



Teaching EU in Singapore

Effects of internationalising political science studies

NEAR EU International Conference (Ljubljana, Slovenia)

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Questions

- What does the process of **internationalisation mean** for the teaching of **political science** and **EU**?
- Does it **produce innovation** or **just difficulties** in terms of teaching methods and curriculum, and are these changing?

My response

- Internationalisation means that we have to **adapt the way** in which we teach.
- Internationalisation **demands innovation** in how we make the materials relevant for the students. This means developing **new teaching methods** while **maintaining a core curriculum**.
- A political science education has two components:
 - **Disciplinary dimension**: the theories, the approaches, the cases, and so on.
 - **Local dimension**: the local experience or the lens through which the lessons from the discipline are filtered.
- Consequences of internationalisation: **need to study how the two dimensions come together** in different countries and universities around the world.

Singapore's Context

- ‘**small island with no natural resources** except a strategic location, Singapore’s survival has always depended on its usefulness to major powers’ (Gopinathan 2007)
- ‘**early recognition of the value of English**...as an economic resource’; this recognition is ‘counterbalanced by the insistence that all students learn a second language, Mandarin, Tamil or Malay’ (Gopinathan 2007)
- ‘Education reform in Singapore is primarily a way of **retooling the productive capacity** of the system’ (Gopinathan 2007)
- To overcome (from the 1990s onwards): ‘the **relative inflexibility of the system**, the **lack of entrepreneurial flair** or **risk aversion** among school leavers, the lack of creative capital due to the overly academic orientation of the curriculum and new questions about the appropriate mix of skills and knowledge required for doing well in the new economy’ (Gopinathan 2007)

Singapore HE System

- There are six local universities in Singapore
 - National University of Singapore (**NUS**)
 - Nanyang Technological University (**NTU**)
 - Singapore Management University (**SMU**)
 - Singapore University of Technology and Design (**SUTD**)
 - Singapore Institute of Technology (**SIT**)
 - SIM Univ. (UniSIM), Singapore Univ. of Social Sciences (**SUSS**)
- Autonomous Universities (AUs)
 - ‘These universities **receive government funding**, but are **autonomous**, which **gives them the flexibility** to strategise, innovate, and differentiate themselves, as they pursue excellence in education, research and service’ (MOE 2017)

Singapore HE Policy

- **‘Thinking Schools, Learning Nation’** (1997)

1. Emphasis on **critical and creative thinking**
2. Use of **information technology** in education
3. National education (**citizenship education**)
4. **Administrative Excellence**

(These reforms **addressed primarily pedagogy** and not the issues concerning structural flexibility and choice)

- **‘Global Schoolhouse’** (2002)

1. To finance an identified group of **‘world-class universities’**: (a) ‘niche centres of excellence’, (b) NUS, NTU and SMU (‘bedrock’ universities), and (c) ‘additional private universities’ (teaching and applied research)
2. To **attract 150k fee-paying int. students** by 2015 to study in SG
3. To **re-model the entire SG education system** so as to inculcate the following attributes: risk-taking, creativity, and entrepreneurialism

(**Series of challenges**: foreign universities – Johns Hopkins closed, Univ. of New South Wales closed, Tisch School of the Arts Asia ended its MA courses, Univ. of Chicago moved its executive education to HK, and the controversy of Yale-NUS college re academic freedom; quality assurance issues; never achieved 150k target)

Singapore HE Policy Effects

- In the mid-2000s: move towards **loosening government regulations** of HEIs
- University Autonomy, Governance and Funding (UAGF) Steering Committee: **recommended corporatisation** of NUS and NTU (like SMU), so they become AUs
- AU status: **universities control remuneration** and the use of block funding
- This led to a **massive internal review** at these HEIs (NTU: tenure review process in 2007)
- **Funding models**: combination of MOE funding and external grants from Research Councils (MOE Tiers 1, 2 and 3; NRF; SSRC)

