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HONG KONG CULTURE

I.   COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course examines the symbolic and cultural meanings embedded in the city of Hong Kong and deciphers the process of cultural continuity and change from historical perspective. It aims to sensitize students to a critical understanding of Hong Kong culture in various domains of social life.

II.   INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to
- Explain a few salient facets of Hong Kong culture and identity from historical perspective;
- Analyze culture in terms of the values, meanings, discourses and ideologies underpinning various social spheres;
- Formulate an informed interpretation of Hong Kong culture.

III.   CONTENT

The course consists of two major thematic clusters and one special topic:
   i)   Culture and identity from historical perspective
   ii)   Space, community and cityscape

- "Culture and identity" looks at the historical formation of Hong Kong culture through the local/ national/ global nexus. It considers the roles of popular culture (market), the state and civil society in shaping our local culture since the 1960s. It explores the construction of identity in different domains of social life from colonial times to the post-colonial era.

- "Space, community and cityscape" extends the discussion of culture and identity into the arena of urban space and development, exploring the issues of memory and heritage, public versus private space, globalism and localism, community and development, as well as home and housing inequalities.

- (Special Topic) "Popular Culture" addresses issues relating to cultural production, popular tastes and audience reception, while echoing some of the issues relating to culture and identity.

IV.   MODES OF LEARNING/ASSESSMENT

Short Assignment	10%
Seminar Presentation	10%
Seminar Participation	10% (including attendance and participation)
Discussion Sessions	5%
Essay	25%
Final Exam	40%

※ Seminars: Each student will do one group presentation. Attendance in the seminars is required.
※ A short assignment, *on an individual basis*, is due on **Oct 7 (Tue), 11:59pm**. (See section VI)
※ An essay, *on an individual basis*, is due on **Dec 20 (Sat), 11:59pm**. Choose from among the 8 seminar questions (Q1-Q8 only) and write an essay of 2,000-3,000 words in English or in Chinese. References should be included.
※ The final exam will be in the form of essays.

V.   SCHEDULE FOR LECTURES AND SEMINARS

Wk	*Tuesday*	*Thursday*
1	[02/09] Introduction	[04/09] Culture & Identity (historical focus)
2	[09/09] Culture & Identity (historical focus)	[11/09] The Concept of Culture
3	[16/09] Culture & Identity (historical focus)	[18/09] Culture & Identity (historical focus)
4	[23/09] *Discussion*	[25/09] Culture & Identity (historical focus)
5	[30/09] Culture & Identity (historical focus)	[02/10] Culture, Identity & Space (hybridity)
6	[07/10] {holiday}	[09/10] Space & Community
7	[14/10] Space & Community	[16/10] Space & Community
8	[21/10] *SEMINAR (1)*	[23/10] *SEMINAR (2)*
9	[28/10] *SEMINAR (3)*	[30/10] *SEMINAR (4)*
10	[04/11] Space & Community	[06/11] Space & Community
11	[11/11] Space & Community	[13/11] *Discussion (Popular Culture)*
12	[18/11] *SEMINAR (5)*	[20/11] *SEMINAR (6)*
13	[25/11] *SEMINAR (7)*	[27/11] *SEMINAR (8)*

VI.   SHORT ASSIGNMENT

Write an essay of 500-800 words, in English or in Chinese, on ONE of the following two questions with CLOSE reference to the required reading. (You are advised to focus your discussion primarily on the reading.) The purpose is to give you some preliminary training regarding the method, approach as well as language used in cultural/discourse analysis. [Due date: October 7, 11:59pm]

Question (A)
"The formation of Hong Kong identity is a process of hegemonic construction." Discuss this statement with reference to the right of abode example.

Reading {also reading for seminar 1}:
Ku, Agnes S. (2001b). "Hegemonic Construction, Negotiation and Displacement – Struggle over Right of Abode in Hong Kong." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4 (3): 259-27.

Question (B)
"The nation is a cultural and political construction." Discuss this statement with reference to the following reading.

