

Research Topics for NUS-MOE HSSR 2019

Subject: Chinese Language and Literature

Topic No.	Proposed Research Topic	Write-up of Research Topics
C1	Knight-errants in Tang Tales 唐传奇侠客小说研究	Students will be guided to read important works representing the theme of knight-errant and write a research essay to analyse the common patterns and the striking features of these tales.
C2	Singapore and Malaysian Chinese literature	What creative strategies do writers use in their fiction, poetry or prose essays to express their emotional connections to Singapore and Malaysia, where they were born or sojourned, or to which they migrated in the twentieth century? To what extent do their artistic choices reflect the larger social environment of their times?
C3	Why does Singapore Chinese sound different from Mainland and Taiwan Chinese? 为什么新加坡华语听起来不一样?	Have you ever wondered why people living in Singapore are born with the ability to distinguish three Chinese accents spoken in different areas: <i>Hua Yu</i> in Singapore, <i>Pu Tong Hua</i> in China, and <i>Guo Yu</i> in Taiwan? Besides lexical and grammar differences, the most robust factor to distinguish these accents is probably the pronunciation. With the development of technology, it is possible to use computer software to study the phonetic details. This could also be applied to the study of three Chinese accents, and thus achieve a better understanding of the linguistic nature of <i>Hua Yu</i> .

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Subject: Economics

Topic No.	Proposed Research Topic	Write-up of Research Topics
E1.1	Poverty and Income Redistribution in Singapore	While income inequality appears to have risen amongst high-income countries in recent years, Singapore appears to have bucked the trend, with measured income inequality even falling in recent years. Singapore is similarly unique amongst high income countries in tackling the related issue of poverty, in that it does not have an official poverty line. What makes Singapore different in these two policy areas? Are there major differences in measurement and/or policies between Singapore and other high-income countries? Students can uncover the conceptual and practical issues of measuring poverty and income inequality in Singapore, and examine the policies adopted to address these policy areas.
E1.2	The economics of newspapers	The economic model of advertising-plus-subscription based broadsheets has been under attack in the digital age. Advertising revenues have been siphoned away by online platforms such as Google and Facebook. Readership has been affected by the presence of 'free' news sites and the ease of copying news in digital format. How do these developments shape the quantity and quality of news, and what are the impacts on individuals and societies? How can newspapers survive and thrive in the digital age? Should governments become more involved in financing the production or consumption of newspapers? Students will examine the evolving economics of news reporting, generation and dissemination, and deliberate on the proper role of policy.
E2	Financial Technology (Fintech) and its impact on the Singapore's economy	The growth of Financial Technology (Fintech) in recent years have challenged the operations of traditional banking and finance. We seek to study how the emergence of Fintech would affect Singapore's economy by looking at both micro (efficiency, equity) and macro (economic growth, inflation) factors. By further examining how Fintech would provide opportunities and challenges to Singapore's position as a financial hub, students are encouraged to provide plausible policy proposals for the future economy.

E3	The behavioural economics of water conservation	<p>Water is extremely scarce in Singapore. One of the promising avenues in water conservation is through the use of behavioural economics in policy.</p> <p>In ongoing research, we evaluate the effectiveness of different policy measures to encourage water conservation, such as MEWR's Smart Shower Programme, This could involve a comparison of policy measures used in different countries to encourage water conservation, with an emphasis on policy measures involving the use of behavioural economics.</p>
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Subject: Geography

Topic No.	Proposed Research Topic	Write-up of Research Topics
G1	Urban reimagining	<p>Choose an urban place in Singapore and conduct fieldwork to find out how the image of the urban area chosen has been changed and the reasons underpinning such changes. Known as urban reimagining, processes of urban change affect many places and people. Urban reimagining has been done in urban areas around the world for a range of economic, cultural and social reasons, from the rejuvenation of inner city to the promotion of tourism. Urban reimagining often brings about numerous positive and negative benefits. You may find it beneficial to discuss some of the reasons for changing or 'improving' the image of the urban area chosen, the strategies which have been deployed, and the impacts you observed. Observations at the site of study are encouraged.</p>
G2	Gender and Geography	<p>Gender is more than the study of women in Geography. The study of gender roles and relations, gender inequality, and gender politics is of key significance to topics such as tourism, development and population. This topic explores the importance of gender in Geography and the student who selects this topic can choose to conduct research on anyone of the three topics listed above. Possible research questions: How does gender influence the attractiveness of places in tourism and place marketing for tourism? How has gender (in)equality influenced Singapore's population? What are some of the challenges posed to sustainable development as an outcome of the gendered valuation of economic labour vs. care/emotional labour.</p> <p><i>Special requirements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Must have an understanding of gender and how it results in unequal access to resources and opportunities.</i> • <i>Strongly preferred if student is willing to conduct interviews and go on relevant observational field trips in Singapore.</i>