Singapore: NUS

- **Oldest and largest:** nation-building and flagship university
- Raffles Institute → University of Singapore → NUS (in 1980) when UoS and Nanyang University merged
- A **broad profile:** schools of PP, business, medical (2); SG's national and comprehensive university
- Comparatively **decentralised and least proactive** (primarily known as host of international university alliances → the CREATE complex)
- Leadership style: **subdued and path-dependent**
 - **Comparatively decentralised**, real power resides with faculties and schools
 - Subdued and path-dependent
 - This may be changing as a result of the latest QS rankings in which NTU has overtaken NUS in 2017
- 'We are **a very good university** but have difficulties in identifying real areas of excellence'
- While NUS has benefited from govt. reforms, the notion of controlled, state-orchestrated, competition has **triggered the rise of NTU**

Singapore: NTU

- **Founded in 1991**; but dates back to 1960, originally set up to train the bulk of SG's engineers
- 1980: closed down and was merged with UoS to form NUS
- Heritage: NTU (in its old form) catered to **SG's Chinese population** (marginalised at the time) and this is **reflected in its leadership style**
- Leadership style: **more hierarchical** in comparison to NUS's collegial and British colonial model of faculty discretion
- **Increasingly a broad profile**: in addition to the many engineering and sciences schools, there are also the schools of social sciences, humanities, arts and design, communications, business, and medicine
- NTU's development:
 - **Strong recruitment** (at both top levels & junior faculties, e.g. NAPs)
 - **Strong leadership**: several re-organisational initiatives, policy, and culture → there are many initiatives and overarching long-term goals, but the relationships between them are still being clarified

Political Science

- **NUS**: Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Department of Political Science (est. in 1961)
 - Degree: Bachelors of Arts (Honours) in **Social Sciences**
- **NTU**: School of Social Sciences, Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme (est. in 2013)
 - Degree: Bachelors of Arts (Honours) in **Public Policy and Global Affairs**

Who are the professors?

- CVs of PS/PPGA faculties at NUS and NTU:
 - **More than 90%** of all TT faculty obtained their PhD degrees abroad
 - Outside of Singapore
 - Outside of East Asia
 - Outside of South Asia
 - **Culture of political science** they bring: distinctly North American, European, or Australian

See: www.sgtalentmigration.com

Table1: Importance of Personal Motivations to Work in Singapore

Factor	Mean	Median	Mode (Count)	Obs.
I am a Singaporean	3.44	4	5 (81)	199
Joining partners working in Singapore or region	2.79	3	1 (81)	205
Joining Singaporean partner	2.69	3	1 (80)	186
Raising children	3.31	4	5 (109)	391
Settling in Singapore (PR/naturalization)	2.50	2	1 (147)	375
Traveling and experiencing new cultures	3.10	3	4 (133)	499
Moving closer to parents	3.46	4	5 (118)	366
Able to communicate in English	3.40	4	4 (150)	527

Coding Scheme:
 1: Not important
 2: Slightly important

3: Moderately important
 4: Important
 5: Very important

See: www.sgtalentmigration.com

Table 2: Importance of Professional Motivations to Work in Singapore

Factors	Mean	Median	Mode (Count)	Obs.
Thriving academic job market	3.59	4	4 (190)	560
Prestigious universities	3.45	4	4 (172)	549
International experience	3.28	3	4 (162)	539
Proximity to region of study	3.00	3	1 (125)	458
Remuneration package	3.82	4	4 (230)	570
Better access to research funding	3.84	4	4 (207)	559
Easier to receive work permission (visa)	2.72	3	1 (132)	448
Scholarship bond obligation	2.71	3	1 (75)	186
Area of research is reputable	3.44	4	4 (172)	524
Proximity to research network	2.99	3	4 (122)	499
English is used in work environment.	4.07	4	5 (246)	576

Coding Scheme:
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Who are the students?

- *THE* World University Rankings for **Internationalisation**:
 - NTU: **17th** in the world
 - NUS: **19th** in the world
 - Both reported that **30% to 31%** of their student body are international students
- In Political Science, **mostly Singaporean** students
 - Based on enrolment in my compulsory course at NTU: **2% to 10%** are international students

Who are the students?

