

HUMA 3630 (Spring 2026)
COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

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Course Description

"Community isn't a property, nor is it a territory to be separated and defended against those who do not belong to it. Rather, it is a void, a debt, a gift to the other that also reminds us of our constitutive alterity with respect to ourselves". (Esposito, Roberto. *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community*. Translated by Timothy C. Campbell. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2009.)

"We miss community because we miss security, a quality crucial to a happy life, but one which the world we inhabit is ever less able to offer and ever more reluctant to promise." (Zygmunt Bauman *Community*, 2001)

"On each side of the political spectrum today we see a fear of social disintegration and a call for a revival of community." (Anthony Giddens *Beyond Left and Right*, 1994)

This course examines theories and case studies of cultural identities and the formation of human communities. Issues on kinship, locality, social stratification, ethnicity, multiculturalism, nationalism, and heritage in the expression of cultural identities and sense of belonging will be explored. Students are required to engage in community services for "enhancing learning of related issues."

Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe multi-disciplinary theories and concepts, as well as folk meanings, of community in the constantly changing world and Hong Kong society
2. Analyze how people create, maintain, and use cultural identities in various communal contexts, cultivating sense of belonging and membership while affirming communal boundaries
3. Apply ethnographic research method in research projects to appreciate local agency of community building and revitalization
4. Define and explain problems of cross-cultural misunderstanding and exclusion

Course Requirements

Requirements consist of attendance at lectures and tutorials and completing the required readings and team presentation; joining various fieldtrip and submitting a fieldtrip worksheet (by partnership of 5-6 teammates); conducting a team-work research community outreach project (by partnership of 5-6 teammates).

Reading Materials

Text-books for Lecture Classes:

Gerard Delanty. *Community*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. (only Selected Chapters)

Supplementary reading materials will be put on the course website <https://canvas.ust.hk/>.

Films/videos will be shown during class and tutorial sessions.

Suggested Readings:

Roberto Esposito, *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community*, trans. Timothy Campbell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), (only Selected Chapters)

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 2006. (only Selected Chapters)

Mazzarella, William. *The Mana of Mass Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. (Only the Introduction Chapter)

Assessment and Grading

In-class participation	100
Written Response Essay	100
Community Engagement Outreach Project (5-6-person Teamwork)	
Project Proposal	100
Final Product (Multimodal Output)	100
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Total	400

Fieldtrips

Various field trips will be arranged. Students are required to attend more than half of them.

Fieldtrip Option 1: Bishop Hill in Sham Shui Po

- Hong Kong Heritage: Community building in the Ex Water Reservoir
- Community of elderly residents doing leisure activities on Bishop Hill

Fieldtrip Option 2: Heritage and Community Revitalization in Sham Shui Po, Kowloon

- Community development in a multicultural environment
- Restaurants and cultural centres as community promoters

Community Engagement Research Project

5-6 students form a team to undertake a research based community outreach project relevant to the subject matter of the course, completing a project proposal, and giving a presentation to introduce the project and discuss its feasibility.

Collecting data, carrying out the project and delivering a multimodal project output (choose between a video, a photographic series, or a written essay)

Project proposal due date: February 20th 2026

Grading Rubrics

Project Proposal grading:

Topic, phenomena and objective	10 marks
Research questions	10 marks
Arrangement of Community engagement	10 marks
Data sources and data collecting methods	10 marks
References Sources	10 marks

Total 50 marks

Project Final Output Due Date: May 15th

Project Final Output Grading:

Introduction	
• Topic, phenomena and objective	10 marks
• Research questions	10 marks
• Community engagement arrangement	20 marks
• Data sources and data collecting methods	20 marks
Data Collection and Analysis	70 marks
Application of course materials	30 marks
Final Output Overall	40 marks
Total	200 marks

Lecture Topics and Readings

(A) Community and Cultural Identity

1. Course Introduction --The Meaning of Community

Examining the Concept of Community

Reading : Roberto Esposito, *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), (only Selected Chapters)

2. The Concepts of Culture and Identity

Explore the concepts of culture and identity in anthropological literature.

Reading:

Garrick Bailey and James Peoples, "Chapter 2: Culture," Introduction to Cultural Anthropology. (Belmont, CA.: West/Wadsworth), pp. 15-25.

3. A Classic Example of Community and Cultural Identity: the model of Lineage community in South China

The Case of the Tang Lineage in New Territories, Hong Kong.

