

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	HTM2S04
Subject Title	Ecotourism in the community
Credit Value	3
Level	2
Pre-requisite/ Co-requisite/ Exclusion	<p>Exclusion: HTM2S01 Ecotourism in rural and developing regions</p> <p>Students will be selected by an application and interview process.</p> <p>For some international or mainland China projects, students who speak the local language will be given priority but this is not mandatory.</p> <p>Students should note that this subject is offered in an extended term from Semester 1 to 2 or, Semester 2 to 3.</p>
Objectives	<p>The objectives of this subject are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce to students the concept and practice of service-learning 2. Familiarize students with the concepts and practice of ecotourism 3. Develop students' competence of using ecotourism as a tool for community development and poverty alleviation 4. Enhance students' generic competencies of innovative problem solving, communication and teamwork 5. Nurture students' sense of social awareness, responsibility and engagement
Intended Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Link their service-learning activities and experiences with the academic content of the subject b. Distinguish sustainable ecotourism practices from unethical practices or green washing c. Appreciate and apply ecotourism as a tool for sustainable community development d. Apply the knowledge and skills acquired in university education to deal with the dynamic and complex issues in the service setting e. Work effectively in teams to solve problems encountered in planning and delivering the service f. Communicate effectively with peers and other ecotourism stakeholders

	<p>g. Demonstrate empathy for people in the community with diverse needs and develop a sense of civic responsibility</p> <p>h. Reflect on their role and responsibilities both as a professional and global citizen in their chosen discipline and as a future leader</p>
<p>Subject Synopsis/Indicative Syllabus</p>	<p>The topics in the course syllabus cover three major areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concept and Practice of Service-learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles, concepts and myths of service-learning • Benefits of service-learning to students and the community • Ethical issues in service-learning • Basic concepts and theories of social problems, developments and justice • Social responsibilities of global citizens as intellectuals and professionals • Proper attitudes and behaviours in service delivery • Reflection as a tool for learning 2. Discipline-Specific Concepts, Issues and Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some basic concepts in ecotourism • Ecotourism as a tool for community development and poverty alleviation • Understand stakeholders' perspectives in ecotourism development • Challenges and issues for quality ecotourism and management • Moral and ethical considerations for communication: Cultural sensitivity- minimized negative and maximized positive impacts • Responsible tourists: Code of ethics for ecotourists • Assessment and evaluation of ecotourism resources • Identify, plan and promote ecotourism resources for sustainable community development such as marketing, education, and assessment 3. Project-Specific Concepts, Issues and Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the historical, cultural, economic and socio-political background of the communities • Workshop on story writing, business writing, conducting training, and marketing • Health, safety and other issues relevant to the service project • Moral and ethical concerns specific to the project and beneficiaries

**Teaching/
Learning
Methodology**

The subject can be offered as a 2-semester subject in Semester 1 + 2 and/or Semester 2 + Summer Term.

1. e-Learning Module

The e-learning module is developed and delivered by the Service-Learning and Leadership Office, consisting of readings, exercises and assessments that are designed to introduce students to the basic concept and practice of service-learning.

Students are required to successfully complete and pass the e-learning module within the first few weeks of the semester in which they are taking the subject.

2. Discipline-Specific Seminars and/or Workshops

These seminars and/or workshops are designed and conducted to equip students with the ecotourism knowledge and skills required for planning and conducting the service-learning project.

3. Project-Specific Seminars and/or Workshops

The project-specific seminars and/or workshops are designed to:(a) develop students' understanding of the targeted community, as well as other issues relating to the service-learning project, (b) provide training for students in generic skills in planning and delivering the service project. Experts and speakers from outside the subject-offering department (e.g. Service-Learning and Leadership Office, NGOs) will be invited to contribute to some of these sessions as appropriate. Where possible, a hands-on interactive format will be used.

Students are expected to attend all of the discipline-specific and project-specific seminars and workshops and successfully complete all of the required assignments/learning tasks.

4. Service-learning Projects

The service-learning projects are designed to develop students' generic competencies of innovative problem-solving, teamwork and communication, and enhance students' sense of social awareness, responsibilities and engagement.

