

MPhil & PhD in Asian Urbanisms

A Uniquely Interdisciplinary Approach
to the Study of Asian Cities



SMU

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY

POSTGRADUATE



COLLEGE OF
INTEGRATIVE STUDIES



Message from the Programme Director

Our postgraduate programmes in Asian Urbanisms offer a blend of taught core and elective courses, followed by a sustained period of independent study, which culminates in a dissertation. Students will be primarily supervised by faculty from the College of Integrative Studies but have the option to be co-supervised by faculty from SMU's other Schools as well. In this vein, we offer a uniquely interdisciplinary approach to advancing the study of Asian cities. That is, an approach that starts from the urban studies paradigm, but which reaches out into other disciplinary fields as well.

Our graduates will comprise a new breed of urban scholars who are trained to develop empirical insights and theoretical perspectives that speak from Asia. Whilst our PhD graduates will be trained to fill either academic roles, or those that speak to the policy and research-related domains, our MPhil graduates will be equipped with the skills needed to make an impact as urban professionals working in research, policy or consulting-oriented domains that span the public, private and people sectors.

Whether you are interested in studying the effects of changing food consumption practices on sustainability in Singapore, the economics of ride-hailing apps in Bangkok, the effects of sea-level rise on Jakarta, or how the state competes with other political structures to plan smart cities in China, our students will have access to world-class faculty that boast a wide range of research interests in, and expertise on, Asian cities.



Professor Orlando WOODS

Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Programmes)

Programme Director, MPhil and PhD in Asian Urbanisms

Lee Kong Chian Fellow

The College of Integrative Studies offers two full-time postgraduate research programmes: an MPhil and a PhD in Asian Urbanisms. As Asia continues to urbanise at pace, these programmes are designed to meet the scholarly need for new understandings of Asian cities.


Distinctive Features


Interdisciplinary & Integrative

We offer a uniquely interdisciplinary approach to the study of Asian cities; one that starts from the urban studies paradigm, but which reaches out into cognate disciplines. Students will be equipped with the knowledge and ability to tackle the most complex urban problems.


This new paradigm of study is designed to actively and purposively go beyond the traditional urban studies paradigm and focus – both theoretically and empirically – on the uniqueness of Asian cities. This is what sets our programmes apart from other postgraduate offerings.


Through a combination of taught courses and independent research, students are exposed to ideas emerging from various disciplines that span:


 Humanities & Social Sciences

 Business & Management

 Economics

 Climate Science

 Public Policy

 Information Systems/
Computer Science

Study Asia, From the Heart of Asia

As the only university located in the centre of Singapore, itself located in the heart of one of the most dynamic regions in the world, SMU is uniquely positioned to offer students the opportunity to study urbanising Asia.

World-Class Faculty

Taught by world-class scholars working on some of the most urgent problems facing Asian cities, our interdisciplinary MPhil and PhD programmes in Asian Urbanisms offer students unrivalled immersion into the theoretical debates and empirical insights that are shaping Asia's future. Primarily supervised by faculty members from the College of Integrative Studies who are committed to building an understanding of the pasts, presents and futures of Asian cities, students will have the chance to tap into SMU's vibrant intellectual community and secure co-supervision from faculty in other Schools, thus maximising their chances of securing employment in academia, research, consulting, or government.



Lily KONG

SMU President
Lee Kong Chian Chair
Professor of Social Sciences

Research Areas:

Inter-communal Relations |
Cultural Industries/Creative Cities
| Smart Cities | Urban Heritage
& Conservation



LIM Sun Sun

Professor of Communications
and Technology

Research Areas:

Digital Transformations &
Workforce Resilience | Public
Understanding of Smart City
Technologies | Digital Literacies



Orlando WOODS

Professor of Geography
Associate Dean (Research and
Postgraduate Programmes)
Lee Kong Chian Fellow

Research Areas:

Smart Cities | Critical
Infrastructure Studies |
Superdiversity & Multiculturalism



Winston CHOW

Professor of
Urban Climate
Lee Kong Chian Fellow

Research Areas:

Urban Climate Risks in
Asian Cities | Climate Change
Adaptation & Mitigation |
Sustainable Tourism & Climate
Change



Fiona WILLIAMSON

Associate Professor of
Environmental History
Associate Dean
(Undergraduate Education)
Lee Kong Chian Fellow

Research Areas:

Environmental History |
Climate History & Urbanism |
Colonial Meteorology



Terry VAN GEVELT

Associate Professor of
Urban Sustainability

Research Areas:

Climate Change | Urban
Resilience | Risk Perceptions
& Behavioural Change



Aidan WONG

Assistant Professor of Urban
Studies (Education)
Deputy Director, Wee Kim Wee
Centre

