

Minor in Urban Studies
Jointly Offered By
Department of Geography (FASS)
And
Department of Real Estate (SDE)

It is estimated that the world's urban population recently surpassed 50% of the total population. Asia remains less than 50% urbanized but are one of the most rapidly urbanizing regions on Earth. International linkages between urban management professionals of various kinds are also increasing and Singapore is seen as a leader in many aspects of urban management, policy and planning. For these and other reasons, opportunities for urban professionals are likely to continue to increase.

Students will be offered the chance to develop expertise and skills in urban studies that would be an asset not only for those already majoring in an urban-related area, but also for the many others from various faculties who have an interest in urban-related careers. Students will get the opportunity to make explicit to employers their special strengths in this area. Students will be provided with a good balance of breadth of knowledge, practical skills, and theoretical depth in a range of urban-related fields. The minor is not conceived as an introduction to any major in urban studies or such like. Instead, it is to be seen purely as a minor which can enhance the degrees and employability of students taking a wide variety of existing majors. This Minor is open to all students.

To qualify for the Minor in Urban Studies, students will need a minimum of 6 modules (3 or 4 Core Modules, and 3 or 2 Elective Modules respectively) from the lists below. At least 4 modules counted towards the Urban Studies Minor must be taken outside a student's own major department and at least two modules must be from level 3000 or 4000. **All modules are equal to 4 MCs.**

- (a) Students should choose at least three core modules from the list below with at least one of which must be a RE module and another GE module.

Module Code and Title	MC	Pre-requisite	Preclusion	Offered In
RE1180 Urban Land Use and Development	4	-	-	Semester 1
RE1181 Real Estate Finance	4	-	-	Semester 2
GE2204 Cities in Transition	4	-	-	Semester 1
GE3204 Cities and Regions: Planning for Change	4	-	GE3203	Semester 2

- (b) Students have to choose 2 or more elective modules from the list below to give total of 6 or more modules inclusive of the core modules.

2000 Level

Module Code and Title	MC	Pre-requisite	Offered In
AR2223 Theory of Urban Design and Planning	4	-	Semester 2
GE2202 Economy and Space	4	-	Semester 2
GE2224 Geographies of Social Life	4	-	Semester 2
RE2281 Real Estate Asset Market I	4	RE1181	Semester 2
RE2480 Urban and Real Estate Management I	4	RE1180	Semester 2

3000 Level

Module Code and Title	MC	Pre-requisite	Preclusion	Offered In
EC3382 Transport Economics I	4	EC2101/EC2151	EC3210	Semester 2
EC3381 Urban Economics	4	EC2101/EC2151	EC3235	Semester 1
GE3219 Globalization and the Asian Cities	4	-	-	Not Offered
GE3236 Transport and Communications	4	-	GE2203	Semester 1
RE3381 Real Estate Development I	4	RE1180	-	Semester 1
SC3206 Urban Sociology	4	-	-	Semester 2

4000 Level

Module Code and Title	MC	Pre-requisite	Offered In
RE4290 Globalization of Real Estate Markets	4	-	Semester 2
RE4291 Comparative Housing Systems	4	-	Semester 1
RE4292 International Real Estate	4	-	Semester 1

(c) Where overlapping modules exist, the Minor Program will consider double counting of MCs up to a maximum of 4 MCs towards the MC-requirement in the Minor in Urban Studies.

MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

Core Modules

RE1180: Urban Land Use and Development

(Estimated workload: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

This is an introductory module providing students with theories, concepts, and components of the urban built environment. Discussions will cover the urbanization process, development of urban forms and structures, land policy and development constraints, national development and the land use planning process, the role of government in the planning process, the property development process, and the roles and functions of parties involved as well as real estate in urban development.

RE1181: Real Estate Finance

(Estimated workload per week: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

This module provides students with an understanding of key real estate financing issues. Students are expected to develop a knowledge base of real estate financing process, terms, participants, and techniques, and the analytical skills needed in the field of real estate finance. Key topics include financial markets and institutions, significance of real estate finance, sources of real estate finance, mortgage financing, real estate finance and capital markets, mathematics of real estate finance, and financial performance studies of traded real estate investment and development companies.

