

United College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
General Education Course
GEUC 2212B PUBLIC AFFAIRS IN ACTION: PARTICIPATION AND REFLECTION
1st Term, 2025/26

Course Instructor: Professor Annie TAM
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Class Time and Venue: Thursday evenings (6:30 – 9:30 p.m.); 18 Sep; 25 Sep; 20 Nov 2025 at Room 104, Tsang Shiu Tim Bldg
Plus Compulsory Service-Learning activities up to required hours outside classroom between mid-September and November 2025
Leave Request: **<https://cloud.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk/webform/view.php?id=13710159>**
Teaching Assistant: To be confirmed

Course Overview:

The course aims to cultivate students' sense of citizenship and leadership. The primary goal of the course is to develop students' knowledge, attitudes, and abilities to participate in public affairs. The course will focus on social issues, using topical case studies to stimulate students' interest in and discussion on public affairs. In addition to classroom learning and interaction, the course will arrange service learning for students to participate in service activities with government agencies, public institutions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Such service learning will enable students to have first-hand experience of how government and NGOs operate, and students should be able to learn and grow from such experience. This experience will also help students understand the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG #11 which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

This course, in alignment with the United College motto of "Ming De Xin Min 明德新民," emphasises social responsibility and citizenship among students. It is designed to raise awareness among students about civic issues both within and outside of Hong Kong, equipping them with the skills and capabilities to critically analyse social problems and intelligently form their own opinions.

This course is designed to provide a systematic and organised way in which civic education can be effectively implemented. A dual track approach will be adopted: students will acquire a range of basic concepts and theories in the classroom; and students will also learn from service-learning and experience sharing. Such approach will enable students to critically apply the concepts that they have learnt in the classroom to real life situations.

In addition, this course will equip students with the skills to develop innovative, human-centered solutions to complex public affairs challenges, with reference to AI realisation and data science. It will foster a deep understanding of global sustainability principles and their application to the local society. By engaging in service-learning projects in collaboration with local communities, NGOs and social enterprises, students may come up with practical and impactful solutions to social problems. By integrating sustainability literacy and the UN SDGs into the curriculum, the course promotes a mindset focused on social responsibility and social equity related to public affairs.

This course will furnish students with the following capacities and skills:

1. Throughout the course, students are expected to master basic concepts in policy analysis and be able to apply them to analyse real-world problems. More specifically, students are expected to develop their insights about the interaction of government and other different actors in a society, and the governance of government and non-government actors.
2. By taking this course, students are expected to learn about the practical problems faced by Hong Kong, the Mainland and other parts of the world. Students will be encouraged to consider and observe how, and how far, the different actors can help to tackle and resolve these problems.
3. This course aims to foster students to become responsible citizens. It will nurture students' generic skills in articulating and communicating complicated ideas and foster their ability in analysing policy issues systematically and logically. The aim is to empower students to arrive at innovative and impactful solutions, having regard to modern technologies (such as AI) and data science. The course will adopt multi formats: classroom learning, case studies, peer interaction, service learning, presentation of projects, experience sharing and self-reflection.

Students will achieve the following desirable learning outcomes of the College General Education Programme:

1. Describe connections and integrate knowledge across fields
2. Understand the meaning of service-learning and reflect on the experience learnt through different types of community service
3. Foster comprehensive awareness in the UN SDGs
4. Develop leadership skills, and be able to contribute effectively in teamwork
5. Identify and apply theories/ technologies/ data/ strategies to address social problems to achieve SGD #11

Grade Descriptors:

P	All learning outcomes/assessment criteria have been met. The work demonstrates most or all the following characteristics in related to those expected at the given level of study within the discipline: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Adequate to good understanding and exploration2. No significant inaccuracies, misunderstandings or errors3. The specifications for the assessment task, including word limit/time limit where appropriate, have been adhered to4. Appropriate contextualisation, including relevant theory/ literature / artefacts / performance5. Adequate self-evaluation, with proper records6. Participate in service-learning activities up to required hours7. Positive attitude towards the course and service
F	One or more key learning outcome/assessment criterion has/have not been met. The work fails to meet the requirements in relation to those expected at the given level of study within the discipline, exemplified by any of the followings: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Poor understanding and exploration of ideas2. Some significant inaccuracies, misunderstandings or errors

	3. Insufficient attention paid to some of the assessment criteria and some significant aberrations from the specifications for the assessment task 4. No evidence of analysis, synthesis, reflection and critical appraisal 5. Fail to complete the required classroom activities, including group presentations 6. Fail to complete the required service hours for service-learning activities
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Course Schedule and Arrangements:

Week One: Policy Studies: A Conceptual Framework: Government, Social Needs, Interaction, Context and Process

18 September 2025

This Lecture will introduce concepts, theories and analytical frameworks of policy making. It will cover Actors (government and people in the society), Reality (changing social needs), Dynamics (process, interaction and politics) and Context (demographic situation; culture, tradition and value; crisis and disaster; and international trend etc.). There will be many case studies based on real life social issues.

Week Two: Making Change through Innovation and Technology: Theory and Practice

25 September 2025

This Lecture will provide a general overview of how change in policy and society is possible as the two interact and co-evolve. New opportunities of social and policy change made possible by innovation and new technologies will also be discussed. Both theory and practice, including case studies and interactive discussions, will be covered. Guest speaker(s) may be invited.

Week Three – Week Six: Service Learning: From Theory to Practice

- The focus will be on Pre-service Preparation and Briefing; Service-Learning Activities; and Consultations with Lecturer. (Dates to be confirmed)

Week Seven: Group Presentation and Discussion in Class: Experience Sharing and Peer Learning

20 November 2025

Each group of students will make presentation on their service learning project to the class. Each group will engage fellow students in discussions.