Reading:

Jack M. Potter. 1970. "Land and Lineage in Traditional China." In Family and Kinship in Chinese Society, ed. Maurice Freedman. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

4. Historical and Political Discourses of Community

Some of the historical expression of community in Western thought and politics are discussed

Reading:

Gerard Delanty. Community. Chapter 1: "Community as an idea: loss and recovery."

5. Sociological and Anthropological Studies of Community

Discuss the idea of community in classical sociology and anthropology, especially around debates on the decline of community with the coming of modernity.

Reading:

Gerard Delanty. Community. Chapter 2: "Community and society: myths of modernity" and Chapter 3: "Urban community: Locality and belonging."

(B) Community and Marginality

6. Gentrification and Urban Redevelopment

Reading: Qian Xingyu and Yin Chengzhi (2018). "From Redevelopment To Gentrification In Hong Kong: A Case Study of Kwun Tong Town Center Project." *Open house international*, 2018-09-01, Vol.43 (3), p.83-93.

7. Foreign Domestic Helpers' Marginality

Reading:
Ivan Nasution (2015) *Urban Appropriation: Creativity in Marginalization.* *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences* 184 (2015): 4-12.

8. Imagined Communities

Reading:
Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 2006.
(only Selected Chapters)

(C) Community Revitalization

9. Intentional Communities

Community as Ideals and Instruments

The Hippies' Communes in the USA

Reading:
Flashing on the sixties [videorecording] : a tribal document / Flashback Productions ; produced by Lisa Law and Anton Walpole ; directed by Lisa Law. Santa Monica, CA : Pyramid Film & Video, c1990.

Rebuilding Tsoi Yuen Village and the Development of Hong Kong's New Territories

Reading:
Moving tale [videorecording] / programme director, Grace Lee; ATV News & Public Affairs production, c2011.

10. Heritage and Community Revitalization

Reading:
Selina Ching Chan (2018). "Heritagizing the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong." In Christina Maags and Marina Svensson, eds., *Chinese Heritage in the Making: Experiences, Negotiations and Contestations*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

11. Mass Media as Community Building

Reading:
Mazzarella, William. *The Mana of Mass Society*.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.(Only the Introduction Chapter)

Tutorial Readings for presentation and Discussion Participation

5 students form a tutorial team for presentation and discussion participation.

Tutorial Grading:

Presentation of reading material (Question based)	50 marks
Participation in class discussion (Answering presenters' questions)	50 marks
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Total	100 marks

Tutorial readings

0. Community Creation

Reading: Roberto Esposito *"Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community"*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2009" (Introduction Chapter)

1. Indian Migrant Communities in Hong Kong

Reading: Caroline Plüss (2005). "Constructing Globalized Ethnicity: Migrants from India in Hong Kong". *International Sociology* 20 (2): 201–224.

2. South Asian Muslims in Hong Kong

Reading: Kareen N. Tonsing (2014) Acculturation and Adaptation of First- and Second-Generation South Asians in Hong Kong." *International Journal of Social Welfare* 2014: 23: 410–420.

3. Hong Kongers' Diaspora and the Impacts on Home Community

Reading: James L. Watson (2004). "Virtual Kinship, Real Estate, and Diaspora Formation: The Man Lineage Revisited." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 63, No. 4.

4. Urban Renewal and Gentrification

Reading: Mee Kam Ng (2018). "Sustainable community building in the face of state-led gentrification: the story of the Blue House cluster in Hong Kong." *Town planning review*, 2018-09-01, Vol.89 (5), p.495-512.

5. The Role of Media in the shaping of Community

Reading: Mazzarella, William. *The Mana of Mass Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.(Only the Introduction Chapter).

6. China's Urbanism in the Making

Reading: Nguyen, Thao, "Governing through Shequ/Community: The Shanghai Example." *International Journal of China Studies*; Kuala Lumpur Vol. 4, Iss. 2, (Aug 2013): 213-VI.

7. Urbanization and the Making of Urban Villages

Reading: Johnathan Bach (2010). "'They Come in Peasants and Leave as Citizens': Urban Village and the Making of Shenzhen." *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 25, Issue 3, pp. 421–458.

8. Community and Cultural Identity—New Application

Reading: Kaman Ka Man Tsang, Kin Wai Michael Siu (2016). "The 3Cs model of sustainable cultural and creative cluster_ The case of Hong Kong." *City, Culture and Society* 7 (2016) 209e219.