GE2204: Cities in Transition

(Estimated workload: 2-hour lectures weekly; 2-hour discussion groups fortnightly; and 8 hours of project work)

This module is primarily concerned with the changing roles of cities in an age of globalisation. The first part of the module examines cities as part of urban networks at the national, regional and international levels, giving particular focus to the implications arising from the rise of megacities and global cities. The second half of the module investigates the challenges facing cities on the ground: issues of the revitalisation and re-imaging of city cores, the changing office and retail landscapes, and the impact of telecommunications on the location of urban activities and peoples' mobility are examined.

GE3204: Cities and Regions: Planning for Change

(Estimated workload: 2-hour lectures weekly; 2-hour discussion groups fortnightly; and 8 hours of project work)

This module provides an introduction to the basic ideas and context of both urban and regional planning. Key planning systems, policy agendas and perspectives are critically assessed. Examples are drawn mainly from rapidly changing regions in Asia. Challenges addressed include infrastructure, land policy, housing, poverty, governance dilemmas and environmental problems. Planning in regions and cities is viewed in light of wider social, political and economic trends as well as the geographical context. Planning is placed into perspective relative to other forces that influence development patterns. The module is aimed at students wanting to understand planning and its place in society.

Elective Modules

Level-2000

AR2223: Theory of Urban Design and Planning

(Estimated workload per week: 3 contact hours for lectures, tutorials and site visits, and 7 hours preparatory work for assignments)

This module introduces students to the concepts of urban form, urban function, urban change and how urban spaces are designed through different urban design models. The module will include the study of the urban history and development of Singapore. It will examine the driving force behind urban transformation. Important urban design models will be introduced, including the traditional city, garden city, regional city, functional city, ecological city and information city.

GE2202: Economy and Space

(Estimated workload: 2-hour lectures weekly; 2-hour discussion groups fortnightly; and 8 hours of project work)

This module examines the spatial organisation of the capitalist space-economy in three spheres: production, circulation and consumption. The first part of the module looks at the organisation of production over space. Neoclassical and contemporary location theories of industrial firms will be introduced. The locational and regional impact of corporate growth and reorganisation will be discussed. The second part of the module addresses structural economic issues that impact on the geography of today's global economy. The globalisation of economic activities – a concern to most politicians, economists and business people will be examined. The emphasis is placed on the role of foreign direct investment, international trade and international finance in driving globalisation. The module also looks critically at the emergence of a new geography of flexible production systems and its associated social and institutional features.

GE2224: Geographies of Social Life

(Estimated workload: 2-hour lectures weekly; 2-hour discussion groups fortnightly; and 8 hours of project work)

This module examines contemporary debates in social geography about social issues in a variety of geographic contexts. In particular, the course will emphasize the relationship between social identity and social space, and how different places reflect and shape diverse ways of life. The course is divided into three sections. The first begins with introducing the key themes and debates in social geography about the relationship between society and space. The second examines the role of space and place in relation to the interplay of different social groups (e.g. the disabled, men/women), and in relation to different aspects of daily life (e.g. employment, housing, welfare). Attention will be given to different social issues (e.g. sexism, racism). Finally, the third part of the module situates these identities, and the relationships between them, in different geographical scales/contexts (neighbourhoods, public spaces, global cities).

RE2281: Real Estate Asset Market I

(Estimated workload per week: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

The module provides a knowledge base for the demand for real estate credit and real estate financing environment in the economy. Students will learn a set of tools and concepts to analyze lending and borrowing decisions for specific types of property in both local and international markets. Traditional and innovative forms of property financing as well as the principles and techniques of real estate investment analysis are also examined. Main topics include financing environment, financing techniques, mortgage loan analysis, development financing, and innovations in real estate financing.

RE2480: Urban and Real Estate Management I

(Estimated workload per week: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

This module introduces students to the basic concepts and principles of property and asset management. The various implications of tenure arrangements and relevant legislation on the ownership and management of different types of properties will be discussed. Students will acquire knowledge and skills in formulating management plans and in implementing the management plan through different stages of the holding period. Main topics for discussion include the property management framework, the management plan, facilities management, and corporate strategy and real estate management.

Level-3000

GE3236: Transport and Communications

(Estimated workload: 2-hour lectures weekly; 2-hour discussion groups fortnightly; and 8 hours of project work)

The transport of goods, people and information is analysed using a systems approach, embracing the spatial patterns of demand and supply, transport modes, networks, volume and composition of flows, and political considerations. The module also evaluates the different modes of transport and communications in terms of comparative advantages, coordination and integration, infrastructural support, technological advances, role in economic development and management in the urban, regional and international scales. Students will learn about tools of network and flow analysis, and about analytical techniques associated with planning and management of transport and communications.