Language:

English

Assessment:

Class Attendance and Group presentation:

Students are required to attend all the lectures, including pre-service briefing and post-service presentation and service-learning activities. If students are unable to attend due to special circumstances, students should submit leave requests at or before 3pm on the lecture date and at least one day in advance for any service-learning activity. Students should provide detailed information regarding their absence and submit the necessary supporting documents along with their leave application via WebForm:

<https://cloud.itsc.cuhk.edu.hk/webform/view.php?id=13710159>

If you fail to attend all lectures and service-learning activities, you might fail the course.

Self-Reflection Report:

At the end of the course, each student will submit a 500-word (in English or Chinese) self-reflection report. In the report, the student is expected to reflect on his/ her experience of the course: on what he/she has learnt from the course, inside and outside the classroom, especially from the service-learning activities; and on the role he/she may play in contributing to making our society and the world a better one. The performance of students will not be judged on their opinions. Rather, students will be assessed on their

ability to reflect on their course experience and how they have enjoyed the course and what they have harvested from it.

Submission Deadline: 30 November 2025

Feedback for Evaluation:

1. Interaction and communication with Lecturer and students;
2. Participation in classes and experiential activities;
3. Group presentations, and engagement of fellow students;
4. Self-reflection reports; and
5. Course and teaching evaluation form.

Suggested Readings

- Johnson, W. C. (2004). *Public administration: Partnerships in public service* (3rd ed.). Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland Press.
- Hughes, O. (2012). *Public Management & Administration: An Introduction* (4th ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 48-49.
- Leo F. Goodstadt (2018). *A City Mismanaged: Hong Kong's Struggle for Survival*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Leo F. Goodstadt (2013), *Poverty in the Midst of Affluence: how Hong Kong mismanaged its prosperity*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- LAU Siu-kai (1982), *Society and Politics in Hong Kong*.
- LAU Siu-kai (2014), *The Unique Democratic Path of Hong Kong (in Chinese)*.
- Cheung, Anthony BL (2009), *Governance in Hong Kong: In Search of Identity, Legitimacy and Trust*.
- Clara Fong and Diana Roy (2024), *What are the UN Sustainable Development Goals?*
- HKSAR Government. (2021). *The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*. Retrieved from:
https://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/filemanager/content/en/files/basiclawtext/basiclaw_full_text.pdf
- Office of the Chief Executive. (2024). *The 2024 Policy Address*.
- HKSAR Government. (2024). *The 2024-25 Budget*.
- Labour and Welfare Bureau. (2017). *Elderly Services Programme Plan*. Retrieved from:
https://www.elderlycommission.gov.hk/en/download/library/ESPP_Final_Report_Eng.pdf
- Social Welfare Advisory Committee. (2011). *Report on Long-term Social Welfare Planning in Hong Kong*. Retrieved from:
https://www.lwb.gov.hk/files/download/committees/swac/SWAC_consultation_report_Eng.pdf
- The State Council of the People's Republic of China. (2022). *Address at the meeting celebrating the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland and the inaugural ceremony of the sixth-term government of HKSAR*. Retrieved from:
http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202207/02/content_WS62bf8de6c6d02e533532d147.html
- Home Affairs Bureau. (2022). *Youth Development Blueprint*.
- World Health Organization (2022). *World Mental Health Report: Transforming Mental Health for All*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/world-mental-health-report>

*More reading materials will be provided in the lectures.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The use of AI tools:

Use only with prior permission

Use of some AI tools is allowed

Students may use some AI tools in some learning activities and/or assessments on the following conditions:

1. The AI tools to be used are restricted to those specified by your teachers. Please clarify with your teachers for details on which tools are allowed and which are not.
2. The specified AI tools will only be permitted for certain types of learning activities and/or assessments. Again, please check with your teachers for specifics.
3. Collaboration with AI tools is allowed for specific purposes or tasks as designated by your teachers. Please confirm these details with them.
4. The input contributed by the AI tools are properly acknowledged and cited; and
5. The input together with the prompts used to elicit the AI responses should be highlighted or included as appendices wherever appropriate.

In case of queries, students should seek advice from the course teacher or refer to the guideline for Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessments of the University: [A-guide-for-students_use-of-AI-tools.pdf](#).

Acknowledging support from AI tools

Students are required to acknowledge all functional uses of an AI tool and cite it when they paraphrase, quote, or incorporate into their own work any content (whether it is text, image, data, or other format) that was created by it.

- i. An example of acknowledgement

'I acknowledge the use of (name of AI tool – e.g. ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/>) to (specify the support, e.g. plan my essay, generate some ideas for the content, ask for examples of data collection instruments, get the dates of historical events, etc.).

- ii. An example of citation

OpenAI. (2023). *ChatGPT* (Mar 20 version). <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

(Students are reminded that due to the rapid developments of AI tools, some citation formats may be updated regularly.)

- iii. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool in their work

"The following text was generated by an AI tool/language model (ChatGPT):"

[Insert the text generated by ChatGPT here.]

- iv. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool and the prompts that were used to elicit the text from the AI tool

"[The prompt], as generated by an AI language model (ChatGPT):"

[Insert the text generated by ChatGPT in response to the prompt.]

Students are reminded to learn and use the AI tools responsibly and ethically and be aware of the limitations.

Improper/unauthorised use of AI tools in learning activities and assessments will constitute acts of academic dishonesty which will be handled in accordance with the University's *Procedures for Handling Cases of Academic Dishonesty*.

Students are reminded to clarify with the course teacher and obtain permission if necessary when in doubt.