

**United College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong**  
**General Education Course**  
**GEUC 2102A & B PUBLIC AFFAIRS: PARTICIPATION AND REFLECTION**  
**2nd Term, 2021/22**

Course Instructor: Mr Ivan CHOY 蔡子強 ([ivanchoy@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:ivanchoy@cuhk.edu.hk))  
Office: Room 310, T C Cheng Building, United College  
Tel. No. : 3943 7529  
Class Time: Class A: Tuesday evenings (7:00 – 9:30 p.m.); 25 Jan; 8 Feb; 12 Apr 2022  
UCC3, T C Cheng Building, United College  
Class B: Tuesday evenings (7:00 – 9:30 p.m.); 25 Jan; 8 Feb; 19 Apr 2022  
UCC5, T C Cheng Building, United College  
Plus a compulsory experiential learning activity outside classroom

**Course Overview:**

This course aims to develop among the students three major abilities and tendencies, which may set them down the path of good citizenship in various aspects of society. The three major abilities and tendencies include (1) to raise their awareness towards social issues; (2) to nurture their ability to identify and analyse the pivotal aspects of the issues; (3) and most importantly to encourage the students to form their own opinions and suggestions. In order to develop the three kinds of potential as mentioned above, the course is issue-oriented, with controversial issues cutting across the teaching, discussion, observation and reflection, rather than simply dwelling on theoretical debate.

As public affairs have turned increasingly complex, there is no longer a single overarching way in response to public demands and concerns. In such regard, there will be focus on two major dimensions in the course. (1) The first dimension concerns the role of government in public affairs and the challenges it face. (2) The second dimension concerns civil society in general and social movement in particular. There is no question that in recent years civil society and social movements are some of the most popular concepts and controversial phenomena in Hong Kong, Mainland China and elsewhere. On the one hand, the course will discuss the political, social and economic significance of civil society, juxtaposed with the potential pitfalls inherent in the working of government agencies. On the other hand, the rationale, organisation and impact of (new) social movements will be introduced.

Apart from classroom teaching and theoretical discussion, there will be guest speakers and field trips so that the students have opportunities to directly exchange ideas and experiences with government officials, community leaders and social activists.

(Remark: *This Course is not for students major in Government and Public Administration*)

**Learning Objectives and Outcomes:**

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

- 1.) Throughout the course the students are expected to master the basic concepts in political analysis and be able to apply them to analyse real-world problems. More specifically, the students are expected to develop some basic knowledge as to the different features of civil society, social movement and governance.
- 2.) By taking this course, the students are expected to be familiar with a wide range of practical problems besting the ordinary citizens in Hong Kong and the Mainland China. The students are encouraged to

consider and observe the ways in which civil society can help to tackle and resolve these problems, and whether too much hope is placed on civil society.

- 3.) In recent years the places like Hong Kong, Mainland China and Asia in general has been marked by the rise of social movements and new social movements. By taking this course, the students are expected to develop the skills to analyse the rationale behind the social movements and their impact on governance. Perhaps more importantly, the students are expected to have the opportunity and ability to reflect on the 'optimal' relationships between government, private corporations and the social activists of a new generation.
- 4.) This course is intended to develop the students into active and considerate citizens. In order to become good citizens, they must master generic skills in terms of articulating and communicating complicated ideas and analytical results effectively in both verbal and written formats. These skills are unlikely to emerge automatically. They have to be deliberately nurtured. In this course, through face-to-face interaction with social participants, and a round of presentation and discussion exercises, the students are offered a well-organised setting where their analytical and communicating skills can burgeon.

#### Grade Descriptors:

<b>P</b>	<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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adequate to good understand and exploration</li> <li>2. No significant inaccuracies, misunderstandings or errors</li> <li>3. The specifications for the assessment task, including word limit/time limit where appropriate, have been adhered to</li> <li>4. The outside classroom activities are well organized, coherent and the standard presentation, including referencing where appropriate, is up to standard</li> <li>5. Appropriate contextualization, including relevant theory / literature / artefacts /performance</li> <li>6. Evidence of quality analysis, synthesis, reflection and critical appraisal</li> </ol>
<b>F</b>	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poor understanding and exploration of ideas</li> <li>2. Some significant inaccuracies, misunderstandings or errors</li> <li>3. Not participating required classroom activities, including group presentations</li> <li>4. Not participating required outside classroom activities, including service projects or visit to organizations</li> <li>5. No evidence of analysis, synthesis, reflection and critical appraisal</li> <li>6. Insufficient attention paid to some of the assessment criteria and some significant aberrations from the specifications for the assessment task</li> </ol>

#### Course Schedule and Arrangements:

##### **Week One. Civil Society and the State: A Conceptual Framework**

25 January

This lecture introduces the concepts of the state and civil society. It studies the challenges that the contemporary governments encounter in doing public governance from a state-society interaction perspective.

