

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Code	HTM1A01
Subject Title	Leisure and Society
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Nil
Objectives	<p>Leisure is a widespread and age-old social phenomenon. Its roles in a modern society and in our lives are complex. Leisure changes from culture to culture, from era to era, and from one stage of life to another. It is this complexity of leisure we hope to pursue through this general introductory subject.</p> <p>The subject deals with the meanings of leisure and the consequences of leisure participation in a modern society. It examines the origins and evolution of leisure as a socio-cultural phenomenon and as an inter-/multi-disciplinary branch of social sciences. Various theories and conceptualizations of leisure are reviewed and discussed in its connection to work and stress, time use, leisure satisfaction and health, quality of life and well-being, community and culture, gender and sexuality, pleasure travel, agencies and policies, and creativity and personal development for individuals in a modern society. In addition to the benefits of leisure participation, the subject also looks at leisure constraints, particularly for populations with special needs, as well as societal trends and demographic shifts that will shape the future of leisure behavior and free time pursuits in our increasingly leisure-oriented communities and/or societies.</p> <p>In short, this general introductory subject aims to provide an overview of the wide spectrum of leisure from various social sciences perspectives. It introduces students (of various disciplines or specializations) to the nature and scope of leisure, leisure behavior, and the consequences of its development (or under-development) in a modern society. As such, the subject's contents are primarily theoretical accounts, informed by the ever-growing body of inter-/multi-disciplinary social sciences scholarship known as leisure studies. Notably, due to the institution's location and students' backgrounds, the policies, planning and development practices of leisure and recreation in Hong Kong will be used as case studies or</p>

	examples to supplement the subject study and seminar discussions.
Intended Learning Outcomes	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place, view and appreciate leisure or leisure behavior in a social, cultural and historical context. 2. Understand and explain the nature, role(s) and value of leisure for individuals and society. 3. Understand and explain the various theoretical/social sciences perspectives on leisure. 4. Briefly explain or describe the origins and evolution of leisure as a multi-/inter-disciplinary branch of social sciences. 5. Identify and appreciate (or critique on) policies, planning and development practices in relation to leisure in Hong Kong.
Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus	<p>Key topics to be addressed in this subject include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The meanings of leisure for individuals, communities, and societies: The origins and evolution of a socio-cultural phenomenon and an interdisciplinary branch of social sciences. (This <i>introductory lecture</i> and its seminar discussion will focus on the many perspectives on and definitions of leisure as a socio-cultural phenomenon, its expressions and manifestations, its nature and attributes, its changes over time, and how leisure studies has originated and evolved and grown as an inter-/multi-disciplinary field of scholarship. That is, how complexities of the leisure phenomenon are reflected over time in leisure studies.) 2. Leisure theories: From “freedom from...” to “freedom to...”. (This lecture presents an <i>in-depth treatment on leisure theories</i>, including, leisure as un-obligated/free time, leisure as “escape/being away” from work, leisure as experience or a state-of-mind, leisure as activity/action, leisure as creativity or “re-creation”. In particular, theories to be introduced in this lecture and to be expanded in the subsequent lectures include developmental theory, social identity theory, interaction theory, institutional theory, feminism, conflict theory, and humanist theory. Notably, theories of leisure have been swinging like a pendulum, from recreational/diversionary modes to experiential/existential ones, each contributing a useful perspective on understanding leisure). 3. Leisure and work: “Re-created” individuals, or the rise of leisure classes?

	<p>(Lecture three will elaborate on employment and work ethics, the myth of declining workweek, income and wealth, and dualism and pluralism of leisure as commodification and consumerism in a postmodern society.)</p> <p>4. Leisure as a coping strategy: Stress, time management, and free time use.</p> <p>(Lecture four will elaborate on pressure and stress in modern society, leisure as coping, time management, life satisfaction, and free time use)</p> <p>5. Leisure as a lifestyle: Forms of leisure and playful activities for all ages</p> <p>(Lecture five focuses on leisure and life course, family life cycle, leisure roles and identities, adolescence and the claiming of private space, the preparation periods, the establishment periods, reintegration and later years, and modern consumerism such as recreation, gyms, sport clubs, golfing, spa, body shape, cosmetics, etc..)</p> <p>6. Leisure and personal development: Creativity and learning for (in) fun</p> <p>(This lecture deals with education and human development, experiential learning, creativity and innovation, leisure and arts, and freedom and form)</p> <p>7. Pleasure travel as “serious leisure”</p> <p>(This lecture deals with motivations of pleasure travel, pleasure travel destination choice, and issues and consequences of leisure travel.)</p> <p>8. Leisure, quality of life, and well being</p> <p>(This lecture deals with leisure participation, the benefits of leisure, life satisfaction, work for leisure, or leisure for work.)</p> <p>9. Leisure and popular culture</p> <p>(This lecture deals with scope of popular culture, popular culture and group identity, popular culture and mass media, the omnipresent entertainer: from television to computer games to mobile/social-networking devices.)</p> <p>10. Ethnicity, race, and leisure in multicultural communities</p> <p>(This lecture focuses on the meanings of leisure, leisure pursuits, and its consequences in the contexts of ethnicity, race, cultures and sub-cultures. It will also address diversity, multiculturalism, contrasting cultures and values such as leisure in Chinese versus western societies, as well as</p>
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acculturation and cultural change.)

11. Leisure and sexuality in a gendered society

(This lecture will deal with feminism and gendered perspectives on leisure, sex and identity, sex industry and prostitution, sex as work versus sex as leisure (or “your leisure; my life”), and sexuality and social change. If time allows, this lecture may also talk about leisure and deviant behavior such as drugs, abuses, and crime.)

12. Leisure constraints, barriers to participation, and the needs of special populations

(This lecture deals with various kinds of leisure constraints, barriers to participation, and consequences of non-participation. In particular, the discussion will focus on people with disabilities and their needs for leisure and recreation, as well as social and community support for leisure of special populations.)

13. Agencies and policies for leisure program development and leisure service provision

(This lecture will focus on the policy, planning, organization, and provisional aspects of leisure programs, services and businesses in a modern society.)

14. Towards a leisure-oriented society: Emerging trends and prospects

(This is a concluding lecture, to mainly deal with leisure in a future society, emerging trends and prospects, and leisure as freedom and meaning.)

As can be seen from this synopsis, the subject’s contents are primarily theoretical accounts on leisure studies. The instances of leisure and recreation in Hong Kong will be used as case studies or examples to supplement the subject study and seminar discussions.