Reading {also reading for seminar 3}:
盧思騁 (1997)，"民族主義與殖民統治---國粹派的民族觀念系統" 載羅永生（編） (1997)：【誰的城市？】。香港：牛津大學，頁 39-67。

VII.   DISCUSSION SESSIONS, SEMINAR QUESTIONS AND READINGS

[23/09]   <u>Discussion Session</u> (Hong Kong ethos)
Identify specific idioms or icons that you think most represent the Hong Kong ethos at the present time and analyze their symbolic meanings. How far do these meanings reflect some larger ideological discourses? (*Please prepare two different examples in writing, in just a couple of lines, and submit them by <u>Sep 20/ Sat, 11:59pm</u>.)

<u>Readings</u>
吳俊雄 (2002):「尋找香港本土意識」

[13/11]   <u>Discussion Session</u> (Popular culture) (more details later)

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

[21/10]   <u>Q1 [Culture & Identity] – Narrating Hong Kong</u>
Analyze the cultural frameworks and discourses used to narrate modern Hong Kong and discuss how they shed light on the representation of Hong Kong identity during the 1960s-1990s.

<u>Required Readings</u>
Ku (2018), "Identity as Politics" {excerpts} (a historical overview)
Turner & Ngan (1995), *Hong Kong Sixties*, pp. xvi, 13-34, 80-83 (the 1960s & 70s)
「80 年代有咩好？!」in *Being HK* 2022, pp252-269 (primary source; recalling the 1980s)
Ku (2001), "Hegemonic Construction" (a case study on identity politics in the 1990s)

<u>Recommended</u>
Shum (2022), "Seeing the Bigger Picture." (pp.13-27) (the HK City Hall Ensemble)

[Advice]
● Identify the salient frameworks and illustrate with examples. Examine how they have shaped Hong Kong identity and reflect on some issues or tensions arising out of them.
● Consider continuity and change in the1960s-70s, transitional years & early post-1997 era.

[23/10]   <u>Q2 [Culture & Identity] – Remembering (Forgetting) our Past</u>
How have histories and collective memories been interpreted and constructed to tell of Hong Kong's past?

<u>Required Readings</u>
Fok (2023) "Removing a colonial anachronism" (historical background esp. after the 1960s)
Leung (2009) "Fates of European Heritage" (3 examples of colonial heritage)
Ku (2010), "Making Heritage in Hong Kong" (case: Central Police Station compound)
Sham (2017), "Hong Kong as a Port City"

<u>Recommended</u>
Weedon (2019) "Collective memory" (theory)

[Advice]
● Examine the approaches, rationales and frameworks used to selectively remember (or forget), narrate and represent the past and think about their relations as well as implications.

[28/10] **Q3 [Culture & Identity] – Representing "Chineseness"**
Examine, based on the readings, the divergent discourses of Chinese nationalism whereby Hong Kong has been related to mainland China over the years.

Required Readings
盧思騁 (1997):「民族主義與殖民統治」，載羅永生(編)
李祖喬 (2011):「香港文化的邊緣」，載彭麗君(編)
Zhang et al. (2018), "Politics of Memories" (comparing the museums in Macau & HK*)
Ho et al. 2023. "Customary and customized" (nation-building at the HK Palace Museum)

[Advice]
● Pay attention to the differences and dynamics between the different discourses. Consider also continuity and change before and after 1997.
● *Focus on HK but you may also discuss Macau briefly to shed a comparative light on HK.

[30/10] **Q4 [Culture & Identity] – Rethinking Hybridity**
How far does "hybridity" offer a useful framework to anchor our understanding of Hong Kong culture?

Required Readings
Wong and Chan (2017) "… Bilingualism in HK's Linguistic Landscape" (signage)
Padua (2007). "Designing an Identity … Post-traditional Landscape" (architecture)
Chan (2019). "Tea cafés" (food culture)
陳冠中 (2007)：【我這一代香港人】，頁 50-73

[Advice]
● Explore some common and different themes of duality highlighted in the articles; "tradition vs. modernity" being one example, among others.
● Reflect on some conceptual issues relating to hybridity as addressed in the articles.

[18/11] **Q5 [Space] – Cityscape**
Examine some distinctive spatial features of Hong Kong as a cosmopolitan city and discuss how socio-cultural and spatial developments have shaped Hong Kong's cityscape since the 1980s.

