

Lingnan University
Social Sciences Program
Fall 2008

Course Title	:	Understanding Social and Economic Indicators
Course Code	:	SSC115/GEB215
Recommended Study Year	:	1
No. of Credits/ Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Lecture-Tutorial
Category in Major Prog.	:	Core course (4 year curriculum)
Prerequisite(s)	:	None

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Brief Course Description

The course starts with providing students with the knowledge about the nature, meanings, measurements, and limitations as well of major social and economic indicators which have widely been used internationally for measuring and comparing the socioeconomic development of societies. It is followed by applying these indicators in assessing the social and economic development of Hong Kong.

Aims

This course aims at understanding the social and economic indicators that we read and hear about everyday in Hong Kong. Students are expected to use the knowledge in analyzing the social and economic development of Hong Kong in an international context. This course not only could provide students with knowledge about the socioeconomic development of Hong Kong, but also could be served as a kind of civil education.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of the course, students are expected to:

1. understand the nature, meanings, measurements, and limitations as well of major social and economic indicators
2. learn facts about the social and economic environment of Hong Kong

3. know the social and economic development of Hong Kong in an international context
4. be aware of the present social and economic situations and future development and issues of Hong Kong

Indicative Contents

Part A Social Indicators

1. Introduction
 - a. The nature and functions of social and economic indicators
 - b. Major global social and economic indicators: Sources of data
 - 1) International organizations
 - 2) Census and Vital Statistics
 - 3) Governmental reports
 - 4) Social and economic research reports
2. Population dynamics and ageing
 - a. Sex ratio and population pyramid
 - b. Mortality, fertility and migration rates
 - c. Regional distribution of population
 - d. Annual population growth rate
 - e. Old age index and dependency ratio

Discussion topic 1: Identify one population problem in Hong Kong and discuss its social and economic implications.

3. Indicators of health status
 - a. Major causes of death
 - b. Infant and child mortality rates
 - c. Maternal mortality rate
 - d. Life expectancy at birth

Discussion topic 2: Are most Hong Kong people in good health condition?

4. Quality of life and life satisfaction
 - a. Measures of quality of life and well-being
 - b. Measures of Human Development
 - c. Subjective well-being
 - d. Domains of Life Satisfaction

Discussion topic 3: Are you satisfied with your present quality of life? Will you be happy in your mid-age and old age?

Part B Economic Indicators

5. Measures of poverty and inequality
 - a. The Lorenz Curve
 - b. Gini index
 - c. Poverty defined, the causes, and the official poverty line
 - d. The government transfer program

Discussion topic 4: What are the causes of income inequality in Hong Kong and what can we do about it?

6. Measures of macroeconomic indicators
 - a. Gross domestic product
 - b. Economic growth
 - c. Cost of living and inflation
 - d. Unemployment

Discussion topic 5: How do you compare Hong Kong's economic growth with other countries/regions?

7. Measures of open economy
 - a. Import and export
 - b. Trade deficit
 - c. Exchange rate
 - d. Purchasing power parity

Discussion topic 6: What are the major challenges that Hong Kong face as an international financial center?

Teaching Method

Lectures combine with tutorials. Lectures provide students with knowledge and the uses of major social and economic indicators. In tutorials, students will be divided

into groups to make presentations and to discuss the applicability and limitations of selected popular social and economic indicators in Hong Kong.

Lecture Dates

Introduction & Organization	September 1	Dr. Law and Dr. Zhang
Lecture 1	September 8	Dr. Law
Lecture 2	September 22	Dr. Law
Lecture 3	September 29	Dr. Law
Lecture 4	October 6	Dr. Law
Lecture 5	October 13	Dr. Law
Lecture 6	October 20	Dr. Law
Lecture 7	October 27	Dr. Zhang
Lecture 8	November 3	Dr. Zhang
Lecture 9	November 10	Dr. Zhang
Lecture 10	November 17	Dr. Zhang
Lecture 11	November 24	Dr. Zhang
Lecture 12	December 1	Dr. Zhang

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Our measurement consists of two parts: continuous assessment and the final exam.

Continuous assessment is made up of the following components:

- (1) Tutorial presentation (25%) - this will be in the form of giving a short presentation on a designated topic. Students will be divided at random into 6 groups, 1, 2, and 3 responsible for topics in sociology, 4, 5, and 6 for economics. Instructors have the right to give different marks to the different members of the same presentation group by judging their different performance.
- (2) Evaluation and comment (15%) - each group will also be responsible for commenting on another group's presentation. In order to make sure that we have interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary communication among our students, we are going to assign students, for example, from groups 4 & 5 to make evaluation of the presentations made by groups 1 & 2. Again, instructors have the right to give different marks to the different members of the same comment group by judging their different performance.

Specifically, we follow the table below to assign students to different presentation topics and commenting groups:

presentation groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
commenting groups	4	5	6	1	2	3

Tutorial Arrangements

All tutorials are compulsory and attendance will be taken. We are very serious with your attendance, without which neither presentation nor evaluation could be made properly or smoothly. No-shows without good reason will result in the reduction of your grades (e.g. A becomes B). If you are sick please provide an original copy of the doctor's notice.

Tutorial and presentation dates for each topic are as follows:

1st meeting	September 18	Choosing presentation topics, Dr. Law
Topic 1	October 2	Dr Law
Topic 2	October 9	Dr Law
Topic 3	October 16	Dr Law
Q & A	October 23	Dr Law
2nd meeting	October 30	Choosing presentation topics, Dr. Zhang
Topic 4	November 13	Dr Zhang
Topic 5	November 20	Dr Zhang
Topic 6	November 27	Dr Zhang
Q & A	December 4	Dr Zhang

Remember that you have to spend quite some time to look for the data source, to download the data, and to treat the data in the presentable ways. You have to keep this table in good order and always remember to go to tutorials on the days listed.

Assessment

Continuous assessment	40%
Final Examination	60% (by University schedule)

Recommended Readings

Lau, S. K., M. K. Lee, P. S. Wan, and S. L. Wong (eds.). Various years. *Indicators of Social Development: Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Mankiw, G., (2006) *Principles of Macroeconomics*, 4th ed., S-W College Pub.

Supplementary Readings

Census and Statistics Department. Various years. *Census and Bi-census Report*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Census and Statistics Department. Various years. *Annual Digest of Statistics*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Census and Statistics Department. Various years. *Annual Report on the Consumer Price Index*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Census and Statistics Department. Various months. *Hong Kong Merchandise Trade Index Numbers*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Census and Statistics Department. Biennial. *Hong Kong Social and Economic Trends*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Case, Karl E. and Ray C. Fair. 2007. *Principles of Macroeconomics*, Eighth Edition, Pearson Prentice Hall

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Various years. *Annual Report*. OECD Publication.

The United Nations Department of Social and Economics Affairs. 2002. *Global Challenge and Global Opportunity: Trends in Sustainable Development*. N.Y.: United Nations.

The United Nations Statistics Division. 1989. *Handbook of Social Indicators*. N.Y.: United Nations.

The United Nations Statistics Division. 2006. *The World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics*. N.Y.: United Nations.

The World Bank. Various years. *World Development Report*. The World Bank.

World Economic Forum. Various years. *Global Competitiveness Report*. WEF Publication.

World Health Organization. Various years. *The World Health Report*. WHO Publication..