EC3382: Transport Economics I

(Estimated workload per week: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

This course builds on basic microeconomic theories and concepts and extends the theory to deal with the idiosyncrasies of the transport sector. For example, the concept of "price" is generalized to include the value of time to the traveller. The demand of transporting freight is explained using the theory of the derived demand for an input, but the impact of modern approaches to management (eg. logistics) is considered. Just as the concept of "price" requires modification, "output" too has many dimensions. In particular, this course will examine ways in which transport firms derive economies of scale when they operate in a network. It covers concepts of price discrimination, social cost benefit analysis and regulation. The course also uses case studies to provide important insights into the economics and management of different parts of the transport sector.

EC3381: Urban Economics

(Estimated workload per week: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

Urban economics employs the tools of intermediate microeconomics to analyse urban land use and activities. These fundamental methods of economics make use of economic models and data with the objective of equipping the student with the ability to analyse various aspects of urban policy. Topics covered in the module include schools of thought in urban economics, location decisions of economic entities, the nature, economic function and origin of cities, land use theories and location patterns, urban transportation, housing location, needs and policy, the role of government, the impact of technology and economic growth and the sustainability of cities. Where appropriate, Singaporean and regional experiences will be incorporated into the lectures.

GE3219: Globalization and the Asian Cities

(Estimated workload: 2-hour lectures weekly; 2-hour discussion groups fortnightly; and 8 hours of project work)

This module examines the relationship between the processes of globalisation and regionalisation, with a specific focus on contemporary development issues in the Asia-Pacific context. The broad aim of the module is to provide students with an understanding of the complex forces driving these seemingly exclusive processes. The first part of the module examines the relationship between economic activity in a global context, political activity at a variety of levels (from the nation-state to the city-state), and knowledge activity within policy networks. The second part of the module describes the array of regionalisation initiatives which are developing in the context of globalisation (from the macro-scale to the micro-scale). The third part of the module addresses two different types of regional initiatives in more detail — the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), and the emergence of what some analysts call the Greater China Economic Space. A key topic running throughout the module is the formation of public policy in a globalising context.

RE3381: Real Estate Development I

(Estimated workload per week: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

This module introduces the basic principles, concepts and stages in real estate development process. Students will acquire knowledge and skills in coordinating the entire development process for different types of property development and redevelopment projects. Discussions will cover a broad range of topics including property development cycle, conception of development project, feasibility study, project financing, project construction, real estate marketing, project completion, management of the completed development and exit strategies.

SC3206: Urban Sociology

(Estimated Workload: 2-hour lectures weekly; 2-hour discussion groups fortnightly; and 8 hours of project work)

This module will look into the various external and internal forces shaping the development of cities and urban ways-of-life. The following themes will be examined: the development and role of cities in Southeast Asia, cities and the political economy of globalization, the social organization of cities, urbanism as a social and cultural concept.

Level-4000

RE4290: Globalisation of Real Estate Markets

(Estimated workload per week: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

The globalization of real estate markets has received increasing attention since the 1990s. This module investigates the classical as well as the contemporary literature in real estate finance and investment, with particular reference to the role of real estate in mixed asset portfolios. Issues in the theoretical and empirical development in real estate investment performance, real estate pricing models, real estate capital structure & mortgage design; and real estate portfolio management in international asset portfolios are examined.

RE4291: Comparative Housing Systems

(Estimated workload per week: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

This module provides students with essential concepts for analysing and evaluating housing systems; at the same time, it will examine the development of housing systems in different countries to draw useful lessons for policies to meet national housing objectives. Key topics include concepts and measurement of housing cost and housing welfare, housing and society/economy, property rights and housing investment, housing delivery system, public policy making and public administration of housing, International housing organizations and aid agencies, and case studies.

RE4292: International Real Estate

(Estimated workload per week: 3 hours lectures and tutorials and 7 hours project and preparatory work)

This module prepares students to meet new challenges and new opportunities in real estate markets across national borders. It is designed to help students prepare for the increasing demand for competence in dealing with international real estate business. The course introduces foreign market assessment, appreciation of the legal, social, economic and political environments of potential markets, and case studies that involve real estate investment and development at international, regional and metropolitan scales.

For further enquiries, please call:

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