform the final grade.

Excellent

High (A+, A, A-)

Good

Significant (B+, B, B-)

Fair

Moderate (C+, C, C-)

Marginal

Basic (D)

Failure

Unsatisfactory (F)

Part III Other Information

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Macionis, J.J. (2008). Social Problems. New Jersey: Pearson
2	Feagin, Joe R., David V. Baker, and Clairece B. Feagin. (2006). Social Problems: A Critical Power-conflict Perspective. Boston, MA: Pearson.
3	Karger, Howard Jacob, James Midgley, Peter Kindle, and C. Brene Brown. (2007) Controversial Issues in Social Policy. Boston, MA: Pearson.
4	Wallace, Ruth A., and Alison Wolf. (2006). Contemporary Sociological Theory: Expanding the Classical Tradition. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Ballantine, Jeanne H. (2001). The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
2	Clinard Marshall B., and Robert F. Meier. (2008). The Sociology of Deviant Behavior. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
3	Eichler, Barbara A., Ahmed S. Khan, John Morello. (2008). Technology and Society. Boston, MA: Pearson.
4	Gallagher, Bernard J., III. (2002). The Sociology of Mental Illness. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
5	Hodson, Randy, and Teresa A. Sullivan. (2002). The Social Organization of Work. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
6	Judd, Denis R., and Todd Swanstrom, (2006). City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America. New York: Longman.
7	McAuley, John, Joanne Duberley and Phil Johnson. (2007). Organization Theory: Challenges and Perspectives. New York: Prentice Hall.
8	Newman, David M., and Liz Grauerholz. (2002). Sociology of Families. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.
9	Weitz, Rose. (2004). The Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care: A Critical Approach. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.