Required Readings
Healey (2002), "On Creating the 'City' as a Collective Resource." (concepts)
Wang & Pan. (2025), "Wardian case" (shopping malls; 1980s)
Raco and Gilliam (2011), "Geographies of abstraction" (case: West Kowloon Cultural District)
Li 2018. "Terminating Architecture" (case: Element)

Recommended
Abbas (1997), *Culture and Politics of Disappearance*, ch.4

[Advice]
● Healey's article provides a clear exposition of the idea of city image.
● Think about Hong Kong both locally and globally.
● Try to relate the readings to one another to make the discussion coherent.

[20/11] <u>**Q6 [Space] – Place, Heritage and Community**</u>

What makes places? Analyze the dynamics in the processes of making and un-making places with reference to some specific examples in Hong Kong.

<u>Required Readings</u>
Gieryn (2000), "A Space for Place in Sociology"
Siu (2015), "Everyday life under modernist planning" (case: Wan Chai)
谷淑美、徐匡慈 (2009)：「一場新社區運動帶來的啓迪」(case: Lee Tung Street, Wan Chai)
Lau and Chow (2019). "The Right to Landscape" (case: State Theatre, North Point)
Ng (2018). "Sustainable Community Building" (case: Blue House cluster, Wan Chai)

[Advice]
● Gieryn's article provides a good overview on the notion of place.
● Think about the role of culture in place-making. (Consider how cultural resources are used and how discourse and space shape each other in generating cultural resources etc.)

[25/11] <u>**Q7 [Space] – Public Spaces**</u>

Discuss how public spaces have been regulated, negotiated and/ or transformed through cultural and spatial practices in our society.

<u>Required Readings</u>
Chan (2023), "Government-driven commodification" (case: Kwun Tong Promenade)
Ku (2016), "Making Cultures" (extracts) (cases: campaigns for Star Ferry & Queen's piers)
Law (2002), "Defying disappearance." (cosmopolitan public space; Central; migrant workers)
Villani and Talamini (2021), "Pedestrianised Streets" (everyday spaces)

<u>Recommended</u> (optional)
Qian (2020), "Geographies of Public Space" (concepts)

[Advice]
● Qian's article offers different theoretical readings of the notion of public space.
● Consider how public spaces have been defined and re-defined, and how their uses might be negotiated by different people through discourses and various activities.

[27/11] <u>**Q8 [Space] – Home & Housing**</u>

"Home is a cultural construction that reinforces social inequalities." Discuss this statement in the context of Hong Kong.

<u>Required Readings</u>
Chan, Kam Wah (2000). "Prosperity of Inequality"
La Grange and Pretorius (2016). "State-led Gentrification in Hong Kong."
Choi et al. (2019). "Luxury Housing"
黎婉薇 (1996)：「大都會計劃的背後」

[Advice]
● Analyze how "home" has been culturally constructed in society.
● Delineate the social/ housing inequalities and explain in what ways the cultural construction of "home" reinforces (or simply reflects) such inequalities.

VIII. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA & GRADING POLICY

Scores for the assessed activities as well as feedback will be communicated via Canvas. Students who have questions may consult the instructor within one week after the release of the scores.

Grade	Grade Descriptor	Elaboration
A	Outstanding/ Excellent	• demonstrates a profound understanding of course materials • explains concepts & ideas effectively • illustrates the concepts with excellent examples or cases • shows depth and originality
B	Very Good/ Good	• demonstrates a very good/ good understanding of course materials • explains concepts & ideas clearly • illustrates the concepts with good examples or cases
C	Satisfactory	• demonstrates an adequate grasp of course materials • explains concepts & ideas adequately • illustrates the concepts with relevant examples or cases
D	Marginal Pass	• demonstrates a weak grasp of course materials • explains concepts & ideas poorly
F	Fail	• fails to adequately understand course materials • fails to fulfill a significant portion of course requirements

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy that requires you to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Please refer to Academic Registry for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

AI Policy

The use of generative AI to assist your learning is permitted under the conditions that proper acknowledgement is provided, and the use does not replace your own work.

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