##### **Week Two. Development of Civil Society and Social Movement in Hong Kong**

8 February

This topic aims at providing a general picture of the development of civil society, traditional and new social movements in Hong Kong.

## **Guest speaker's session / fieldtrip (Total 4 Hours) (9 February to 31 March 2022)**

List of organizations for fieldtrip in 2021-22 Semester Two (to be confirmed)

Categories included:

1. Politics/ Think tank
2. New media
3. Urbanism/ Urban politics
4. Art and Culture
5. Green
6. Community

### **Week Three. Group presentation and discussion**

12 April (Class A); 19 April (Class B)

Civil society and (new) social movements are the major concepts cutting through this course. In line with this focus, 6 to 7 students have to form a project group. Each group is required to choose an interviewee from the list for field trip and analyze. For example, the students may examine the significance of 香港獨立媒體, analyze its shortfalls and suggest the possible ways-out. Each group has to present its findings in class.

#### **Language:**

Chinese /Cantonese (materials in both Chinese and English)

#### **Assessment:**

##### **Class attendance and discussion:**

Students are expected to attend both lectures. It is mandatory to attend the visit and presentation, otherwise, they would not be granted a “pass” for this course. They are expected to participate in classroom discussion and exchange ideas with social participants during the field trips and/or guest speaker's sessions.

##### **Group presentation:**

The presentation must meet the basic standards in connection with the course objectives. (1) First, each group of students is expected to set a clear and valid research puzzle; (2) Second, students must demonstrate their ability to grasp the issues under study; (3) Third, students must apply the concepts and theories in a correct manner; (4) Fourth, students are expected to form their own opinions and suggestions, and these opinions and suggestions have to be firmly based on empirical studies. It is important to note that the content of opinions would not affect the grading by itself.

##### **Interview outline:**

Before the field trip, each group is expected to draft an outline for the interview. This outline must include a general introduction of the background of the interviewee, and also a list of questions that the students would ask during the interview.

##### **Self-reflection report:**

At the end of the course, each student has to submit a 500-word (in English) or a 1000-word (in Chinese) self-reflection report. In the report, the student is expected to reflect on the concepts, discourses and discussions that they have come across throughout the course, including in the lectures, guest lectures and class discussions. Having reflected on the teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom, the student is expected to consider the role that he/she may play in contributing to the development and operation of civil society in general and the cause of social movement in particular as a university student, and the manners in which their role can help correcting the social, economic and political problems facing

the local, regional, and global contexts.

Again, it is important to emphasise that the performance of students will not be judged on their opinions as relation to their suggested role in civil society and/or social movement. Rather, the students will be assessed on their ability to integrate the concepts, discourses and discussions that they have come across in the course into the consideration of their potential role in civil society and/or social movement. The students will be given a pass grade if they are able to identify their potential role in civil society as a university student on the basis of the course content.

#### **Feedback for Evaluation:**

1. Interaction and communication with instructor and students;
2. Participation in classes and visits;
3. Group presentations and sharing;
4. Self-reflection reports; and
5. Course and teaching evaluation form.

#### **Suggested Readings**

1. O'Connell, Brian (2000). "Civil Society: Definitions and Descriptions", *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp.471-478.
2. Carothers, Thomas (1999). "Think Again: Civil Society", *Foreign Policy*, No. 117 (Winter 1999/2000), pp.18-29.
3. Salamon, Lester M. and Anheier, Helmut K. (1998). "Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Nonprofit Sector Cross-Nationally", *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 9, No.3, pp.213-248.
4. Lam, Wai-fung and Perry, James L (2000), "The Role of the Nonprofit Sector in Hong Kong's Development", *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 11, No.4, pp.355-373.
5. Lee, Eliza W.Y. (2005), "Nonprofit Development in Hong Kong: the Case of a Statist-Corporatist Regime", *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 16, No.1, pp.51-68.

#### Optional reading:

1. Ku, Agnes S. and Pun, Ngai (eds.) (2004). *Remaking Citizenship in Hong Kong*, London: Routledge.
2. Shiels, E. (1991). "The virtue of civil society", *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 3-20.
3. Johnston, H. (2011). *States and Social Movements*. Cambridge: Polity, chapter 1: "The State, Protest and Social Movements".
4. Eder, K. (2011). "The 'New Social Movements': Moral Crusades, Political Pressure Groups or Social Movements," in Zirakzadeh, Cyrus Ernesto ed., *Social and Political Movements (Volume 1)*. London: Sage, pp. 343-58.
5. Elin, L. (2003). "The Radicalization of Zeke Spier: How the Internet Contributes to Civic Engagement and New Forms of Social Capital", in McCaughey, M. and Ayers, M. D. (eds.) *Cyberactivism: online activism in theory and practice*. London: Routledge, pp. 97-116.
6. Tarrow, S. (2011). *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 1: "Contentious Politics and Social Movements".
7. 葉蔭聰 (2010) , 《直接行動》 (香港: 進一步多媒體) 。

#### **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.