- What does this mean?
 - Teaching Singaporean students **primarily educated in Singapore**
 - Students who have **performed very well** throughout their lives in order to secure a place at University
 - Students who will **continue to strive and work very hard** during University (GPA affects starting salary)
 - **Limited exposure to political science** studies and the ways in which arguments are constructed, and how key concepts (power, influence, policy change) are contested ('**Black and White**' vs. '**Grey**')

What does it mean for teaching?

- Finding a **textbook suitable** for an audience less familiar with social scientific arguments
- Finding a **textbook not written** for a North American or European audience
- **Compromises** on textbook need to be made
- Use of **more familiar cases** for the students
 - **I am also** undergoing a **political science education**
- For more **challenging teaching scenarios** (e.g. EU): the need to **create simulations**
 - Simulations allow students to **take on roles** they would not have otherwise

Teaching EU in Singapore

Sessions	Dates	Themes
1	12 January 2017	Introduction: <i>European Union</i>
2	19 January 2017	The origins and development of European integration
3	26 January 2017	The evolving treaty framework and the Court of Justice
4	2 February 2017	The institutions (I): European Council and Council of Ministers
5	9 February 2017	The institutions (II): Commission and Parliament
6	16 February 2017	Policymaking in the European Union
7	23 February 2017	<i>Reading week</i>
<i>Recess</i>	<i>2 March 2017</i>	<i>Please enjoy the week!</i>
8	9 March 2017	EU policies (I): Justice and Home Affairs
9	16 March 2017	EU policies (II): Europe of Knowledge
10	23 March 2017	EU policies (III): External relations
11	30 March 2017	Theories of European integration
12	6 April 2017	Crises and the European Union
13	13 April 2017	<i>The verbal test will take place this week</i>

Teaching EU in Singapore

|How did the EU come about?

The beginnings

HA4014 European Union

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The simulations take place at different periods throughout the history of what we now call the European Union: from the 1950s to the 2010s.

We will play different rounds throughout the semester. Each round will consist of approximately 30-45 minutes each. During each of the rounds, each group may receive additional information from Hsuan, but the goal remains the same: **negotiate the best outcome for your country or institution in treaty or policy form.**

How to play:

- **Within your group, identify your interest in writing.** Do not reveal your interest to other countries or institutions. For the Benelux group: the 'national' interest is the common interest your three countries share; you may have differing national interest that are not revealed to the other members of your group.
- **Develop a strategy for the country and/or institution that you will approach, cooperate, and negotiate.** Identify the topic of discussion and what support you would like from them.

Teaching EU in Singapore

- **Guest lecturers** from Europe: Singaporean students meeting European professors
- **Eurobubble** clips
 - ‘Hunting for a job’
 - ‘Conference part II’
 - ‘Conference part III’
- From Wk3 onwards: **student-led presentations** based on written essays; I provide detailed comments
- **Oral exam** (vs. traditional written exams)
- Nominate students to attend **Model EU** (an excellent learning experience)

Teaching EU in Singapore

Please comment on this faculty member's strengths

1.	The way this faculty member allows students to lead the lecture on a weekly basis is the best feature of her teaching. It encourages strong participation and critical thinking. The faculty member is also very approachable and helps guide the discussion in class when needed. Her choice of assessment is also a great way to test students.
2.	Very detailed in marking our essays and commenting on how to improve our writing and essays. Detailed in planning lessons. She also made the effort to ask guest speakers to come, which is nice of her.
3.	Takes time to encourage questions, and answers them very in depth
4.	She has done a great job in clarifying difficult concepts. I think she has also done a fantastic job in encouraging student to view and approach problems from various different perspectives, thus enabling students to gain a better appreciation of the subject matter.
5.	Critical response and presentations during lessons forces us to internalise the concepts and academic papers we're given as part of the syllabus for this module. Clarifying concepts in simple terms or using analogies help as well
6.	provides opportunities for discussions and takes into consideration students' multiple perspectives.

Thank you!

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