Students are required to:

1. research and study materials related to the project site
2. attend and participate in all site inspection activities, which may be out of the class time and during the weekend
3. implement the project in Semester 1 + 2 or Semester 2 +3 (duration: about 40 hours or 5-7 days depending on the destination/location/community needs)
4. serve target communities in Hong Kong or in a developing destination

	<p>5. provide their knowledge and skills to support the local community to develop/enhance sustainable ecotourism such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assess/review the potential ecotourism resources for ecotourism development and maintenance b. Meet, interview, and interact with local community members for cultural and customs exchange and documentation c. Design promotional materials and branding for the project site and community d. Design and host events and activities to raise awareness of local cultures e. Provide a comprehensive ecotourism marketing plan for the project site f. Provide education and training to the local community such as: basic food safety and hygiene, basic English to communicate with tourists, basic nursing care for injury, basic service skills, basic ecotour guiding skills <p>The project will be implemented in Semester 1 + 2, or Semester 2 + 3, and about 40 hours or 5-7 days depends on the destination/location/community needs, such as in Hong Kong or in a developing destination such as mainland China, Taiwan, and Cambodia.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5. Reflective Journals & Report and Review Sessions</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to write reflective journals both <u>during</u> and <u>after</u> the service-learning project to demonstrate their ability to: (a) link their service-learning experiences with the academic focus/discipline-specific content of the subject, (b) reflect on their service-learning experience to identify their learning gains as well as areas for future improvements, (c) reflect on their roles and social responsibilities. Students are expected to submit a reflective journal at the end of the service with a critical self-reflection (cognitive, physical and emotional) of their learning as an individual, professional detailing.</p> <p>To guide students in using reflection as a tool for learning, and to assess their ability in achieving the above learning objectives, group and individual reflection sessions will also be held both <u>during</u> and <u>after</u> the major service activities. Experts and facilitators from outside the subject-offering department (e.g. Service-Learning and Leadership Office, NGOs) may be invited to contribute to some of these sessions as appropriate.</p>
<p>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes</p>	<p>Students' performance in this subject will be assessed using a letter-grading system in accordance with the University's convention from grade F (failure) to A+. The relative weighting of the different assessment components are as follows:</p>

Specific assessment methods/ tasks	% weight- ing	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed							
		a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
e-Learning Module and Project-specific seminars and workshops	10%	✓						✓	✓
Plans/proposals for service	20%		✓	✓	✓				
Performance in rendering service	40%		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Reflective journal/report	30%	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Total	100%								

Students must obtain a pass in all of the components in order to pass the subject.

Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:

The e-Learning Module and Project-specific seminars and workshops will include assignments and learning tasks that are designed to assess students' ability to link service-learning with the academic content of the subject (ILO a), their empathy for the underprivileged community (ILO g) as well as their understanding of their role and responsibilities in society (ILO h).

Students will be asked to write proposals or plans for the service projects as preparation for service. These proposals will demonstrate their ability to apply their discipline-specific as well as other knowledge and skills to deal with issues and problems in the service settings (ILO b, c and d).

The students' attitude and performance in the rendering of service, their degree of engagement with the service recipients, their collaboration with other students, and interactions with the service recipients and/or collaborating NGOs are obviously indicators of their ability to communicate effectively with peers and stakeholders (ILO f), their sense of civic responsibility, professional ethics and their empathy for people in need (ILO g), and their ability to work collaboratively to apply their knowledge and skills to deal with real problems in the service setting (ILO b, c, d and e).

	<p>Students' reflective journals and report, and their presentations and discussions during the reflection and review sessions and tutorials, will testify to the students' <u>reflection</u> on their learning experience, and the breadth and depth of their learning. This assesses their ability to link service-learning and the academic content of the subject (ILO a), their ability to apply their knowledge to the service project (ILO b and c), their empathy for the less fortunate people in the society (ILO g), and their ability to reflect on their role and responsibilities in the society (ILO h).</p>	
Student study effort expected	e-Learning Module	10 hours
	Class Contact	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discipline-related and Project-specific Seminars and/or Workshops 	25 hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection sessions 	4 hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site inspections and visits 	10 hours
	Other student study effort:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and preparation for the service project 	31 hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct rendering of service 	40 hours
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reflection 	12 hours
	Total student study effort	132 hours
Reading list and references	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Wearing, S. (2012). <i>Ecotourism</i>. Hobken: Taylor & Franis. Fennell, D. (2015). <i>Ecotourism</i>. Routledge. Raju, G.P. (2009). <i>Ecotourism guidance for tour operator</i>. Manglam Publications. Fennell, D.A., & Malloy, D.C. (2007). <i>Codes of ethics in tourism: Practices, Theory, Synthesis</i>. Channel View Publications. Wearing, S. & Neil, J. (1999). <i>Ecotourism: Impacts, Potentials and Possibilities</i>. Butterworth/Heinemann. UNWTO (2003). <i>Sustainable Development of Ecotourism – A Compilation of Good Practices in SMEs</i>. United Nation World Tourism Organization. UNWTO (2006). <i>Poverty Alleviation Through Tourism – A Compilation of Good Practices</i>. United Nation World Tourism Organization. Selected articles from academic journals such as: Journal of Sustainable Tourism Journal of Ecotourism Annals of Tourism Research Tourism Management Journal of China Tourism Research 	