Research Areas:

Circular Economy & Urban
Waste Management | Informal
Economies & Labour | Urban
Citizenship



Jonathan CHASE

Assistant Professor of Computer
Science

Research Areas:

Urban Computing & Smart Cities
| Public Safety & Security |
Digital Transformation through AI

MPhil in Asian Urbanisms

Programme Structure

Year	Curriculum	
1	Core Courses⁺ (4 Course Units)	Elective Courses⁺ (4 Course Units)
	Any 4 from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Studies: Theory and Method Cities in Asia: Planning, Policy and Praxis Principles of Sustainability Studying Cities: Research Methods Introduction to Interdisciplinary Research Graduate Seminar with Invited Industry Partners 	Any 4 from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative Urbanisms Urban Sustainability Urban Technologies/Geographic Information Systems Social Life of the City Urban Economics & Policy Urban & Regional Economics Independent Study Urban-related courses offered by Visiting Fellows
	Ongoing: develop thesis proposal	
2	Thesis and Oral Defence (12 Course Units)	
	Term 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and defend thesis proposal Conduct research 	Term 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research Prepare and submit thesis Conduct defence for thesis

Students will typically focus on coursework in the first year, followed by thesis research in the second year. The minimum duration of the programme is two years and the maximum duration is three years.

PhD in Asian Urbanisms

Programme Structure

Year	Curriculum	
1 and 2	Core Courses⁺ (6 Course Units)	Elective Courses⁺ (6 Course Units)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Studies: Theory and Method Cities in Asia: Planning, Policy and Praxis Principles of Sustainability Studying Cities: Research Methods Introduction to Interdisciplinary Research Graduate Seminar with Invited Industry Partners 	Any 6 from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative Urbanisms Urban Sustainability Urban Technologies/Geographic Information Systems Social Life of the City Urban Economics & Policy Urban & Regional Economics Independent Study Urban-related courses offered by Visiting Fellows
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissertation Proposal Qualifying Exam 	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissertation Research 	
4	Dissertation (28 Course Units) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research Complete and submit dissertation Complete dissertation defence 	

* The Graduate Research Professional Development (GRPD) programme (1 Course Unit) is compulsory.

The minimum duration of the programme is three years. Most students, however, are expected to take about four years to complete the programme. The maximum duration of the programme is five years.

+ The courses offered vary each term.

Financial Assistance Schemes

SMU awards three types of scholarships and fellowships on a competitive basis. We assess applicants for different award schemes either at the time of admission based on qualification and suitability for these schemes or during their MPhil/PhD journey based on their outstanding academic performance.



SMU Research Scholarship

The scholarship covers registration and subsidised tuition fees. This scheme also provides successful recipients with monthly living stipends*. The scholarship is renewed yearly, conditioned on good academic performance. The scholarship for the PhD is tenable for up to four years, while the scholarship for the MPhil may be awarded for a maximum of two years. Beyond the scholarship duration, students who have been on the scholarship may receive continued support through research and teaching assistantships or industry grants.

SMU Presidential Doctoral Fellowship

The SMU Presidential Doctoral Fellowship* is awarded to existing PhD students who have outstanding academic performance. The Fellowship is a one-year award.

SMU Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship

The SMU Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship* is awarded to existing PhD students who have shown exemplary pursuit of research that crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries. This Fellowship is also a one-year award.

SMU Incentive Package for Interdisciplinary PhD Programmes

SMU will provide support for purchase of research-related items in broad categories. SMU strongly encourages interdisciplinary PhD students to go for an overseas exchange in their 4th year. SMU's Incentive Package comprises travel support and a discretionary research fund.

* The stipend rates are published on the SMU PhD website and are subject to change.

Admission & Application

Admission Requirements

MPhil in Asian Urbanisms	PhD in Asian Urbanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bachelor's degree in a related discipline (such as, but by no means limited to, urban studies, architecture, urban planning or urban geography), from a reputable undergraduate programme with excellent academic performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bachelor's and Master's degree, at least one of the two in a related discipline (such as, but by no means limited to urban studies, architecture, urban planning or urban geography), from a reputable undergraduate programme with excellent academic performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Good GRE resultsGood English Proficiency Test (TOEFL or IELTS) scoresStatement of Purpose, up to 1500 wordsResearch Proposal, up to 2500 wordsCurriculum VitaeAt least two Referral/ Recommendation letters	

Application Information

The MPhil in Asian Urbanisms and PhD in Asian Urbanisms are full-time programmes. The University's application window is listed as follows:

Intake	Opening Date for Application	Closing Date for Application
August	1 August (of prior year)	31 December (of prior year)

Details of the application procedure are available on the website.



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