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Subject: History

Topic No.	Proposed Research Topic	Write-up of Research Topics
H1	Family firms and their role/s in economic development in Southeast Asia c.1970s-1990s	This topic allows students to consider the role of family firms in the economic development in Southeast Asia c.1970s-1990s. This may be via case studies of particular firms, an examination of diasporic business communities or even government policies relating to family firms.
H2.1	Cold War as a Military Conflict in Asia	There was nothing Cold about the Cold War in Asia. Military conflicts related to, driven by, or sparked by the Cold War devastated countries and killed millions. Did this mean that the Cold War in Asia, itself, overall, was a connected military conflict? How can we answer that question?
H2.2	The use of military force as an instrument of the United Nations	The interposition of a so called 'peacekeeping force' was not conceived of, nor written into, the United Nations Charter. It was an expedient, developed in response to circumstances. The UN Charter envisaged the use of force to stop and or punish/reverse aggression. But over time 'peacekeeping' came to be widely seen as epitomising the UN and the use of force came to be seen as an indication that it could not function effectively. How can we account for this?
H3.1	History of a local or multinational firm in Singapore	This project seeks to enhance our understanding of the history of business & capitalism in Singapore against the backdrop of the growth of the post-1945 global economy. The investigator should focus on only one local or multinational firm. The proposed study should also be clearly periodised. Apart from examining the firm's decision to establish itself in Singapore, the investigator should further explore the nature of its local operations, its markets, its attitudes toward local regulations and culture, its corporate-labour relations, its ethos & corporate culture, & its relationship, if any, with the state.
H3.2	History of a labour union in Singapore	This project seeks to enhance our understanding of Singaporean labour history in the context of the growth of the post-1945 global economy. The investigator should focus on only one local union that operated during a defined period of Singaporean history. The investigator is free to design the project's focus. Themes that could be examined include industrial relations, mass politics involving labour, gender relations, and the sociocultural history of the labour group.

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Subject: Literature in English

Topic No.	Proposed Research Topic	Write-up of Research Topics
L1.1	Twentieth-Century Literature	Students can explore any significant author, topic or critical issue in Anglophone literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Literary works can be drawn from the modernist period in the early decades of the twentieth century or from the postmodern period after WW2. Students may also work on contemporary writing that has emerged in our current era of globalisation. Possible authors for study include Conrad, Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Fitzgerald, Beckett, Pinter, Coetzee, Rushdie, Ishiguro and Toni Morrison.
L1.2	The Fiction of J. M. Coetzee	M. Coetzee's writing is intensely political as it is profoundly ethical and captivatingly aesthetic. Students are welcome to explore any aspect of Coetzee's writing and can draw on works in any phase of his <i>oeuvre</i> (early, middle or late; South African, "Australian", or global). Possible novels for study include <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i> , <i>Foe</i> , <i>Disgrace</i> , <i>Elizabeth Costello</i> and <i>Slow Man</i> .

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Subject: Malay Language and Literature

Topic No.	Proposed Research Topic	Write-up of Research Topics
M1.1	Malay Writers: Social Thought and Contributions	<p>The focus on this research is to document, analyse and evaluate the role and contribution of leading Malay writers (In Singapore/Malaysia/Brunei) with the aim of highlighting the significance of their ideas in the context of dominant ideas in Malay discourses. Critical analysis of their ideas will be the main emphasis for the research.</p> <p>The dominant ideas found in literature include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Modernisation issues vs. Tradition (b) Social Issues and Problems of the community (c) Educational and cultural advocacy (d) Gender issues and economic advancement <p><i>Special Requirement: Students need to be proficient in both Malay/Bahasa Indonesia and English.</i></p>
M1.2	Leading Figures in Malay Language Studies and Research	<p>The focus of this research is to document, analyse and evaluate the role and contribution of leading figures in Malay Language Studies and Research (in Singapore/Malaysia/Brunei) with the aim of highlighting the significance of their ideas in the context of language planning and development in contemporary Malay society. Critical analysis of their ideas will be the main emphasis for the research.</p> <p><i>Special Requirement: Students need to be proficient in both Malay/Bahasa Indonesia and English.</i></p>